

# Independent Study Abroad Guide

Independent Study Abroad programs allow you to take advantage of hundreds of study, internship, volunteer, and teaching opportunities around the world. These programs are not affiliated with the University of California and are typically administered by another university, institution, or organization.

If you participate on an Independent Study Abroad program, you will be responsible for selecting an appropriate program, clearing it with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, your college (and in some cases your department), as well as filing a Planned Leave of Absence Form with UC Berkeley. Be aware that transfer credit and financial aid may only be available on select programs.

## Before You Go

**Step 1: Research and select an Independent Study Abroad program.** Berkeley Study Abroad does not make program recommendations or endorsements, but has provided the following directories for your search:

- Abroad 101 [www.abroad101.com](http://www.abroad101.com)
- Diversity Abroad [www.diversityabroad.com](http://www.diversityabroad.com)
- GO Overseas [www.gooverseas.com](http://www.gooverseas.com)
- GoAbroad.com [www.goabroad.com](http://www.goabroad.com)
- IIE Passport [www.iiepassport.org](http://www.iiepassport.org)
- National Registration Center for Study Abroad [www.nrcsa.com](http://www.nrcsa.com)
- StudyAbroad.com [www.studyabroad.com](http://www.studyabroad.com)

The following programs offer special funding through an affiliation agreement with UC Berkeley:

- **American Institute for Foreign Study** [www.aifsabroad.com](http://www.aifsabroad.com)  
AIFS will provide a grant of \$400 to each Berkeley student enrolling in an academic semester program and \$200 for a summer program.
- **Cultural Experiences Abroad** [www.ceastudyabroad.com](http://www.ceastudyabroad.com)  
CEA will provide a travel grant of \$500 to each Berkeley student enrolling in a year program, \$250 for a semester program, and \$100 for a short-term or summer program.
- **IES Abroad** [www.iesabroad.org](http://www.iesabroad.org)  
IES will provide a grant of \$1,500 to each Berkeley student enrolling in a semester program (with the exception of the IES Delhi program).

**Step 2: Have an Admissions Advisor in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions evaluate your proposed courses to check transferability.** The purpose of the evaluation is to review your proposed program and courses, and to advise you in advance about transfer credit policies and potential transfer credit for the courses. The evaluation is informational—it does not obligate you to attend a program. To arrange an evaluation, email Chelsea Muhlhahn at [muhlhahn@berkeley.edu](mailto:muhlhahn@berkeley.edu). Be sure to submit the following:

- Study Abroad Proposed Program Evaluation, completed (see pages 4-6 of this document)
- Program information
- Course descriptions
- Name of institution issuing transcript
- Any program forms requiring a signature of a study abroad adviser (including financial aid forms). If a form requires disciplinary record information, request this from the Center for Student Conduct in 205 Sproul Hall.

After all documentation is received, you should expect to pick up your completed paperwork from Admissions the following week. Admissions will keep your Proposed Program Evaluation Form on file, along with copies of the program information and course descriptions. Admissions will give you a copy of the Proposed Program Evaluation Form for your records.

**Step 3: (FINANCIAL AID STUDENTS) Meet with a counselor from the Financial Aid & Scholarships Office in 160 Stephens Hall to review your financial aid eligibility for an Independent Study Abroad program.** If you wish to apply financial aid towards an Independent Study Abroad program, you must file a *Consortium Agreement* with the Financial Aid and Scholarships Office at least 60 days prior to your program start date.

**Step 4: (INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS) Meet with an advisor at the Berkeley International Office on the 2nd floor of International House to discuss how Independent Study Abroad will affect your F-1 or J-1 visa status.** This meeting is to discuss the consequences of ending your visa status while on an Independent Study Abroad program and the process for reestablishing status prior to returning to Berkeley. Please be aware that the Berkeley International Office cannot maintain the visa status of F-1 and J-1 students who engage in independent study abroad.

**Step 5: Meet with your college and department advisers to discuss how an Independent Study Abroad program will fit into your academic progress at Berkeley.** Will it be necessary to receive department credit for the program to stay on track for graduation? What requirements does the college/school or department have for students participating in an Independent Study Abroad program? Be sure to discuss receiving a registration code for the term after your program (if returning to Berkeley).

**Step 6: Apply to an Independent Study Abroad program by the program's deadline.**

**Step 7: Submit Planned Leave of Absence Form to the Berkeley Study Abroad office in 160 Stephens Hall.** The Planned Leave of Absence Form lets the University know that you intend to be away for at least a semester (fall and/or spring) for non-UC study abroad. With the Planned Leave Status, you do not need to file a Readmission Petition for the term following study abroad. Currently registered undergraduate students who plan to participate in a recognized and accredited study abroad program for credit and who will maintain a full-time course load during the entire term abroad are eligible to apply for Planned Leave Status. You do not need to file a Planned Leave of Absence Form if you will be away during the summer only.

Submit your Planned Leave of Absence Form as early as possible, but no later than the following deadlines: for a spring semester absence, submit form by **October 15**; for a fall semester absence, submit by **April 15**. Once you submit the form, your CARS account will be billed \$70.00 for the Planned Leave of Absence fee. If you miss the deadline, you will not be eligible for Planned Leave Status and must instead cancel your registration through Tele-BEARS for your term abroad. Students not using Planned Leave Status must submit an Application for Readmission to Cal Student Central in 120 Sproul Hall by June 1 for readmission for the fall semester or by November 1 for the spring semester.

**Step 8: Address the following before departure:**

**Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)**

If you are covered by SHIP, verify your dates of coverage and make arrangements to have insurance for any gaps in coverage between SHIP and your study abroad program.

**Library Access**

Contact the UC Berkeley Library regarding your library privileges while participating on an Independent Study Abroad program.

**Class Pass**

You will not be eligible for an AC Transit Class Pass during your study abroad term when participating in an Independent Study Abroad program.

### ☐ **Career Center Services**

You may continue to access Career Center services (e.g. Callisto, counseling appointments) during your study abroad term by completing a Degree Verification Registration process at <https://career.berkeley.edu/General/DegreeVerif.stm>. When prompted for department//college advisor information, enter:

Full Name: Travis Pentz  
Department/College: Study Abroad  
Email: [tpentz@berkeley.edu](mailto:tpentz@berkeley.edu)  
Phone #: 642-1356

Once the Career Center has received confirmation from Berkeley Study Abroad, you will receive an email with a Career Center ID and instructions on how to create a password and login. If you have an existing Callisto or Letter Service account it should already be tied to your CCID.

## **During Your Program**

**Step 9:** Register for courses through Tele-BEARS for the term following your program (if you will be returning to Berkeley).

**Step 10:** Check your Berkeley email account regularly for important updates.

**Step 11:** Order official transcripts from the host institution at the conclusion of your program to be mailed directly to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

## **Upon Your Return to Berkeley**

**Step 12:** Meet with your department adviser and be prepared to show course syllabi, papers, exams and other graded work.

## Study Abroad Proposed Program Evaluation

Please provide the following information to assist the Office of Undergraduate Admissions in reviewing your academic records for possible transfer credit when you return.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First M.I.

UCB SID #: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_ First term at UCB: \_\_\_\_\_

College: \_\_\_\_\_ Major: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street

\_\_\_\_\_ City State Zip Telephone (including Area Code)

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

- Country in which you plan to study: \_\_\_\_\_
- Name of institution: \_\_\_\_\_
- Dates of attendance: From: \_\_\_\_\_ To: \_\_\_\_\_
- If study is sponsored by an accredited U.S. college or university, please specify name of institution:  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Who will issue official transcripts of record? \_\_\_\_\_  
(Transcripts must be issued by an accredited university/college-level institution to be considered for credit.)
- If you plan language study, what courses in that language have you already completed at UCB or other U.S. institution of higher education?  
\_\_\_\_\_



# Transfer Credit Rules and Guidelines

## Status of the Institution or Program

The college or university you attend must be accredited by one of the U.S. regional accrediting associations or be officially recognized as a higher education institution by the appropriate education authority in the country in which it is located. If the program is not an educational institution, but a study abroad program or private school, courses will only be considered for transfer credit if the transcript is issued by a regionally accredited U.S. university or college or by an officially recognized university in the country. If you are unsure about the status of the institution that offers the courses you wish to take, bring information about the institution to your appointment with the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

## Course Content

The courses taken must be comparable in scope, content, and level of instruction to those taught at one of the ten University of California campuses. Credit will not be given for any course that duplicates course work that you have already completed at UC Berkeley or any other university or college.

You should bring to your Admissions appointment a description for every course you propose to take. Save all course materials from your courses such as syllabi, notes, papers, journals, reports, examinations, etc. Review may be needed to determine course content when you return to Berkeley. This is especially true of courses such as "Independent Study," "Internship," "Directed Studies," or "Special Topics," which cannot be pre-approved because the actual course content is not determined until you begin the course.

## Official Transcripts

Transfer credit will be considered only for courses recorded on official university or college documents. If you attend a foreign university as a directly-enrolled student, you must submit the official record as it is issued to students in that institution. Transfer credit will NOT be considered for courses recorded on a "Certificate of Attendance." If you have any questions about documents required, consult a transfer credit adviser in Admissions. Transcripts issued in a language other than English must be accompanied by an English translation. Official transcript must be sent directly from the institution to:

**STUDY ABROAD – EVALUATION OF TRANSFER CREDIT**  
**Office of Undergraduate Admissions**  
**110 Sproul Hall # 5800**  
**Berkeley CA 94720-5800**

In case of delay, you may also wish to request a copy to be issued directly to you in a sealed envelope, which you can submit to Admissions upon your return. Do not open the envelope.

## Evaluation of Transfer Credit and Posting of Credit to Your UC Berkeley Record

Final decisions regarding transfer credit are made on the basis of official documentation. Upon receipt of an official transcript, Admissions will evaluate your transcript for appropriate transfer credit and forward the results to the Office of the Registrar for posting on your UC Berkeley record. *With the exception of regular courses taken at another UC campus, only the name of the sponsoring institution and the number of transferred units will appear on your UC Berkeley record.*

Evaluation of transfer credit is based on UC system-wide guidelines. Credit will only be considered for courses in which you have earned a passing grade, as defined by the university that issued the transcript. There are limitations of credit in certain areas: professional courses in journalism and law are not transferable; lower-division business courses are rarely transferable; upper-division courses are transferable only if stated prerequisites for the course have been completed prior to enrollment. Unit value for credit granted will be determined by Admissions. You may not negotiate credits, nor choose whether or not to receive credits.

Allow at least one semester for receipt of transcripts, evaluation, and posting of transfer credit. There is a high volume of requests when students return. This process may not be completed prior to when you need to schedule your next term classes. Credit from an Independent Study Abroad option should not determine your UC Berkeley course schedule or unit load.

## Planned Leave of Absence Form for Independent Study Abroad

<b>Student Information</b>		
Name:	SID:	Semester and Year that you intend to graduate:
<b>Independent Study Abroad Plans</b>		
Name of Institution Abroad:		
Country:	Semester Abroad Leave Request: <input type="checkbox"/> Fall Semester 20__ <input type="checkbox"/> Spring Semester 20__	
Academic Focus of Study Abroad:	Start and End Dates of Study Abroad:	
Name of Program Adviser/Contact at Institution Abroad:		
Email for Program Adviser/Contact at Institution Abroad:		
<b>Academic Work</b>		
Student's academic goals for study abroad:		
List all courses you are interested in taking abroad:		
List all requirements you would like to fulfill abroad (if any):		
<b>Evaluation by Office of Undergraduate Admissions (step 3 on instruction sheet)</b>		
Evaluation completed on:		
Checklist of items for evaluation:		
<input type="checkbox"/> Study Abroad Proposed Program Evaluation, completed (see pages 4-6 of this document) <input type="checkbox"/> Program information the study abroad option you are interested in pursuing <input type="checkbox"/> Course descriptions of potential classes and, if available, any syllabi <input type="checkbox"/> Name of institution issuing transcript (if unsure, contact program directly) <input type="checkbox"/> Any program forms requiring the signature of a study abroad advisor, including financial aid forms		

<b>Financial Aid</b> – required for financial aid students	
<input type="checkbox"/> Meet with a Study Abroad Financial Aid Counselor in 160 Stephens Hall “I met with (name)” _____ Date _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> Make a personal budget based on program cost and aid available as discussed with Financial Aid Counselor.	
<input type="checkbox"/> Obtain and complete an In-School Loan Deferment Request Form. This form is necessary for you to retain your status as an enrolled student while studying abroad, and prevent your loans from becoming due and payable.	
<b>Berkeley International Office</b> – required for international students	
Required for F-1 & J-1 students (step 4 on instruction sheet) Advisor signature: _____	
<b>College/School and Major/Minor Department Information</b>	
Major(s): _____	Minor: _____
College Adviser (1 <sup>st</sup> major): _____	2 <sup>nd</sup> College Adviser (if applicable): _____
College Adviser’s email: _____	2 <sup>nd</sup> College Adviser’s email: _____
Department Adviser: _____	2 <sup>nd</sup> Department Adviser (if applicable): _____
Department Adviser’s Email: _____	2 <sup>nd</sup> Department Adviser’s Email: _____
Adviser for Minor (if applicable): _____	Adviser for Minor’s Email: _____
College/Department Notes (optional): _____ _____	
<b>Submit this Form – Planned Leave of Absence</b> (step 7 on instruction sheet) Check the boxes below to confirm the following:	
<input type="checkbox"/> I have been accepted into my program abroad.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will check my Berkeley email account for important updates while abroad.	
<input type="checkbox"/> It is my responsibility to order an official transcript from my host school at the conclusion of the program to be mailed directly to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at UC Berkeley.	
<input type="checkbox"/> I will save all course documents, such as syllabi, papers, notes, exams, and other graded to be shared with my department.	
Submit this form to Berkeley Study Abroad in 160 Stephens Hall:	
<input type="checkbox"/> April 15: Deadline for Fall Absence	<input type="checkbox"/> I agree to be billed \$70.00 to my CARS
<input type="checkbox"/> October 15: Deadline for Spring Absence	account for the Planned Leave of Absence fee

***By my signature on this form, I agree to comply with UC Berkeley (campus, college/school, and departmental) requirements and policies, as well as with the requirements of the host institution, university and/ or organization abroad. I understand that failure to comply with the appropriate rules and procedures may affect my UC status as well as my degree progress and status in the program. Planned Leave Status cannot be renewed after two semesters of Planned Leave.***

Please Check:

- Yes, I grant UC Berkeley permission to release my name, international program, and email information to other students interested in study abroad.
- No, I do wish to release my information.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_