

SDSU Undergraduate Academic Approval Form (AAF) Instructions

Introduction: What is the Undergraduate AAF and why do I need to fill it out?

• An explanation of what the AAF is, why it is important, and who should complete it can be found in the SDSU Global Education Portal on the <u>Academic Approval Form</u> page.

1. Prep	paring to fill out your AAF
	The AAF will need to be filled out digitally. Please use Adobe Acrobat or Reader, which is a free Adobe software from SDSU. Download before you attempt to complete your AAF.
	Determine which kind of degree requirements you hope to satisfy. These could include courses for your major, your minor, language, and/or General Education (Foundations and Explorations). There may be courses you're interested in taking while abroad, which don't satisfy any specific graduation requirements: we call these "General Electives", because they will still count toward the required units to graduate from (e.g., 120). Each category is explained within the "Types of Courses" section of this AAF Instructions document.
	Use your degree evaluation (also known as "degree audit") in my.SDSU to find out exactly which requirements you need to complete. Use <u>this website</u> to help you with interpreting your degree evaluation.
	Make a list or chart of which categories of requirements you need to satisfy (e.g., major electives) and how many units you have left in that category (e.g., six units). Add a note next to the category if the course requirement is upper division (300 and higher at SDSU) or lower division (100 and 200-level at SDSU).
	Many courses abroad have already been approved to satisfy your SDSU degree requirements. Use the following links to find pre-approved courses:
	☐ General Education Foundations and Explorations ☐ Major / Minor Courses Abroad
	□ For courses/departments that are not listed on this page, gather the syllabi for the courses you would like to take. You can usually find this information on the host university/partner program website or the Global Education Portal (Aztecs Abroad) online brochure for your program. Connect with your Global Education Advisor if you need assistance.
	Determine how many courses you should take. The answer is based on how many SDSU units each of your courses abroad will equal at SDSU when you return.
	For fall and spring abroad semester programs, all students must enroll in the equivalent of 12 SDSU units or more.
	Summer programs have no SDSU minimum unit requirement unless your SDSU major/minor has a unit minimum to satisfy an international experience requirement - in this case, make sure you understand the exact SDSU requirement(s) you are trying to fulfill.
	Universities abroad measure contact hours and course credits in a different way than SDSU. (SDSU calls these "units."). The unit conversion between SDSU and your program abroad will vary by program. Use the Global Institutions Guide for Unit



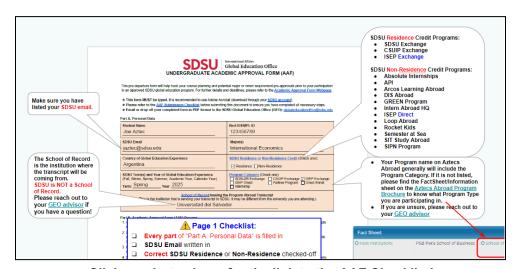
<u>Equivalencies & Upper Division Status</u> to see the unit conversion and make sure you end up with at least 12 total SDSU units while abroad.

☐ Get backup courses approved on your AAF so you have alternatives to satisfy your degree requirements, in case you are unable to enroll in your first choice courses at your host institution due to unforeseen circumstances.

After you've completed the steps above, you're ready to fill out your AAF!

2. Starting your Academic Approval Form (AAF)

\sqcup	Once your status in the SDSU Global Education Portal has changed to "Accepted Pending
	Commitment," log into your Global Education Portal to download the AAF from the step called
	"Undergraduate Academic Approval Form."
	Reminder: The form will need to be filled out digitally. Please use Adobe Acrobat/Reader
	which is a free Adobe software from SDSU. Download before you attempt to complete
	your AAF.
	Read the entire AAF first!
	Download the fillable pdf.
	Refer to this AAF Checklist as you complete the AAF (IMPORTANT! Don't skip this step!)



Click on photo above for the link to the AAF Checklist!



3. Types of Courses Taken Abroad

SDSU Degree Requirements you CAN fulfill when transferring courses from abroad:

- GE Foundations
- GE Explorations (on Exchange/CSU IP Programs only)
- Major/Minor degree requirements
- Language Requirements
- <u>General Electives</u> (to reach unit requirements for SDSU degree)

SDSU Degree Requirements you **CANNOT** fulfill when transferring courses from abroad:

- Graduation Writing Assessment Requirement (GWAR)
- Ethnic Studies

General Electives

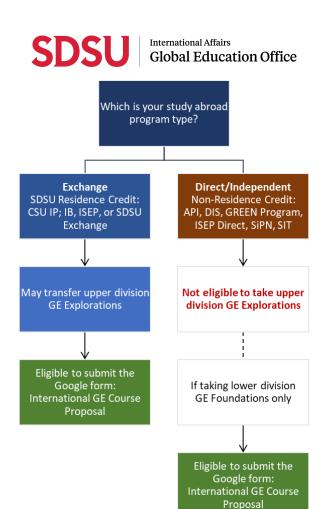
General Electives are courses taken that do not apply towards your major, minor, or general education. The units earned from General Electives will count towards the minimum overall units required to graduate from SDSU and do not require pre-approval on the AAF. However, they must be listed on the AAF (Section 1) to demonstrate that you are planning to take enough courses to maintain full-time student status while abroad (equivalent to 12 SDSU units).

General Education (GE) Foundations and Explorations

SDSU General Education requirements can be fulfilled abroad, but must be <u>pre-approved by the SDSU</u>
Registrar's Office. These are not to be confused with General Elective courses.

- General Education (GE) Foundations are required lower division courses that are part of SDSU degree requirements.
- General Education (GE) Explorations are required upper division courses that are part of SDSU degree requirements and must be taken for SDSU Residence Credit. <u>Note</u>: Explorations cannot be taken until the semester in which you reach 60 units at SDSU and can only be taken abroad on Exchange programs or CSU IP programs because those programs offer SDSU Residence Credit.

The flowchart below explains which categories (or types) of programs abroad allow you to take General Education Foundations (Lower Division) and/or General Education Explorations (Upper Division) to satisfy SDSU requirements.



- You can find pre-approved international General Education Foundations and/or General
 Education Explorations courses on SDSU's <u>General Education Study Abroad website</u>. This is a
 historical record of general education courses taken by SDSU students in the past. It does not
 capture all courses available, and some of the courses may have changed or are no longer
 offered.
 - Reminder: Eligibility to take General Education Explorations courses abroad depends on the type of study abroad program - see limitations on Explorations courses in the above flowchart.
 - If all the courses you are planning on taking are on this list, you can write them on your AAF in Section 1 and then move forward to Section 3 of the AAF, if needed.

This is an example of how to fill out Section 1.



1. SDSU Foundations & Explorations and/or General Elective Courses

- Use the space below to list each <u>pre-approved Foundations/Explorations</u> class or any General Electives (units toward graduation that do not satisfy major, minor, or Foundations/Explorations requirements) that you plan to take abroad. General Elective courses do not require pre-approval.
- Please note that to meet SDSU's Foundations/Explorations requirements, courses must have a minimum of three (3) semester units. If you enroll in a course with fewer than 3 units, you will need to supplement it with additional units from the same approved area of Foundations/Explorations to satisfy the minimum 3-unit requirement.
- Approved international Foundations/Explorations courses will be posted on <u>SDSU's Foundations/Explorations Study Abroad</u> website.
- New Foundations/Explorations courses can be proposed on the <u>International Foundations/Explorations Course Proposal Form</u>. If the review of your proposed Foundations/Explorations courses are denied, an email will be sent to you with an explanation.

International Course Title (include course number if available):	U.S. Semester Unit Value:	Specify Foundations/Explorations Requirement or General Electives (Filled out by student)
American Ethnology & Argentina	3	Explorations - Social Behavioral Science & Cultural Diversity
Cinematographic Theory	3	Explorations - Humanities

- If the General Education courses you are planning to take are not on the <u>General Education</u>
 <u>Study Abroad website</u>, you can request them to count by submitting them through the
 International General Education Course Proposal form.
 - General Education courses must be a minimum of three (3) SDSU semester units or multiple courses in the same area of the GE that add up to 3 semester units.
 - The SDSU Registrar's Office will email you once the review of your proposed General Education courses is complete. Approved international General Education courses will be posted on the <u>General Education Study Abroad website</u> approximately three weeks after you submit your courses for review.
 - Reminder: Refer to the <u>Global Institutions Guide for Unit Equivalencies & Upper Division</u>
 <u>Status</u> for information about how your international courses will transfer back to SDSU
 (i.e. credit conversion, lower or upper division, and grading)

Major/Minor Courses

Your major or minor advisor will provide the required AAF signatures for each major/minor requirement, based on a pre-approved list or review of courses abroad for pre-approval. You will need to review their advising materials or websites for how they want to process your AAF, such as through email, drop-ins, or an appointment.

- **1. Pre-approved lists.** If all the major/minor courses you wish to take while abroad **are** on a pre-approved list, you can write them on your AAF on Page 3. You would then follow the process for your major/minor academic advisors to receive the initials and signatures on Page 4 of the AAF.
 - Please note that students whose major/minor has pre-approved lists must make every effort to select pre-approved courses.
- **2. Review for pre-approval**. If your major/minor does not have a pre-approved list for courses offered abroad OR if you have a serious and compelling reason for selecting major/minor courses abroad that **are not** written on a pre-approved list, you may request review for pre-approval.



- Please note that review for pre-approval in the **Fowler College of Business** requires a 6-8 week timeline to receive a response, with no guarantee of approval.
- For students in the College of Health and Human Services (CHHS), additional courses that are not on the pre-approved course sheets for Kinesiology and Public Health are <u>not</u> eligible to be reviewed

For this process, you must provide the relevant academic advisor with the following information about the courses you wish to take:

- If your major has a pre-approved list, your reasoning for requesting this course instead of something that has already been pre-approved.
- Course descriptions/syllabi for courses you wish to take
- Which major or minor requirements you think it will satisfy
- The SDSU unit value
- Whether your proposed courses are upper or lower division
- Reminder: Find unit values and upper/lower division information on the <u>Global Institutions Guide</u> for Unit Equivalencies & Upper Division Status.
 - Please note that some international institutions do not publicly disclose curriculum
 information, and only students can directly request this information. Additionally, some
 international institutions offer a 3- year university degree, so some 2nd year courses require
 additional departmental review for upper division approval. It is the student's responsibility
 to contact the host institution or partner program to provide their advisors with proof of the
 year the course is offered.

This is an example of how to fill out Section 2.

2. Major and/or Minor Courses

- All major/minor courses to be taken abroad must be listed below, along with your advisor's initials. Please refer to this sheet for Global Institutions Guide for Unit Equivalencies & Upper Division Status.
- IS3D and Undeclared students please see Page 4 for more information.
- The appropriate academic advisor will need to initial (typed initial is fine) the approved major/minor courses listed in this page as well as sign in the appropriate space on Page 4.
- If the AAF is submitted with a course in which the "Advisor Initials" column has no initials, they will proceed to count as General Elective courses (units toward graduation that do not satisfy major, minor, or Foundations/Explorations requirements).

International Course Title (include course number if available):	U.S. Semester Unit Value:	Specify Major / Minor Requirement Fulfilled: (Must be filled out by an Advisor)	Advisor Initials: (*Required)
Economia Politica	3	Major elective	JH
International Economy-Economia Internacional	3	Major elective	JH
Sistemas Politicos y Econ de Asia	3	Econ 321	JH

Language Courses

Depending on your academic requirements, it is possible for language courses taken abroad to be counted as major credit, minor credit, General Education (GE) Foundations and Explorations, or General Elective courses. Language courses should be listed in the relevant section of the Academic Approval Form according to the type of academic requirement being fulfilled (e.g. General Education, major/minor requirements, General Electives).



Considerations for taking language courses abroad as a non-language major/minor:

- **Course level:** If language courses are taken while studying abroad, the language course must be above the highest level previously completed in college in order to earn SDSU credit.
- **Taking your first-ever course in a language:** Approval signature is not necessary if you have never taken a college course in that language.
 - General Education: Some lower division language courses are already pre-approved for General Education Foundations (Humanities) and can be found on the General Education Study Abroad website. Pre-approved language courses must be listed in Part C, Section 1 of your AAF if you want the language course to count as the pre-approved General Education requirement. If it has not yet been pre-approved, you will need to submit it through the International General Education Course Proposal form to see if it will count.
 - General Electives: If not approved as General Education or major/minor credit, language courses will count as general elective credit.
- Continuing with a language you have already studied: If you have previously completed a
 college course in the same language you are taking abroad, see the appropriate language
 department at SDSU for assessment and approval of the language course(s) you intend to take
 abroad. They will include their signature on your AAF to approve these courses.

4. Signatures

Types of ACCEPTABLE Signatures on the AAF

- A. "Wet" signatures: print out your AAF form, signatures are signed with a pen.
- B. <u>"Digital" custom signatures:</u> ("insert signature image" or "draw") through Adobe Reader/Acrobat



Please see how to insert Adobe "Custom" Signatures Instructions

Types of **UNACCEPTABLE** Signatures on the AAF

A. Please **DO NOT** use the "**typed cursive-font signatures**" that are available through the "Type" option in Adobe Reader or Acrobat. These types of signatures can be created by anyone and cannot be verified. See example below.





When to receive sign the AAF

Academic Advisors should type their initials, information about degree requirements, comments first before signing the AAF as it will lock the document so that it cannot be edited afterwards.

Major and/or Minor Courses Signatures from your Academic Advisors

You will need an academic advisor signature from each major or minor department for which you are planning to satisfy a requirement abroad. For example, if you are planning on taking both major and minor courses, you will need initials and signatures from both departments.

Note: General Education Foundations and Explorations courses do not require a signature.

- Initials and signatures from advisors will be needed for major course approvals in <u>Section 2</u> and <u>Section 3</u> on your AAF.
- After you receive all of your advisor signatures, then sign the bottom of Page 1.

This is an example of how to fill out Section 3.

3. SDSU Advisor Signatures				
*	After you have carefully reviewed the <u>Academic Approval Form Webpage</u> and resources, please see academic advisors in the areas you are planning on taking course work abroad. Have all appropriate academic advisors initial the specific courses listed in the previous page as well as sign in the appropriate space provided below.			
*	Advisor Signatures below must be "wet" OR "custom" digital signatures (cannot use typed, cursive-fonts).			
Major Requirement Notes:				
Major Advisor Signature (required if taking major courses from):				
Advisor I	Print Name: Joyce Hepner Department: Economics			
Advisor S	Signature: Date 11/05/2024			
	0			

IS3D and Undeclared Majors

• If you are in the Interdisciplinary Studies in Three Departments (IS3D) major or the Undeclared major, your advisor for that major will need to sign in the following special section:

Interdisciplinary Studies (IS3D) majors and Undeclared students ONLY:			
A signature from the IS3D advisor or Undeclared advisor must approve your plan for coursework abroad by signing below.			
IS3D students: You must also obtain course approvals from any/all of the 3 departments in your Master Plan for which you will fulfill requirements abroad and obtain their signatures in the "Major and/or Minor Courses" section of this form (Part C.2).			
IS3D or Undeclared Advisor Print Name:	Department:		
IS3D or Undeclared Advisor Signature:	Date:		

International Education Requirements (IER)

If you are in a major or minor with an IER and your credit-bearing experience abroad will satisfy
that requirement, your advisor from that department must complete and sign the following special
section:



International Experience Requirement (IER) Notes: This program will satisfy major international experience requirement.			
International Experience Requirement (if required by your major and/or minor) By signing below, I confirm that this program will satisfy the SDSU International Experience requirement.			
Advisor Print Name: Joyce Hepner	Department: Economics		
Advisor Signature:	Date 11/05/2024		

5. AAF Final Submission

Once you have completed your AAF, verify that you have completed the document properly using the following checklist: <u>AAF Submission Checklist Sheet</u>

• If there is an error on your AAF, it will NOT be processed and you will need to correct the error and resubmit the document.

When you have checked to see that it is properly completed, submit it to the SDSU Global Education Office by email to: GlobalEducationOffice@sdsu.edu.

- Only PDF format will be accepted. JPG or other photo format of your AAF will not be accepted.
- A copy will be uploaded to your Global Education Portal (Aztecs Abroad) "documents" section for your records.

Reminders:

- It is your responsibility to review the AAF Checklist procedures before you submit your AAF.
- Failure to complete and submit the AAF will impact the transfer of credit from your program abroad and will delay fulfillment of your degree requirements at SDSU.



6. Additional Resources

FAQs: The AAF Process

What happens if I register for classes that are *not* listed on my AAF (after I have already submitted my AAF or after I am already abroad)?

- If the new classes are listed in the categories below, they have been pre-approved by your department. Notify your SDSU major or minor advisor of the change, in case there are any implications for your future course registration at SDSU. Your academic advisor may need to submit a RAAR (Request for Adjustment of Academic Requirement) to make it count. You can find this out once your degree evaluation has been updated after your study abroad transcript has been evaluated. See your advisor if pre-approved courses are not counting:
 - General Education (Foundations and Explorations)
 - o Major / Minor Courses Abroad
- If the new classes **are not** listed as pre-approved, you will need to obtain approval from your SDSU major or minor advisors via email. This can be done while you are still abroad.
 - Send the advisor the course descriptions/syllabi for the new courses you plan to take, which requirements you think they will satisfy, how many SDSU units the course(s) will count for, and whether they are lower or upper division.
 - Reminder: Find this information on the Global Institutions Guide for Unit Equivalencies & Upper Division Status
 - o Keep copies of all your email correspondence with your advisor.
 - When you return from your program, contact your major advisor to submit a RAAR to make these courses count for your major/minor.

How should I complete the AAF if my courses abroad haven't been announced yet and won't be available until I arrive abroad and complete my registration?

 We recommend using previous course catalogs to guide your selection. It is important to list your best guess of what you will take abroad in order to demonstrate the intent to maintain your full-time student status and earn transferable credit while abroad. If you do not ultimately register for the courses you listed on your AAF, see the instructions in the previous question.

Can I take classes abroad that will not count towards any specific degree requirement?

Yes, these are called General Elective units. These units will go towards your minimum overall
units required to graduate with your degree from SDSU. You will still need to include these
general electives on your AAF, as explained within the "Types of Courses" section of this AAF
Instructions document.

What is "Residence Credit"? Does it have anything to do with my California residency?

 Residence credit is not the same as CA Residency. In order to get a bachelor's degree from SDSU, students have to take a certain amount of units at SDSU.



- Exchange programs come back to SDSU as Residence Credit because you are paying tuition to SDSU. Programs whose tuition is not paid to SDSU (e.g. ISEP Direct, Direct Enroll, Partner Programs) will not come back to SDSU as Residence Credit. It is your responsibility to understand the Residence Credit requirements for your degree before switching from an exchange program to a non-exchange program!
- GE Explorations and some major/minor courses have limitations related to Residence Credit. See
 the chart above in the <u>"General Education (GE) Foundations and Explorations" section</u> for
 additional guidance.
 - Additional information is in the <u>SDSU University Catalog</u>

I'm a graduate student and it looks like this form is just for undergraduates. How can I get pre-approval for my courses abroad?

• Graduate students have a separate process. Please visit this <u>Graduate Student Programs</u> page to get instructions specific to graduate students.

I'm going on a non-SDSU program and I completed the Travel Registry for my program, but I didn't see the Academic Approval Form. How can I get it?

- Non-SDSU Program participants cannot get credit pre-approved, so they will not complete the AAF.
- Instead, you will need to save all syllabi and coursework you complete while abroad and submit it
 to your academic advisor for evaluation when you return. There is no guarantee that your
 coursework will be approved to satisfy SDSU requirements. If approved, your academic
 advisor will initiate a Request for Adjustment of Academic Requirement (RAAR) so that your
 degree evaluation can be updated once SDSU has received your study abroad transcripts.

FAQs: Grades Abroad & Transcripts

How does the AAF get processed with my official transcripts from my host institution?

- After you submit the completed AAF to the Global Education Office by the posted deadline, the
 Global Education Office will verify the form is filled out and will provide a copy to the SDSU
 Registrar's Office to include in your record. All academic approvals are pending until SDSU
 receives the sealed official transcript or official e-transcript issued by the institution granting credit
 for your coursework abroad.
- After the student concludes their study abroad program, the School of Record/Study Abroad
 Program will send official transcripts to SDSU on the student's behalf. The SDSU Registrar's
 Office will evaluate the transcript and post the credit to the student's academic record and degree
 evaluation. The evaluation will include reviewing the AAF and assigning credit towards major
 and/or minor requirements as indicated on the AAF.



How will my grades transfer back to SDSU?

- For information about how your coursework abroad will count in your GPA, refer to the <u>Global Institutions Guide for Unit Equivalencies & Upper Division Status</u>. This depends on whether your transcript is from an International Institution, a U.S. Accredited institution, or CSU-IP.
 - o **International Institutions** transcripts: You will receive Credit (CR) for the courses you passed abroad. Grades of CR (credit) are not calculated into your cumulative GPA.
 - However, the original letter grade you earned remains on the international institution's transcript.
 - If you apply for postgraduate programs (graduate, law, medical, fellowships), the graduate school may include your international grades into your cumulative GPA for their admission criteria. SDSU does not determine admission criteria for graduate programs at other institutions. Please contact that school for more information.
 - Only the units that you have passed will be credited towards your degree evaluation. Courses you have not passed will not be counted
 - U.S. Accredited Institutions transcripts: Even though you may be studying abroad at a
 foreign university, your transcript may be from an accredited U.S. institution. To find out,
 check the school of record for your program on the Global Institutions Guide for Unit
 Equivalencies & Upper Division Status.
 - All grades will be calculated into your cumulative GPA, including failing grades.
 - Please note: U.S. transcripts are issued for John Cabot University, Universidad de las Américas Puebla (UDLAP), Semester at Sea, and for all SIT Study Abroad programs. Some API programs issue credit through Marist College.
 - Courses taken during study abroad with a transcript from another U.S.
 Accredited Institutions are not eligible for course forgiveness.
 - CSU-IP transcripts: Grades earned on a CSU-IP program will be calculated into your SDSU GPA as well as your cumulative GPA.
 - All grades will be calculated into your cumulative GPA, including failing grades.
 - Courses taken during study abroad with CSU-IP are not eligible for course forgiveness.

What is considered a passing grade?

• If you pass your class according to your host institution's standards, then SDSU will award the units.

What happens if I don't pass my classes?

- Please note that failing classes may impact your Satisfactory Academic Progress for financial aid purposes and may have negative consequences for financial aid awards.
- For information about how failing grades will be reflected on your study abroad transcript and your SDSU record, see information provided above regarding how grades transfer back to SDSU.



Do I need to request my transcripts from credit earned abroad to be sent to SDSU?

- International Internships: For SDSU-approved internships abroad, processes vary. Students who wish to earn credit for their internship abroad via SDSU's approved provider must request a transcript by following steps specified by the partner.
- **Study Abroad**: For SDSU-approved study abroad programs you do not need to take any action to have your transcripts sent to SDSU. This process has already been built into your study abroad experience. Several programs do require an additional step, however. Review the information below and connect with your GEO Advisor for additional information:
 - SDSU Exchange programs in Australia and New Zealand: Students will need to have their transcripts sent to SDSU via MyEquals, and will initiate this process towards the end of their semester abroad.
 - SDSU Exchange participants at WU Vienna (Austria) and University of Mannheim (Germany):
 - Students will receive online access to their transcripts through a secure portal.
 - It is each student's responsibility to submit the official transcripts to <u>TranscriptsForSDSU@sdsu.edu</u>. The SDSU Registrar's Office will authenticate and verify them.
 - SDSU Exchange students attending specific universities in the United Kingdom will need to do the following:
 - University of Hertfordshire: Students will be mailed a physical transcript; no other transcript format will be offered. Once you receive your transcript, it is your responsibility to forward your transcript to the SDSU's Registrar's Office to ensure you receive credit for the courses you took abroad. All transcripts should be sent to TranscriptsForSDSU@sdsu.edu
 - University of Leicester: You must inform the University of Leicester to include <u>transcripsforsdsu@sdsu.edu</u> as a recipient of your official transcript at the end of your exchange term abroad.
 - SDSU Exchange programs at BI Norwegian Business School in Norway: Students will
 receive online access to their transcripts through a secure portal. It is each student's
 responsibility to individually authorize access for the SDSU Registrar's Office.

How can I get a copy of my study abroad transcripts for a graduate school application?

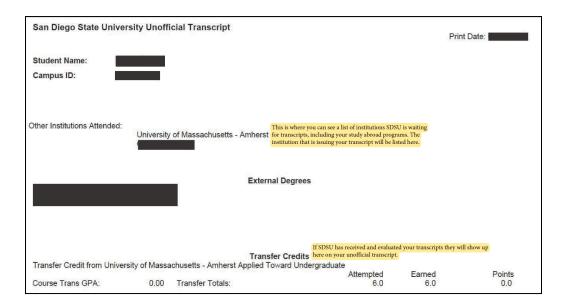
- Transcripts sent to SDSU from other schools or colleges become the property of SDSU and will
 not be released or copied. You will need to contact your study abroad program's school of record
 to order official transcripts to be sent to your graduate schools.
 - Graduate school applications sometimes allow unofficial transcripts for the initial application and then ask for official transcripts if you have been accepted. It is a good idea to keep a copy of your unofficial transcript for your records. You should receive this from your host university or have access to their portal.

How long does it take for my transcripts to be credited towards my degree evaluation?

- From the program end date it takes 3-5 months for SDSU to receive your transcript and credit the courses towards your degree evaluation.
- To check if SDSU has received your transcripts, go to my.SDSU to check your unofficial transcript and see if credit has been awarded.



This is an example of where you will check for credit on your unofficial transcript in my.SDSU.



- If it has been more than 90 days since the last day of your program date and you still don't see the units on your unofficial transcript, then email your GEO Advisor to check on this process. Don't forget to include your RedID.
- If you are taking courses abroad that are prerequisites for your next semester at SDSU, your degree evaluation may not be updated by the time the semester starts. If this is the case, reach out to your SDSU major advisor and your SDSU professors early to let them know you are taking the prerequisite course abroad and your degree evaluation may not be updated. See if they will accept an unofficial transcript or a letter from the professor from your study abroad course showing that you have passed the course. Taking this step may prevent you from automatically being dropped from a course at SDSU.