

## Academic Planning, Crediting and Reporting

### Introduction

This publication contains important information about academic planning, course crediting and reporting pertaining to your participation in the International Programs (IP). As a participant, it is your responsibility to read the information provided in this publication in conjunction with the publications entitled “Academic Policies” and the “Academic Bulletin” for your study center which contains academic information about courses, units and grading.

### Academic Planning

Before departure, the Office of International Programs (OIP) requires that with the help of CSU campus academic advisor(s), students formally plan which courses to take and complete the two-part Academic Advisement Form in addition to other campus-based forms that may be required by the home CSU campus. Once completed, Part I of the Academic Advisement Form will provide students with a listing of courses still required for their major, minor and general education requirements. Part II will provide an indication of what courses should be taken abroad as well as an idea of how courses will be applied to CSU degree requirements.

Students who plan to study in a field other than their declared major may wish to consider declaring a second major or a minor in that field, where available.

Once abroad students will experience greater difficulty trying to take care of academic formalities at their home campus, so students are advised to handle certain matters before leaving their campuses. Examples are:

- taking—and passing—all required English and mathematics proficiency exams;
- changing or adding a major or minor;
- filing a petition for course substitutions or waivers;
- clearing up any incomplete coursework.

Graduate students: Students pursuing graduate degrees must obtain classified graduate standing before departure for overseas, and consult with their academic advisor about which required coursework should be completed at the campus prior to, and after their study abroad experience. It is essential that IP applicants obtain, from both their graduate department and dean of graduate studies on the home campus, advance information on how courses taken abroad can be applied to their degree program. At a later point, this also requires that both the department chair and the dean of graduate studies sign the Academic Advisement Form. Graduate students may find that only six to nine units will count toward their degree; they must, however, maintain the minimum unit load requirement.

Graduating seniors and graduate students: Students whose graduation depends on the completion of specific courses should plan carefully and note that course availability abroad is not guaranteed. Students should keep in mind that it is often not possible to graduate in the same semester in which the study abroad experience was concluded due to the time that it can take to process grade reports and when the academic calendar ended for the study center attended. Students must take this into consideration when submitting forms to graduate since degrees are not posted until all courses taken abroad are reported to your home campus.

## Courses Abroad

Student access to academic opportunities increases as their academic preparation for the particular study center environment improves. Limitations can derive from one's level of language fluency and literacy (in non-English speaking countries) and specific preparation in the major. It is important that IP participants develop a realistic view of what they can actually accomplish in their year overseas and set realistic goals. Students studying in non-English speaking countries should not overestimate their ability in the host country language and should understand that some limits on choice of coursework are to be expected.

As is the case with any CSU campus, study center courses may not be offered every semester, may not be offered for same number of units as the student's home CSU campus or may not have the same components (e.g. lab) as the course at the student's home CSU campus so students should not enter the overseas academic experience with rigid and narrowly defined course requirements.

## Course Crediting

All coursework taken overseas will be accepted by the student's home campus as resident credit (not transfer credit) and will appear on the student's CSU academic record anywhere between three and six months after completion of the international study experience. (Variances in reporting time and posting to the CSU record applies depending on program and special circumstances involved.) The appropriate authorities at the student's home CSU campus determine the applicability of coursework completed overseas to major, minor, general education, and elective degree requirements. Specific questions regarding CSU campus policies and how courses will apply towards the degree should be directed to CSU campus advisors rather than study center or OIP staff.

It is the student's responsibility to:

- check all major departmental rules prior to departure for overseas;
- meet with the appropriate department advisor(s) to determine which courses will count toward specific degree requirements; and
- collect and provide course information from professors to submit to his/her advisor.

The campus advisor's role is to:

- determine how courses will be credited to the degree;
- suggest appropriate courses to be taken abroad which might fulfill degree requirements (e.g., course content, course level and unit value); and
- guide the student through the course substitution (petitioning) process at the home campus.

It is OIP's role to:

- report all courses and units attempted, and grades earned at the study center to the student's home CSU campus

Since courses abroad can differ from the CSU courses required for the CSU degree, advisors can suggest that the student take similar courses to fulfill specific course requirements. In these cases, campuses usually require that students submit a petition (or course substitution request) to have these courses count towards specific course requirements. This process protects the integrity of the degree and the transcript while allowing students the flexibility of taking related courses to meet specific requirements. Students are advised to discuss the process with advisors and appropriate officials at the student's home CSU campus prior to going abroad.

Parts I and II of the Academic Advisement Form must be completed as accurately as possible and signed by the department advisor(s), where indicated. Without these signatures, there can be no guarantee that students will receive credit toward their degree objectives. Even with prior approval for course credit, students are advised to keep course syllabi, term papers, reading lists, examinations and any other pertinent materials, until the degree is completed by loading them to their IP portal. Students are advised to refer to their campus catalog when they have questions about degree requirements while abroad.

When selecting courses at their study center, students should choose courses which best represent the home campus course requirement they are seeking to fulfill in terms of course content, course level and the unit value. In cases when the unit value of the home campus course requirement is more than the study center course, students should consult with their home campus advisor about selecting an additional course which would fulfill the unit value of the home campus course requirement.

Graduate credit will be granted only in courses that are judged by the study center and by the OIP to be graduate level. Graduate students must be aware that credit, in any case, will be granted only if prearranged with their respective home campus major departments and graduate deans. As few as six units per year may be directly transferable into their course requirements for the master's degree; nevertheless, all graduate students are required to maintain a full academic load. Additional units may be accepted by their advisor to meet other degree requirements.

Students who have questions about how their course work will apply to home CSU campus requirements are advised to contact their departmental advisors and refer to their CSU campus catalogs. Before departure, students should obtain contact details for their advisor(s) so they can communicate while abroad. Specific questions regarding CSU campus policies should be directed to CSU campus advisors rather than study center or OIP staff.

## **While Abroad**

While studying abroad, students will be asked to submit course information, enrollment details, and other information to the OIP by uploading them in their IP portal. Students may also be required to complete other academic forms as well, e.g. General Petition Form and Credit/No Credit Request Form. It is critical that students:

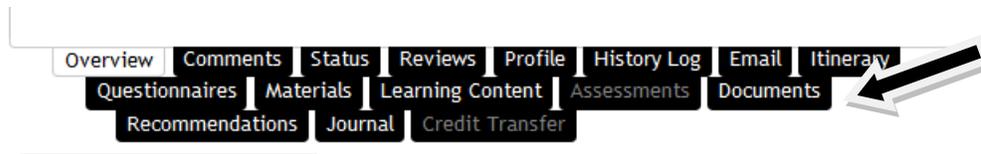
- Read instructions carefully when completing IP forms.
- Scan and upload forms to their IP portal. Refer to [Don't Pack it, Upload it!](#) for uploading instructions found in their "Academic Toolkit" in their IP portal.
- Check emails regularly for messages from the OIP.
- Update email and other addresses in the IP portal if addresses have changed.

Timely submission of the required information is critical for the crediting of courses taken abroad and to avoid delays with processing academic reports at the end of the year.

## **Academic Reporting**

At the conclusion of the student's study abroad experience, the OIP issues an Academic Report to the student's home CSU campus and the student. In this report, the OIP reports all courses in which the student was enrolled, all units attempted and all grades earned. The Academic Report is the sole academic record of the student's year abroad. Mid-year reports are not provided. Grades earned while on IP will be computed in the cumulative grade point average on the student's CSU transcript.

Reports are provided to the student's Registration/Records Office at the student's home CSU campus. A copy of the Academic Report is uploaded to the student's IP portal (located in the "Document" section as shown below) except advised otherwise. Reports are also made accessible to the IP Coordinator at student's home CSU campus.



Once the Registration/Records Office at the student's home CSU campus receives the Academic Report, the information is entered to the student's CSU record. It may take several weeks for courses, units and grades to appear on the student's CSU transcript so students should check their online CSU academic record periodically. If courses do not appear on the CSU record after four weeks after the report is made available to the student, then the student is advised to contact the Registration/Records Office at their home campus to find out when courses will appear on his/her CSU record. Once posted, the CSU transcript becomes the official record of coursework attempted and grades earned abroad.

Once courses appear on the student's CSU academic record, students should verify that courses listed on their Academic Report also appear on their CSU academic record. If there are any discrepancies, students should contact the Registration/Records Office at their home CSU campus.

If an error has been made on a student's Academic Report (for instance, if a grade was recorded incorrectly or a course that was taken was not listed on the report), then the student should e-mail the OIP at [IPacademics@calstate.edu](mailto:IPacademics@calstate.edu) to request a course or grade review. Course and grade reviews can take several months to complete depending on circumstances, the urgency of the request and the time the request was received. Reviews must be requested 1) before a student graduates with the degree that they were pursuing while studying abroad on IP and 2) no later than 12 months after the date which appears on their Academic Report, whichever date comes first. Requests made after this time will not be considered. Therefore, students should check the accuracy of their report and CSU transcript as soon as it becomes available and, if necessary, request a review immediately thereafter. For more information, students are advised to read the cover letter attached to their Academic Report.

Courses are posted to the student's CSU transcript and become a permanent part of the student's CSU academic record; courses listed on the Academic Reports must accurately represent the courses taken abroad. To ensure accurate reporting, IP reports courses attempted by reporting the title of the course and the CSU home campus department in which the course is closely related. This method of reporting means that students will need to furnish course descriptions, syllabi and other course materials to their advisors in order to apply for credit towards specific major, minor or general education requirements. If courses are not needed for specific degree requirements, then it is usually not necessary to complete any other campus-based forms although students should verify this with their campus IP coordinator or home campus academic advisor. Refer to the Academic Advisement Form Instructions and the Academic Policies publication for additional academic reporting information.

Academic reporting information is also available on our website found [here](#).

### **When to Expect Your Academic Report**

Since the grade reporting procedures of international institutions differ from the CSU campuses, IP students should not expect to receive their grades as quickly as they do at their home campus. For most countries, it can take a minimum of four months after completion of the year abroad for courses taken at the study center to be reported to the student's home CSU campus. In some cases, reports can take longer than four months to process depending on specific circumstances. This is especially true for students who study in France, Germany, Ghana, South Africa and Sweden where reports can take six months or longer to finalize. While OIP reports grades as quickly as possible, delays in reporting are beyond our control largely due to academic

differences between the CSU and how overseas partners process and provide academic information to the OIP.

Students should note that delays in reporting may also affect financial aid eligibility and payments upon return to their CSU campus. Students are advised to discuss this with their home campus financial aid advisor if they are concerned.

Students who have not received their report by the end of the fourth month after they have completed their year abroad may contact OIP to check on the status of their Academic Report.

Graduating Seniors: Due to the delays with receiving grades for some countries and for programs whose programs end their year in June, July or August, (.e.g. Chile, Germany and Japan), graduating seniors might have to postpone their graduation date depending on when the Academic Report can be sent to their home campus. Academic reports for graduating seniors are given priority processing but seniors should understand that it still can take a minimum of four months to process reports. For this reason, it is often not possible to graduate in the term following the last semester abroad. Students who plan to apply to graduate schools following their year abroad can still apply for graduate programs as long as they inform the institutions to which they are applying of a possible delay in the posting of their degree.

**IMPORTANT:** If students have an outstanding account balance related to their international studies, the academic report will not be released to their home CSU campus until the debt has been cleared. Notification of outstanding account balances will be sent to the student's permanent home address or via email.