

Study Abroad Program Student Guide

Exploring the world starts here. This guide answers the most common questions students have about studying abroad through Sacramento State. The information that is included covers categories such as program options, eligibility, academics, costs, financial aid, safety, and more. Whether you're just beginning to think about studying abroad or preparing to apply, this guide will help you navigate your next steps and discover the opportunities that await you around the globe. Let's get you prepared for an amazing international journey!

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Introduction to Study Abroad at Sacramento State

Studying Abroad is an opportunity for Sacramento State students to gain global experience, immerse themselves in new cultures, and earn academic credit while exploring the world. Sac State offers a variety of programs designed to support students of all backgrounds, majors, and experience levels. Please see below for information about CSU International Programs and the Sac State Study Abroad Program:

CSU International Programs: [CSU IP Study Abroad](#)

Sacramento State Direct Exchange: [Study Abroad for Current Students](#)

Program Options

Sac State students have the opportunity to study at a variety of locations in more than 20 countries around the world. **Note that not all areas of study are offered at every location.** Students should research their options carefully and coordinate with the study abroad staff to select a program that best meets their academic and personal goals.

There are two main program options for study abroad students:

- **[Sac State Direct Exchange Program:](#)** Open to Sac State students only.
 - **Program Duration:** Semester, Academic Year, Summer (Limited Options)
 - **Fees:** Sac State tuition, living expenses, flights, travel insurance
 - **Financial Aid Applicable:** FAFSA and scholarships
 - **Credit type:** Resident
- **[CSU International Programs:](#)** Open to students at any of the 23 CSU campuses.
 - **Program Duration:** Semester, Academic or Calendar Year, Summer (Limited Options)
 - **Fees:** Sac State tuition, living expenses, flights, travel insurance
 - **Financial Aid Applicable:** FAFSA and scholarships
 - **Credit type:** Resident

Note: Academic Year refers to programs that start in the fall and end in the spring, while Calendar Year refers to programs that start in the spring and end in the fall.

The main difference between Direct Exchange and CSU-IP is administrative. Direct Exchange programs are run by our office on campus, while CSU-IP is administered by the Chancellor's Office in Long Beach. Although the application and acceptance processes are slightly different, both options offer the same tuition cost, opportunity to apply existing financial aid packages, and classes taken for resident credit.

Other Study Abroad Options:

- **Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs (FLSA):** Short term programs open to anyone. These programs are generally 1-2 weeks long and take place during the summer or winter terms. FLSA offers credit for one Sac State class through various departments. Please note that all faculty-led programs are administered by the [College of Continuing Education](#).
 - [Upcoming Programs](#)
- **Third Party Provider Programs:** There are many third-party provider options for students wishing to go on summer study abroad programs in various countries around the world. [USAC](#), [CIEE](#), [ISA World Strides](#), and [Maximo Nivel](#) are some examples of providers Sac State students have used in the past.
 - Please note that all courses taken on these programs will appear as transfer rather than resident credit, and students should apply directly to the provider.

Eligibility Requirements

Below you will find information to help you better understand the academic and program-specific requirements needed to participate in the study abroad program.

Eligibility varies by program, but most require:

- Be a degree-seeking student for the duration of the full program while maintaining good academic standing.
- GPA requirements vary from approximately 2.75 to 3.0, depending on the program. Each program has specific eligibility requirements that can be found through [searching the program's webpage](#).
- Must be at least a sophomore for most programs.
- Must take at least 12 units (in U.S. credit) per semester. Some countries may require a minimum of 15 units (in U.S. credit) per semester to maintain good standing with their student visas.
- Some programs may require language prerequisites that are specific to the program.
- All classes must be approved by your academic advisor.

Please visit this link to view eligibility requirements for CSU IP: [CSU IP Eligibility FAQs](#)

Application Process

Here we have provided a step-by-step overview of how to apply for your chosen study abroad program. Below are some key points of the application process, but please visit the [CSU IP website](#) for CSU IP specific program application deadlines and a more detailed guide towards applying for study abroad programs.

- [Sac State Study Abroad – How to Apply Video](#)

- [CSU IP Application FAQ Page](#)

How to Apply

Research and explore programs. Use either the [CSU IP Program Discovery Tool](#) or the [Sacramento State Program Search & Application Portal](#) to find the right program for you. Ensure that you meet the program requirements and prerequisites prior to applying. Each program has details about the requirements for the program, courses offered, costs of program, and housing options.

Meet with the Sac State Study Abroad Advisor

For both Direct Exchange and CSUIP programs, you will first want to meet with a study abroad advisor to discuss your options and narrow down which program(s) best fits your personal journey.

Specifically for CSU IP, there are designated advisors for each country that can help answer program specific questions. See their virtual advising hours here: [CSUIP Virtual Advising](#)

Apply for your passport

You must have a valid passport to study abroad. Your passport must also be valid for at least 6 months after your return date to the U.S. If you do not already possess a valid passport, now is the best time to start that process.

You can apply for a passport at The Passport Place @ Sac State. Please visit their website for more details: <https://www.csus.edu/ipge/the-passport-place.html>

Required Items to Apply

To successfully submit your application, it is required that the following information is provided as part of your application:

- Term selection (e.g. Fall/Spring Semester, Calendar Year, Academic Year, etc.). Only one application can be submitted per term.
- 1st choice program selection. It is also recommended to select a 2nd choice option.
- Unofficial transcript
- Course preferences
- Personal essays

For CSU IP programs, you must also receive home campus approval from the Sac State Study Abroad office. This is an internal review process that will typically result in approval, provided you meet all eligibility requirements (GPA, academic level, good academic standing, etc.).

After You Are Admitted

1. **Complete post-decision steps in the application portal.** Once you have received your admissions decision, you will have access to post-decision requirements. These items must be completed and submitted by the deadlines that are provided.
2. **Apply for Financial Aid.** Complete the FAFSA application and/or research Cal Grants through the California Student Aid Commission (CSAC). Meet with a financial aid advisor on campus to discuss how you will pay for your time abroad. There are also scholarships available for students to apply for that can be used towards funding their study abroad programs.
3. **Meet with your CSU academic advisor.** You will be required to meet with your academic advisor(s) on campus to discuss the classes you will be taking abroad and get approval for those courses. Your academic advisor is also known as your major advisor.
4. **Apply for a student visa.** Most countries require students to apply for a visa or residency permit before traveling abroad. **Students are entirely responsible for obtaining their visa.**

Pre-Departure Steps

1. **Attend a Pre-Departure Orientation.** The CSU system requires that you attend a pre-departure orientation. This is a critical part to ensure students' safety, health, and satisfaction while abroad. CSU IP and Direct Exchange host separate PDOs, so please be sure to attend the one for your program.
 - a. Some topics may include:
 - i. Cultural orientation
 - ii. Basic safety measures/precautions
 - iii. Information on health concerns and risks
 - iv. How to handle money
 - v. Packing guidance
 - vi. How to get the most out of the experience
 - vii. Legal issues of concern
 - viii. Student conduct
2. **Book your flight.** Review program start dates in your application portal (these are based on your admission letter) and book a flight to your study abroad location. Some programs may have a mandatory group flight.
3. **Arrange housing abroad.** Review your specific housing guide in the application portal for tips and resources. Students are required to arrange housing prior to departure.
4. **Review policies.** Learn policies and regulations, as well as those of your host country, and host university.
5. **Do more research.** Research the location where you will live and the regions to which you will travel. Check the [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\)](#) for required immunizations and health information and the [US State Department](#) for travel warnings and alerts.

Housing Abroad

There are various options to choose from when deciding where you will be staying while abroad. Some universities offer dormitories, apartments, homestays, or program-arranged housing. During your program search, you can find the housing options offered by each university.

Upon acceptance to the host university, students will be offered a list of options for housing. Students are free to accept or reject these options. If they decide not to accept the housing offered by the host university, students are responsible for finding their own accommodations. For more information about housing options, participants should contact their host university for guidance.

Academic Guide & Course Credit

This section helps navigate academic policy and requirements while assisting in shaping your educational journey abroad. Additionally, this section contains information about course enrollment and how course credit is applied.

For more detailed information on CSU IP programs, please refer to the [Academic Guide for CSU IP Participants](#).

Academic Planning Form

Planning ahead makes it much easier to focus on learning and enjoying this experience. The Academic Planning Form is designed to allow students to seek approval from academic advisors/department chairs for their courses abroad and eliminate the need for course substitutions after their return.

If you are seeking to have major, minor, or GE credit satisfied through your courses abroad, then you must complete the Academic Planning Form. Any courses that you wish to come back as extra credit do not need to be list on your APF.

To successfully complete your APF, please follow the steps below:

1. Create a list of courses you would like to take abroad based on your host university's course list. Be sure to collect both course titles and course descriptions, if available. *Note: Comprehensive course lists are typically available after you've been accepted by your host university.*
2. Compare your study abroad course list with the [Sac State Course Catalog](#) and identify which courses you believe best match based on course titles and descriptions. This is only a preliminary check, as your academic advisor/department chair will have final approval.
3. Gather your two lists and meet with your academic advisor or department chair for your major to review your courses and confirm that they will apply to your academic requirements.

Enrollment While Abroad

While studying abroad, students will be enrolled in placeholder units for the courses they will be taking abroad to maintain their full-time status at Sac State. Students must adhere to the following requirements:

- Enroll full-time at the host university (typically 15 units)
- Do not enroll in more than one online class at Sac State during your time abroad. The Registrar's office cannot register students for their placeholder units if more than 3 units are posted on your account.
- Clear any holds on your account as soon as possible. This will ensure you are enrolled in placeholder units in a timely manner.
- **If a student does not have placeholder units prior to or during their time abroad, they are advised to contact the study abroad office immediately.**

Placeholder units will be replaced with your actual courses after returning from the host university, once transcripts are received and grades are processed.

How Course Crediting Works

Students are advised to choose courses that closely match Sac State course content, level, and unit value while also fulfilling major or general education requirements. Below are some key points about course credit:

- a. Courses taken abroad count as residential credit, not transfer credit.
- b. Credits will appear on your Sac State transcript approximately 4-6 months after program completion
- c. Each department decides how courses can apply towards graduation requirements
- d. Unit values may differ between institutions, making academic advisor approval essential

Your Role vs. Advisor & Study Abroad Office Support

1. Student Responsibilities:
 - a. Get course approval from their academic advisor before departure.
 - b. Upload syllabi/course descriptions to student portal prior to departure.
 - c. Follow academic instructions and deadlines closely.
2. Academic Advisor Role:
 - a. Approve courses and determine how credit applies.
 - b. Assist with course substitutions or petitions
3. CSU IP or Study Abroad Advisor Role:
 - a. Report your completed coursework, units, and grades to Sac State Registrar's office

While Abroad

To ensure your credits are processed smoothly:

- Submit required academic forms through the student/CSU IP portal.
- Check email regularly for updates or notices.

- Upload documents promptly and follow instructions carefully.

Timely submissions help prevent transcript delays after returning to Sac State.

Costs, Financial Aid & Scholarships

Studying abroad is an investment in yourself, and you do not need to be wealthy to partake in one of these programs. There is a myriad of ways to fund your journey and experience! This section will help guide you towards how much programs cost, financial assistance, and potential scholarships that participants can obtain.

Costs

- Estimated costs vary from country to country, program to program. Budget sheets are available for every program which are based on the experience of the previous years' students.
- Each program site offers estimated program costs that explain the cost to Sac State and out-of-pocket expenses that students can expect to pay per program.

The CSU IP Website has a [Cost Comparison](#) page that has links to the [budget sheets](#) for each program.

Financial Aid

- Federal financial aid can be used to pay for study abroad costs. This can be applied to all programs offered.
 - [Free Application for Federal Student Aid \(FAFSA\)](#)
 - [California Student Aid Commission \(CSAC\)](#)
 - Contains information to apply for Cal Grants, Middle Class Scholarships, Chafee Grant Program, California National Guard, and Law Enforcement Personnel Dependents.
- Fee Waivers also apply to study abroad programs. There are Mandatory Fee Waivers that students can qualify for, and if you are a dependent of a CSU employee, there is the CSU Employee Dependent Fee Waiver that individuals can be eligible for. See below for more information about these Fee Waivers.
 - [CSU Employee Dependent Fee Waiver Information](#)
 - [CSU Mandatory Fee Waiver Information](#)
- For more detailed information about Financial Aid, please refer to the links below:
 - [CSU IP Financial Aid Page](#)
 - [CSU IP Finance FAQs](#)

Scholarships

There are many scholarship opportunities for students interested in studying abroad. Below you will find various resources that connect you with the national and location-specific scholarships.

- [Sacramento State Study Abroad Scholarship Page](#)
- [CSU IP Scholarship Page](#)

Passport & Visa Information

This section will connect you with resources to apply for passports and visas for your travels abroad. It will also include helpful links that provide important travel information and programs that are offered to travelers. **ALL participants of programs abroad must have a valid passport prior to travel.**

Passport

If you need to apply for a passport for the first time, please visit [The Passport Place at Sacramento State](#) located in Modoc Hall 4006.

Visa

Most countries require students to obtain a visa; however, requirements may vary. Please visit [this website](#) to see a list of foreign embassies and consulates in San Francisco to learn more about the application process.

To help you better plan for your international travel, there are travel checklists, travel guidance, personal travel needs, safety tips, and much more that is provided by the [U.S. Department of State website](#). Please see below for these resources:

- [U.S. Department of State International Travel Homepage](#)
- [International Travel Checklist](#)
- [International Travel Guidance](#)
- [Plan Your International Travel](#)
- [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (Enrollment into this program is highly recommended)

Health & Safety Support

While abroad, your safety and well-being matter and there are some resources that can help you in times of need. Participants should research their destination, follow safety guidelines, stay aware of local conditions, familiarize themselves with the location and contact information of the U.S. embassy in their host country, enroll in the U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP), and obtain travel insurance. Below you will find a list of resources that can help you prepare for traveling abroad to ensure that your experience is enjoyed safely!

- [U.S. State Department Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of State Safety Tips for Studying Abroad](#)
- [U.S. Department of State Overseas Security Advisory Council \(OSAC\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of State Help Abroad Page](#)
- [USA Study Abroad Travel Health& Safety Info](#)

- [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) Travelers' Health Information](#)
- [International Travel Advisories](#)
- [Global Events Affecting International Travel](#)
- [Crisis Response & Evacuation Information](#)
- [International Travel Guidance](#)
- [International Travel Checklist](#)
- [Travel Insurance Information](#)
- [List of U.S. Embassy's by Country](#)
- [CSU IP Health & Safety Resources](#)
- [CSU IP Health & Safety FAQs](#)

Travel Experience & Cultural Adjustment

Adjusting to a new culture can be exciting but also sometimes challenging. Studying abroad means individuals will be immersed in a new cultural environment with different customs and norms, communication styles, daily routines, governmental policies, and much more. Although adjusting to a new culture may take time, it is a normal and meaningful part of the study abroad experience. This section offers practical tips to help participants feel more confident, connected, and comfortable while settling into life abroad.

Helpful Tips for Cultural Adjustment:

- **Give yourself time.** Culture shock is real and adjusting to a new environment may not be immediate. Allow yourself time to learn, observe, and feel more comfortable in this experience.
- **Approach this experience with an open mind.** You will encounter many new things such as cultural/social norms, foods, daily routines, classroom styles or structure, etc. Approach these experiences with curiosity and desire to learn about this new culture.
- **Learn the local language.** It is not expected that individuals are fluent in the local language but knowing basic phrases or greetings can be beneficial and be a pathway to feeling more confident and building connections with the community.
- **Build a routine.** Create small daily habits! Activities such as regularly visiting a local cafe or restaurant can help individuals feel more grounded in a foreign environment.
- **Connect with others.** Make an effort to connect with local students, faculty, staff, or fellow study abroad students. Building a community and connecting with others can greatly contribute to feeling a sense of belonging for study abroad participants.
- **Stay connected to home.** Checking in with friends and family at home can be comforting for students abroad, but it should not be heavily relied on. Homesickness can take a toll, but individuals are encouraged to be as present as possible to gain the most out of their experience.

- **Take care of yourself.** Get enough rest, eat regularly, and ask for help if you're feeling overwhelmed. Your physical and mental health is important, and there are many resources available to assist individuals in need.

Remind yourself, growth happens outside of your comfort zone. Get involved, stay curious, and remain patient with the transition into a new culture. This is a great experience and will help you gain many skills, confidence, and perspectives that can be utilized long after you return home!

Accessibility & Accommodations

Every student deserves a meaningful and accessible study abroad experience. This section connects you with resources on and off campus that can help ensure that any accommodations needed are available.

- [Sacramento State Disability Access Center](#)
 - [DAC Student Portal](#)
- [Sacramento State Inclusive Excellence](#)
- [Mobility International USA \(MIUSA\)](#)
 - [Tips for Medications When Traveling Internationally](#)
- [U.S.Department of State Accessibility Needs Information](#)
- [The Society for Accessible Tourism & Hospitality \(SATH\)](#)
 - [Travel Tips and Access Information](#)
- [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\) Guidance on the Transport of Mobility Aids](#)
- [U.S.Department of Transportation Traveling with a Disability Information](#)
 - [Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights](#)
- [European Network for Accessible Tourism \(ENAT\)](#)

It is recommended that requests for accommodations be made immediately to ensure that appropriate arrangements are in place for individuals. For more information or to request accommodations, please email diversity@csus.edu.

Tools & Resources

This section contains helpful links, planning tools, guides, and resources to make each study abroad students' experience easier from the start. This collection of links can guide individuals to certain information that can be useful to them at any stage of their study abroad journey.

Sacramento State

- [Study Abroad Home Page](#)
- [Study Abroad Program Overview](#)
- [Study Abroad FAQs](#)
- [Scholarships and Financial Aid Information](#)
- [Financial Aid Office](#)

- [Disability Access Center \(DAC\)](#)

CSU IP

- [Home Page](#)
- [Step-by-Step Guide to Studying Abroad](#)
- [CSU IP Program Search](#)
- [CSU IP Financial Aid Information](#)
- [CSU IP Virtual Office Hours](#)
- [CSU IP FAQs](#)

U.S. Department of State

- [U.S. Passport Agency](#)
- [International Travel Page](#)
- [Planning Your Travel](#)
- [Travel Advisories](#)
- [Travel Checklist](#)
- [Travel Guidance](#)
- [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)
- [Study Abroad Safety Tips](#)
- [Accessibility Needs](#)
- [U.S. Embassy Search Tool](#)

Language Tools

- [Duolingo](#)
- [Mango Languages](#)
- [Google Translate](#)

Accessibility & Accommodations

- [Sacramento State Disability Access Center \(DAC\)](#)
- [U.S. Department of State Accessibility Needs](#)
- [Sacramento State Inclusive Excellence](#)
- [Mobility International USA \(MIUSA\)](#)
 - [Tips for Medications When Traveling Internationally](#)
- [The Society for Accessible Tourism & Hospitality \(SATH\)](#)
 - [Travel Tips and Access Information](#)
- [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\) Guidance on the Transport of Mobility Aids](#)
- [U.S. Department of Transportation Traveling with a Disability Information](#)
- [Airline Passengers with Disabilities Bill of Rights](#)
- [European Network for Accessible Tourism \(ENAT\)](#)

Contact Information

If you have any other questions or concerns regarding the study abroad program or would like to discuss getting started with your application, the Study Abroad office at Sacramento State is here to help! Do not hesitate to reach out; the study abroad office is excited to help you explore the world and experience an amazing educational opportunity! Students can schedule advising appointments to learn more about the programs that are offered.

Sacramento State Study Abroad Office

- Lassen Hall 1100
- sabroad@csus.edu
- (916) 278-1273

International Programs & Global Engagement

- Modoc Hall, 4th floor
- intlinfo@csus.edu
- (916) 278-6686

Inclusive Excellence

- Del Norte Hall, Room 2004
- diversity@csus.edu
- (916) 278-4796