



DRURY UNIVERSITY

Chocolate University High School International Business Immersion Origin Location: Tanzania

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who should apply to Chocolate University?

A. Southwest Missouri high school juniors and seniors attending public, private, or homeschool. Students should be planning on high school graduation in 2025 or 2026 and be 16 years old by May 1, 2025. Students should be interested in exploring international cultures and business and should be able to share their plan to apply their anticipated learnings to their future success. Experienced and first-time travelers are welcome. Students must be available to attend six monthly prep meetings scheduled from January through July 2025 from approx. 4:30 to 7 pm. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: Who will be traveling on the trip to Tanzania?

A. The group of travelers includes a total of 5-6 adults: Shawn Askinosie, 1-2 members of the Askinosie Chocolate corporate team, 1-2 from Askinosie Foundation leadership, and a faculty member from Drury University. A Drury student, usually from the business school, also accompanies the group of 12-14 student travelers, and serves as a Resident Assistant. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: What is the interview like?

A. The selection committee is composed of 5-6 adults including high school teachers, along with representatives from Drury University, Askinosie Foundation, and Askinosie Chocolate. During the virtual interview meeting, the committee will ask questions based on your application and make it easy to share your ideas about how you will use the Choc Univ experience in your future plans. The group is friendly and helpful. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: How much does the trip cost?

A. Students selected for the CU Class of 2025 will pay a registration fee of \$500 to the Askinosie Foundation to participate in Chocolate University. This fee, combined with donated scholarship funds from individuals and businesses supporting the program, covers the cost of Chocolate University. The 2025 budgeted cost is \$5,300 per student traveler and includes airfare, lodging, meals, preparation classes, travel insurance, and security. Incidental costs to be covered by the individual student traveler could include vaccinations/immunizations, shoes and clothing, a carry-on rolling suitcase, and passport application. We do not want cost to be a barrier for any student's participation. Financial help with the registration fee or incidental costs is available and will be discussed during the interview process. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: Do you get to meet any of the farmers featured on the Askinosie Chocolate Bars?

A. YES! We had the opportunity to meet Mama Mpoki, who is featured on the 72% Dark Chocolate Bar. She was captivating and probably the most beautiful woman I have ever seen in my life. I froze up a bit every time I saw her, starstruck. She is the leader of the farmer group in Mababu and had definitely earned the respect of all of her fellow farmers. -Emma B., CU Alumni

Q: Did you make chocolate while you were there?

A. We didn't make any chocolate in Tanzania, but we did have a chocolate tasting with the farmers. Some of them had never tasted chocolate before, which was crazy because they had been growing cocoa pods their whole lives. The farmers were so proud of the Askinosie bar made from their cocoa beans, and they all decided that it definitely tasted the best among the bars from the three cocoa origins they sampled. -Emma B., CU Alumni

Q: Did you have to get any shots or take any special medicines before you went?

A. Always consult with your doctor to get advice on medications for your needs. [CDC recommendations](#) for travel abroad precautions are available online and are offered specifically to the Tanzanian area visited. Your doctor or [Greene County Health Department](#) can administer vaccines for a fee. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: What was the best/worst food that you tried in Tanzania?

A. Let me start off with the worst food. On the way back to the airport we stopped by a market and some of us bought some sort of tiny fried, dried fish snack. If you do try those, I highly recommend that you have water with you to wash down the fishy taste. As for the best food... all of our meals were so good. We had these crepe-like pancakes (chapati) for breakfast that were amazing. Lots of stewed meats and vegetables with amazing rice. One evening we had a celebration dinner with the farmers on the beach where we had roasted goat. The taste was rich and hearty. - Alec H., CU Alumni

A. Meals are eaten in group settings and provided by a private caterer (Lunch) or at the resort (Breakfast, Dinner). Individual bottled water is provided and consumption is encouraged. Guidance on how to eat and drink safely while traveling abroad is shared in trip preparation meetings. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: Where did you stay in Tanzania and what was it like?

A. Our group typically stays in Matema, a neighboring village to Mababu. At the lakeside resort in the village, students lodge in groups separated by gender. Rooms are equipped with individual beds and shared baths - sink, toilet, shower. Electricity is usually available, but is not 100% reliable and does not accommodate heating elements (hair dryers, flat irons do not work). Laundry service is available at the resort for a small fee. Morning and evening meals are enjoyed together in a common dining space property. Additional accommodations can vary based on the trip agenda and timing. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: How long is the trip?

A. Our trip was 10 days. About five nights in the village plus travel time of about 2 days each way, but I wish it could be longer! -Tim, CU Alumni

Q: Did everyone on the trip get along?

A. Yes! Our class got along extremely well. The Drury campus week was really helpful because we got to know each other before we embarked on a trip across the world. We really balanced each other out, and it was nice to have people to talk to and relate to on a trip as life-changing as this one. And, we still get together and keep in touch! -Emma B., CU Alumni

Q: What is the Tanzanian culture like?

A. The culture in Tanzania was hands down one of my favorite parts about the trip. If I had to describe it in just a few words it would be love, generosity, and optimism. The farmers were nothing but welcoming to us and included and loved us as if we were family. While some had nearly nothing they continued to give and showed us the warmest hospitality. I loved every moment of my time there and was inspired by the energy and the hope there was while living even the most minimalist life. -Leila I., CU Alumni

A. The Chocolate University experience is truly unique in that students travel abroad WITH Askinosie business leaders to visit the company's long-standing farming partners resulting in a level of hospitality and welcome typically reserved for old friends. You might liken the experience to joining a friend to visit their family. Cocoa farmers welcome the group into their homes for honest conversation and generously share their thoughts and traditions. CU Tanzania offers an extremely rich cultural exchange when compared to a typical tourist experience. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: Is the Chocolate University trip like a mission trip?

A. The trip is not a mission trip; it is a business trip. While in Tanzania, the group will spend the majority of time visiting Askinosie's cocoa farming partners and conducting business. The students observe the business meetings and experience international trade negotiations firsthand. Prior to travel, prep meetings explain international commodity markets, review company financials, demystify profit sharing, address issues in the global cocoa supply chain, and explore the company's bean-purchase transparency reporting model. Following guidance from the farmers and Askinosie's onsite field rep, the CU class will prepare, plan, and during the visit, complete a student-led community project to support the farming village. The group also spends time each evening in community discussion and personal reflection. - Askinosie Foundation

Q: Did you see any lions, elephants, or giraffes?

A. Unfortunately, no. This was one of the main questions that friends and family asked when I returned to the States. We did see plenty of chickens and pigs in the village though. Our interpreter, Allan, was super excited to show us the pigs, thinking that we'd never seen pigs before. That was pretty hilarious. -Emma B., CU Alumni

Q: What language do the people speak in Tanzania and was the language barrier hard to overcome?

A. In Tanzania, most people speak Swahili. During the Drury week and in downtime in airports, we tried our best at least to learn some greetings and phrases so that we could directly communicate with the farmers. Our interpreters made it really easy to connect with the local people, so that definitely helped with the language barrier. The farmers laughed at our attempts to speak their language, but I think they at least appreciated that we tried. -Emma B., CU Alumni

Q: How safe is Tanzania?

A. International group travel is unique and should increase a person's sense of responsibility to the group's safety while also raising individual awareness to maintain personal safety. Working closely with Drury University's International Studies department, the Chocolate University program monitors the US State Department and Center for Disease Control advisories for travel. While Tanzania is ranked well ahead of the United States in many world indexes of safety by country, both countries experience increased criminal activity in urban centers. The group will learn international travel guidance and techniques from a security professional during prep meetings. The group will also be enrolled in the STEP program (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) which alerts the US Embassy in Tanzania of our travel plans and contacts us directly in case of emergency.

Q: What does a typical day look like for students in Tanzania?

A. Students wake up fairly early and meet in the common dining area of the resort for breakfast. The group then boards a shuttle bus for a 20-minute drive to a meeting with the farmers, a cocoa farm site visit, or a check-up in another village location. Often, the group will participate alongside farmers to evaluate and ready the cocoa beans for export. Catered lunch is eaten as a group with the farmers. Afternoon activities typically involve working on a project to benefit the village community or an exploration (as a group) of the village and surroundings. Sometimes, the busy 14+ hour day calls for a quick rest before dinner and the evening group meeting/reflection.

Q: How do I know this program would be a good fit for me?

A. There is no ideal student profile for Chocolate University. However, students with a curious, open mind, and a heart ready to be touched generally get the most benefit from their CU experience. Students seeking a global perspective and greater sense of self are well suited. The CU application is just a snapshot of you. We look forward to getting to know you better and helping you decide if Chocolate University is the right place for you in Summer 2025.

Still have a question? Please email CU Executive Director, Melissa Gelner, at migelner@askinosie.com.

Resources: [ChocolateUniversity.org](https://chocolateuniversity.org) [State Department Fact Sheet - Tanzania](#) [CDC Guidance for Tanzania](#)