Berkeley STUDY ABROAD

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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 in an Independent Study Abroad program, you will be responsible for selecting an appropriate program, clearing it through the Central Evaluation Unit, 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.

Financial Aid Update: Effective Summer 2017, most financial aid, including federal, state, UC and Berkeley scholarships and grants, cannot be used by students studying on independent programs. Students who receive scholarships or grants from outside organizations should contact those organizations to confirm that the awards may still be used.

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
- Diversity Abroad www.diversityabroad.com
- GO Overseas www.gooverseas.com
- GoAbroad.com www.goabroad.com
- IIE Passport www.iiepassport.org
- National Registration Center for Study Abroad www.nrcsa.com
- StudyAbroad.com www.studyabroad.com

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

- **American Institute for Foreign Study**
  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**
  CEA will provide a travel grant of $2000 to each Berkeley student enrolling in a year program, $1000 for a semester program, and $500 for a short-term or summer program.

- **DIS – Study Abroad in Scandinavia**
  Automatic fee reduction of $4,400 for each Berkeley student enrolling in an academic semester program and $500 - $1,500 for a summer program.

- **IES Abroad**
  IES will provide a grant of $1,000 to each Berkeley student who enrolls in a semester program and submits a financial aid application by the IES deadline.

- **IFSA**
  Automatic fee reduction of $2000 for any Berkeley student enrolling in a semester or academic year IFSA program.

- **CIEE**
  CIEE offers grants of up to $2,500 plus a $1,500 airfare credit to Gilman Scholarship applicants (must be Pell Grant eligible). Other scholarships available include the GAIN Travel Grant, Gilman Go Global Grant, Frederick Douglass Global Fellowship and the Frederick Douglass Global Scholars Grant.

Step 2: Check transfer-credit (unit credit) of coursework from abroad.
To confirm that units for your coursework from abroad will be accepted as transfer credit by UC Berkeley, you will need to have your program reviewed by the Central Evaluation Unit (CEU). To have your program reviewed, please complete the form linked here, which will request the following program details:

- Program Provider
- Program Name
- Host Institution (if applicable)
- Institution from which your transcript will be provided
- Dates of Program
- Descriptions of Proposed Courses (links or PDF descriptions, preferably including syllabi if available)

If you would like to use any courses from abroad for major, minor, or breadth requirements, you will need to contact your Major and/or College Adviser for information regarding their approval process (see step 5 below). Transfer credit (unit credit) is determined by CEU, while “content-credit” (using coursework from abroad to satisfy departmental/college requirements) is determined by your department or college. No grades from independent study abroad will appear on the Berkeley transcript, nor will such grades factor into the UC GPA. Transfer credit will appear on the CalCentral Transfer Credit Report.

Step 3: (FINANCIAL AID STUDENTS) Determine if your financial aid (loans, scholarships, grants) can be used for your study abroad program. Most financial aid, including federal, state, UC and Berkeley scholarships and grants, cannot be used by students studying on independent programs. If you receive scholarships or grants from outside organizations, please contact those organizations to confirm that your awards may still be used. If you or your parents have taken any student loans during your undergraduate career, be sure to submit the **In-School Loan Deferment** form to your Servicer (also known as "Lender" or "Loan Servicer") -- otherwise, your loans will become due and payable. This form is necessary for you to retain your status as an enrolled student while studying abroad. Here is an overview of how the In-School Loan Deferment works:

- Servicer (also known as "Lender" or "Loan Servicer") needs "proof of enrollment" which must come from the program in which you will be enrolled. Obtain the In-School Loan Deferment form from your Servicer. Program provider sends the completed form back to the Servicer.
- It does not matter whether UC Berkeley accepts the coursework as transfer-credit. The program provider is the entity that must provide proof of enrollment.

If you are a **Haas** student accepted to a study abroad program, learn about how to apply for the $7,500 Thomas Tusher Scholarship from Haas. Students may reach out to Dionne Monique Daniels <dmdaniels@berkeley.edu> with any questions.

If you are a **Pell Grant recipient and a U.S. citizen**, you are encouraged to apply for the Gilman International Scholarship. Visit https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/ and email Michelle Ayazi mayazi@berkeley.edu for more information.

Step 4: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS discuss with an advisor at the Berkeley International Office how Independent Study Abroad will affect your F-1 or J-1 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 the removal of Adviser Holds in CalCentral for the term after your program (if returning to Berkeley). Students studying abroad during their last term before graduation must obtain a signature from their College Adviser (on page 8 of this guide) before submitting the Planned Leave of Absence Form.

For L&S students seeking approval of independent study abroad courses to be used for breadth requirements, see instructions and Google form for Breadth and Essential Skills Transfer Review at https://lsadvising.berkeley.edu/progress-planning/transfer-credit/other-higher-education-institution.

Note: all syllabi must be dated within a year of the term. Students should expect a decision within 4 weeks of submission.

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

Step 7: Have program forms signed by the appropriate Berkeley office. Many study abroad providers require signatures from UC Berkeley campus staff as part of the application process. Send any forms asking for a signature from a Berkeley staff person to independent@berkeley.edu.

Please make sure to include the form as an attachment or provide a link to the document, as well as the deadline to submit the form(s). Requests for release of disciplinary records may be sent to Cal Student Central, for a Letter of Good Standing (a Dean's Certification). When you have obtained the Letter of Good Standing, email a scanned copy of it to independent@berkeley.edu so that the Berkeley Study Abroad office can use it to answer disciplinary questions as needed.

Step 8: Submit Planned Leave of Absence Form (CalNet authentication required).

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 CalCentral 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 CalCentral 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 9: Address the following before departure:

- ☐ **Student Health Insurance Plan (SHIP)**
  Students who study abroad independently are not eligible to use SHIP Insurance for their semester abroad. If you typically use SHIP, you will need to make sure that you are covered by an Affordable Care Act compliant insurance policy while you are away. If this applies to you, please contact your program provider to see what insurance coverage is offered through your program. If you need further coverage, please review the Tang Center's Gap Coverage page. Make sure there are no gaps in

coverage between the end of your current SHIP coverage, your study abroad insurance coverage, and the start of your SHIP coverage when you return to Berkeley.

- □ **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. Handshake, counseling appointments) during your study abroad term by completing a Degree Verification Registration process. When prompted for department//college advisor information, enter:

  Full Name: Ted Sengpaseuth
  Department/College: Study Abroad
  Email: independent@berkeley.edu

  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 Handshake or Letter Service account it should already be tied to your CCID.

During Your Program

Step 10: At the beginning of their program, all independent study abroad students who pursue Planned Leave of Absence should register their study abroad with the UC Travel system, UC Away. If an emergency occurs in your travel destination, this is how your campus Risk Management office will know you are there. Travel registration also enrolls you to receive travel alerts from UC's security provider, Crisis24.

Step 11: Register for courses through CalCentral for the term following your program (if you will be returning to Berkeley).

Step 12: Check your Berkeley email account regularly for important updates.

Step 13: Order official transcripts from the host institution at the conclusion of your program to be mailed directly to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Alternatively, you may wish to request an official copy of your transcript to be issued directly to you in a sealed envelope, which you can submit to Cal Student Central upon your return. This option will allow you to confirm receipt by Admissions of your transcript and to track the process. If you choose this option, do not open the envelope.

Upon Your Return to Berkeley

Step 14: Meet with your department adviser and be prepared to show course syllabi, papers, exams and other graded work. Transfer credit must be processed by Admissions before final credit can be awarded by your College and/or Department.

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, be sure to follow the instructions listed in step 2 above.

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.

Following the instructions in step 2, you should submit syllabi or course descriptions 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, contact Berkeley Study Abroad. 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:

UC Berkeley Admissions Transcripts
16 Sproul Hall, MC 0608
Berkeley, CA. 94720

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.

Your transcript may also be submitted electronically. If the institution/transcript vendor provides a pre-populated institution list, selecting “UC Berkeley Undergrad” or “UC Berkeley Undergrad Admissions” will send the transcript to the correct location. Otherwise, if the institution/transcript vendor requests an email to send the transcript, use busops@berkeley.edu. Berkeley does not accept transcripts sent via email attachment.

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, the Central Evaluation Unit 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 the Central Evaluations Unit. 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.

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Sample Planned Leave of Absence Form for Independent Study Abroad

Submit this form (CalNet authentication required) by **April 15** for fall semester programs or by **October 15** for spring semester programs. **The Fall 2024 deadline has been extended to **May 15, 2024.***

Student Information	
Name:	Student ID:
Semester and year that you intend to graduate:	Email: @berkeley.edu

Independent Study Abroad Plans	
Country:	Name of Institution Abroad:
Program Type: ___Direct Enroll ___Program Provider Provider Name:	Semester Abroad Leave Request: _Fall Semester 20____ _Spring Semester 20____
Program Start Date:	Program End Date:
Name of Program Adviser/Contact at Institution Abroad:	
Email for Program Adviser/Contact at Institution Abroad:	

College/School and Major/Minor Department Information		
Class standing while abroad: ☐Freshman ☐Sophomore ☐Junior ☐Senior		
Major 1:	Are you declared? ☐Yes ☐No	If no, when will you declare?
Major 2:	Are you declared? ☐Yes ☐No	If no, when will you declare?
Minor:	Are you declared? ☐Yes ☐No	If no, when will you declare?

Academic Work
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):

□ I have discussed my academic plans for study abroad with my College and Departmental Advisers.

Check transfer-credit (unit credit) of coursework from abroad (step 2 on instruction sheet)

Completed on:____/____/____

Financial Aid

I am receiving financial aid (grants, scholarships, and/or loans) during the current academic year:

☐Yes ☐No (If yes, review and complete the next three checkboxes)

- □ I have confirmed that I am eligible to use the following types of aid for my study abroad program:
- □ I have made a personal budget based on program cost and aid.
- □ I have obtained and completed 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.

Berkeley International Office Signature (required for F-1 & J-1 students, step 4)

Signature:

Notes (Optional):

College Adviser Signature (required if you are a graduating senior)

Signature:

Notes (Optional):

Check the boxes below to confirm the following:

- □ I have been accepted into my program abroad.
- □ I will check my Berkeley email account for important updates while abroad.
- □ It is my responsibility to order an official transcript from my host school at the conclusion of the program to be mailed to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions at UC Berkeley, or to me to hand deliver to Cal Student Central.
- □ I will save all course documents, such as syllabi, papers, notes, exams, and other graded to be shared with my department.
- □ I understand that federal, state, UC, and Berkeley financial aid cannot be used for independent study abroad programs.
- □ I agree to be billed $70.00 to my Cal Central account for the Planned Leave of Absence Fee.

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.

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.

Signature _____Date _____