

# Study Abroad

A distinctive feature of SUA's academic program is the requirement for all students to spend one semester of their junior year abroad. This semester must be spent in a country where the primary language aligns with the student's language studies at SUA. These programs aim to deepen a student's foreign language skills through complete immersion in the everyday life of another culture.

Participating in study abroad helps students further develop the qualities necessary to be global citizens. Upon returning to campus, they bring back a network of new friends and associates, fostering deep, potentially lifelong relationships. Additionally, the experience broadens students' intellectual understanding of the world's diversity.

Please note, SUA is not liable for any potential adverse effects on a student's U.S. immigration status that may arise from participating in the Study Abroad requirement.

## Eligibility for Study Abroad

**Students must fulfill the following criteria for participation in study abroad**

- No students on academic probation are permitted to embark on study abroad programs.
- Incomplete Grades: Default grades will be factored into the student's semester GPA for study abroad eligibility. A student whose default grade results in a term or cumulative GPA below 2.0 will be deemed ineligible for study abroad the following semester.
- Participation in study abroad is typically reserved for junior-year students. However, students can petition for eligibility to study abroad during a different academic year. Students are not permitted to participate in study abroad during their final 8th semester (usually the Spring term) due to the priority placed on Capstone.
- Before departing for their semester abroad, students must have completed the 202-level or higher in their target language on campus.
- While at SUA, students are allowed to study multiple languages, provided they achieve the 202-level proficiency or higher in the target language for their study abroad destination before commencing study in another language.
- Language courses necessary for study abroad eligibility cannot be taken on a Pass/No Pass basis. • Study abroad target language courses at the 100/200-level must be taken for a grade.
- Students starting at the 300-level must take their initial courses for a grade.
- Students are mandated to undergo Language Proficiency Tests (STAMP Test) administered by the Language and Culture Program (LCP) both before and after study abroad.
- Official enrollment is required in the semester preceding a semester of study abroad.
- Attendance at all orientations organized by the Office of Study Abroad and International Internships (SAII Office) is mandatory, along with submission of all necessary documents, prior to departure for study abroad.

## Requirements and Alternatives

At SUA, the standard policy is for students to participate in study abroad programs during their third year. However, exceptions to this policy are considered under specific circumstances: (1) if a student does not meet the necessary prerequisites for study abroad, including academic standing and adequate language preparation, or (2) if the intended study abroad program in the target language destination country/countries is unavailable due to health, safety, legal, or political issues. In these scenarios, students are required to complete a minimum of 12 upper-division units in their study abroad target language at SUA to fulfill the study abroad requirement.

Additionally, certain students may encounter travel restrictions to specific countries based on their nationality and bilateral national relations. If a student finds they are unable to study abroad in their chosen language once the application period commences, they have two options: 1) Pursue study abroad in another language offered at SUA, selecting a program that accepts beginning language learners if they are at a novice level, or 2) Complete an additional 12 upper-division units in their chosen language of study at SUA. It is crucial to note that the availability of study abroad programs can change in response to evolving global events and diplomatic relations.

## Study Abroad Alternative Procedure

Students who meet the specific circumstances outlined in the Requirements and Alternatives policy above may choose an alternative to the study abroad requirement. This option is available to students who do not meet the necessary prerequisites for study abroad, encounter travel restrictions to specific countries based on their nationality, or if their intended study abroad program is unavailable due to health, safety, legal, or political issues. Students who are approved for the study abroad alternative will have to satisfy the study abroad graduation requirement with four upper-level courses in their study language.

To request the study abroad alternative, affected students must submit a formal petition via email to the Director of the Study Abroad and International Internships (SAII) Office. In the petition, students should clearly outline their reasons for requesting the study abroad alternative and provide any supporting documentation, if applicable.

Upon receipt of the petition, the Director of the SAII Office will review the request and consult with the Study Abroad Committee and the Dean of Faculty to determine eligibility for the study abroad alternative requirement. The decision will be communicated to the student in a timely manner.

It is important to note that being approved for the study abroad alternative may have implications for academic planning and graduation requirements. Students are encouraged to carefully consider their options and consult with their academic advisors before submitting a petition for opting out of study abroad.

For further guidance or assistance with the study abroad alternative procedure, students may contact the SAII Office.

## STAMP Test Administration

SUA students are required to take the STAMP Test for Language Proficiency, administered by the Language and Culture Program (LCP), prior to and following their Study Abroad term, in line with institutional assessment protocols.

It is imperative to note that students must approach the test with the necessary seriousness and adhere strictly to the provided guidelines. Failure to comply will result in the requirement to retake the test at the student's expense.

## Academic Load Abroad

### Study Abroad Credit Requirements

Students must earn a minimum of 12 credits and a maximum of 16 credits in their target language per semester for study abroad. The course load is determined by the student in consultation with the Director of the SAII Office. The academic suitability of a specific program is assessed by a faculty committee in collaboration with the SAII Office.

### Enrollment in Courses

Students participating in study abroad programs must select courses based on results from both the Placement Test taken on-site and the Pre-Study Abroad STAMP Test taken at SUA. They must enroll in language courses and/or content courses tailored for international students. Internships or service-learning courses may be enrolled if pre-approved by SUA.

### Eligibility for Local University Courses

To take regular courses at local universities with native-speaking students that meet SUA's study abroad requirements, students must achieve scores of 5 (Intermediate Mid) or higher in all four skill categories on the mandatory Pre-Study STAMP Test. Students with a score of 4 (Intermediate Low) in no more than one skill category may petition the Study Abroad Committee for special consideration. Final decisions on such petitions are made by a member of the Study Abroad Committee in the target language and the Director of the Language and Culture Program (LCP).

### Course Selection Process

Choosing courses for study abroad involves considering multiple factors:

1. Pre-Study Abroad STAMP Test scores at SUA
2. On-site placement test scores and expert opinions (from Resident Directors and faculty members)

### 3. Requirements of the specific study abroad program

Students typically fulfill the minimum requirement of 12 credits in the target language by taking language or content courses designed for international students.

#### No Credit Transfer

While students are encouraged to explore various courses offered by the host institution or program, not all courses are eligible for credit transfer. Credits are awarded for language and culture studies related to the target language of the program. Courses outside this scope, including elective or required courses in non-language/cultural areas, skill-based workshops, or those taught in languages other than the target language, are not eligible for credit transfer.

Credits for internships or service-learning courses are granted only if pre-approved by SUA. Students may need to submit a course syllabus to the SAIL Office for final approval for courses potentially eligible for credit transfer.

## Approval Process for Courses Abroad

Before departing for their study abroad program, students are required to schedule a consultation with a member of the Study Abroad Committee who teaches their target language. This consultation ensures that students select courses aligned with their interests, SUA's academic standards, and the educational objectives of the host university specific to their study abroad site.

#### Pre-approval Process

Before the course consultation, students must complete the "Approval Form for Courses Abroad." This form outlines their intended course selection for the semester abroad, including possible alternatives. To ensure compliance with SUA's Academic Guidelines, particularly regarding credit transfer from abroad, students must follow these steps:

1. List all courses intended to be taken during the semester abroad, including those not for credit transfer.
2. Provide course names in English, translating if necessary.
3. Specify which course(s) will be partially transferred back to SUA to stay within the maximum of 16 credits.
4. Indicate whether each course is a Pre-Semester Course, a Course for International Students, or a Regular University Course with local students.
5. Specify whether each course will be taken on a Graded or Pass/Non-Pass basis. Note that Core 1 is designed as Pass/Non-Pass, while Core 2 is graded.
6. Include Pre-Study Abroad STAMP Test Scores.
7. List all courses in the "Not for Transfer for SUA credit" section, if applicable.

After completing the form, students must send it to the Director of the SAIL Office for approval. They should retain a copy of the form and the approval email from the Director of the SAIL Office for their records.

#### Final Approval Process

Students should be aware that course selections made before departure may be preliminary, as actual course offerings on-site could differ from those listed by Provider Programs. If students make changes to their proposed schedule on-site, they must notify the Director of the SAIL Office within the first 14 days of semester classes (or the first 3 days of pre-semester classes, if applicable) by sending an updated PDF form of their course selection. Failure to do so may impact credit transferability. The final course selection must be approved by the Director of the SAIL Office and/or Study Abroad Committee.

If students fail to notify course changes within the specified timeframe, their pre-approved courses will remain the final selection.

#### 16 Credits Limit and Declaration

Credit distribution varies by program, and students may need to declare which courses to transfer back to SUA to meet credit requirements. For instance, if a student takes four five-credit courses, they must declare within the first 14 days of semester classes which three courses will be fully transferred (15 credits) and which will not (5 credits). Failure to declare within this timeframe grants the Director of the SAIL Office authority to determine the transfer status of courses on the student's behalf.

#### Add/Drop Class Policy

After arriving at the host institution, students may need to add or drop courses due to placement test scores or changes in offerings. In such cases, students must email the Director of the SAIL Office within the first 14 days of semester classes (or the first 3 days of pre-semester classes) to seek approval for their final course selection. Failure to do so will result in maintaining the pre-approved course(s).

Students may not drop a course if doing so results in a less-than-full course load, unless under extenuating circumstances. In such cases, students must notify the Director of the SAIL Office, who will consult with the Dean of Faculty.

## Transferred Grades from Abroad

The grading system outlined in the SUA Undergraduate Catalog applies universally to all study abroad programs.

### 12-16 Transfer Credits

Study abroad courses, ranging from a minimum of 12 to a maximum of 16 credits in the target language, contribute to the student's GPA regardless of whether they pass or fail. For credit transfer eligibility, students must obtain pre-approval for all courses from the Director of the Language and Culture Program and the Director of the SAIL Office either before commencing study abroad or within the first 14 days of semester classes (the first 3 days of pre-semester classes). No transfer credit will be granted for courses without prior approval, even if successfully completed.

No credit will be awarded for courses taken abroad if they are taught in English or any language other than the target language. Such courses will result in a grade of F or Non-Pass, potentially causing the student to fall short of the minimum 12-credit requirement if not taught in the target language.

Individual courses taken abroad cannot be directly applied to fulfill SUA graduation requirements. While credits earned during study abroad (ranging from 12 to 16) contribute to overall SUA credit, they do not fulfill specific coursework requirements for particular concentrations.

### Policies of Individual Programs

#### 1. Credit Requirements:

Each program sets its own minimum and maximum credit requirements. You must comply with both SUA's academic guidelines for Academic Load and the credit guidelines of your chosen study abroad program. For instance, some programs may require enrollment in up to 15 credits to meet their study abroad criteria.

#### 2. Grading Systems:

Study abroad programs follow the grading systems of their host universities and institutions. SUA respects these varied grading standards. Credit transfers to SUA will be based on official transcripts provided by the host programs.

Note: SUA's grading system does not include D+ or D- grades. Thus, grades of D+ or D- earned abroad will be recorded as a D at SUA.

#### 3. Instruction Hours and Credit Conversion:

Some host institutions abroad may have different standards for instructional hours required per academic credit, which may not align with U.S. norms. However, SUA does not convert these into U.S.-based units. We adhere to the credits as they appear on the final transcript from the host program or institution.

#### 4. Contact Hours and Credit Calculation:

In cases where programs specify contact hours without clear credit hour allocation, students must consult their on-site program directors to confirm these hours. This information is essential for accurately calculating the U.S. equivalent credits, based on the standard of 15 contact hours per credit.

### Courses Registered as "NOT for Soka Credit"

All courses undertaken during study abroad, regardless of their transferability status, will be recorded on the SUA official transcript. Only courses or units approved by the Study Abroad Committee will contribute towards degree requirements and GPA calculations. Any courses or units designated as "not for credit" on a student's Approval Form for Courses Abroad, or those lacking approval from the Study Abroad Committee, will be annotated as "No Credit" on the SUA official transcript.

### Pre-semester Course(s)

Certain programs may provide pre-semester course(s) mandatory for all participants. It's essential for students to understand that pre-semester courses will contribute to the required 12 credits and will be graded unless students declare otherwise within the initial 3 days of pre-semester classes.

Failure to communicate changes in course preferences, including grading options, to the Director of the SAIL Office within this timeframe will result in the pre-approved courses being finalized as the student's course selection.

### Graded or Pass/Non-Pass

The following statement outlines the updated policy for choosing between Graded and Pass/No Pass options for courses taken during your study abroad.

#### 1. Policy for Electing Pass/No Pass:

- **Standard Semester Courses:** Students must declare their intent to take courses as Pass/No Pass within the first 14 days of the semester.
- **Pre-Semester Courses:** For those enrolled in pre-semester courses, this declaration must be made within the first 3 days.
- **Failure to Notify:** If you do not inform the Director of the SAIL Office about your choice within these timeframes, your pre-approved courses will default to their original selection.

#### 2. Limitations and Eligibility:

- **Total Allowance:** You may elect to take a maximum of 4 courses as Pass/No Pass throughout your entire course of studies at SUA, including during study abroad.
- **Core Courses:** Please note, Core 1 is inherently a Pass/Non-Pass course, whereas Core 2 is graded.
- **Responsibility:** It is your responsibility to track the number of Pass/No Pass courses you have taken. Exceeding the limit will result in some Pass/No Pass courses being invalidated and reverted to graded status by SUA's discretion.

#### 3. Declaration Procedure:

- **Pre-Departure Declaration:** You must declare your Pass/No Pass choices before departing for study abroad, indicating your decision on the Approval Form for Courses Abroad.
- **Changes During Study Abroad:** If you change courses while abroad, you must re-submit your Pass/No Pass declaration via email within the first 14-day add/drop period of the semester (or within 3-day add/drop period for pre-semester courses). Retroactive declarations are not permitted.

#### 4. Consequences of Non-Communication:

- If you fail to communicate any changes in your Pass/No Pass status within the specified timeframe, we will assume no changes have been made from your initial declaration.

#### 5. Course Credit Conversion:

- Be aware of the conversion rates for Pass/No Pass Units based on course credits:

| Course Credit Equivalent | Pass/Non-Pass Unit |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| 1.00 - 4.49              | 1                  |
| 4.50 - 8.49              | 2                  |
| 8.50 - 12.49             | 3                  |

#### 6. Academic Risks:

- Failing to complete a minimum of 12 credits, such as receiving a D in a Pass/No Pass course, could result in academic probation. For example, taking all four courses as Pass/No Pass and ending with grades equivalent to 3 As and 1 D (3 Ps and 1 NP) may lead to probation.

### **Internships/Service-Learning**

SUA recognizes the value of internships and service-learning experiences during study abroad, offering students the chance to apply their language skills in practical settings. To ensure credit transfer, students must obtain pre-approval from the SUA Study Abroad Committee, ensuring that the internship or service-learning opportunity meets specific SUA criteria:

- Internships/service-learning must be graded.
- Students must utilize their "target" language throughout the activity, excluding English.
- The activity should include academic components such as reading/writing assignments, presentations, or class discussions.

For internships/service-learning, students can earn a maximum of 3 credits, with contact hours varying based on the program or host university. If students opt not to receive academic credit, they should list the course in the Not-for-Credit section of SUA's Approval Form for Courses Abroad. Credits for internships/service-learning will be awarded upon successful program completion and transcript review.

### **Failure to Complete Full Class Load**

Students risk academic standing issues if they fail to fulfill the minimum 12-credit requirement, either by insufficient course enrollment or by receiving failing grades or a D in a Pass/Non-Pass course. Consequences may include loss of scholarships or financial aid and delayed graduation. International students may jeopardize eligibility or legal status upon returning from abroad. Students falling short of 12 credits must enroll in language class(es) upon returning to SUA to compensate.

### **SUA & Original Transcripts**

Information accessed via SUA's People-Soft/Learn, including courses taken abroad, is provisional until official transcripts are received from the study abroad program. All registered courses, regardless of credit designation, appear on SUA's official transcripts. Additionally, courses and grades from the study abroad program or host institution are included on original transcripts provided abroad.

## **Post Study Abroad Preparations**

### **Accessing People-Soft/Learn During Study Abroad**

Information found in People-Soft/Learn during study abroad, including courses taken, is preliminary. SUA's receipt of official transcripts from study abroad programs finalizes academic status.

### **Registration for SUA Courses in the Following Spring**

Students abroad must register for SUA classes online. Access to People-Soft and soka.edu email is essential upon arrival at the host institution. Registrar's office communications, including registration details, are sent exclusively to soka.edu accounts. A hold on registration remains until students attend a mandatory Academic Advising appointment. Financial obligations must be settled before registration.

### **"Rush Transcript" from Study Abroad**

For students planning to take regular university courses with locals, obtaining study abroad transcripts promptly is crucial. Requesting "rush transcript" services from program providers before departure is recommended. Delays in transcript processing may impact scholarship eligibility and athletic participation in the following semester.

### **Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP)**

SAP is reviewed at the term's end after grades are posted. Study abroad returnees may experience grade posting delays, with courses initially marked as incomplete. These courses count as attempted credits with no earned credit until study abroad grades are received.

Incomplete study abroad courses do not affect SAP GPA calculations. Once study abroad grades and credits are received, they undergo the same SAP review as regular courses. If study abroad grades are not available at disbursement, students may receive a SAP warning.

For students on a SAP warning before study abroad, aid disbursement awaits grade posting. If a SAP suspension results from study abroad grades or delay, students have 20 business days to appeal after notification.

## Withdrawal and Return

### Course Withdrawal

Students may withdraw from a study abroad course between the 2nd and 8th week of a semester, maintaining enrollment in a minimum of 12 credits. Withdrawals do not affect GPA but require approval from the on-site program director and the SAIL Office. The "I" (incomplete) designation is not permitted for study abroad courses.

### Withdrawal from Study Abroad

Study abroad is mandatory for SUA graduation. Withdrawal necessitates written notification, reviewed by both SUA and the Program Provider. Subsequent submission of an SUA withdrawal form to the Registrar's Office is required. Re-registration at SUA is not permitted during the same semester as study abroad withdrawal. The earliest re-registration opportunity is the following semester. If withdrawal occurs before the study abroad start date, re-registration for the same semester may be possible before the add/drop period ends.

### Winter Block and Financial Aid Implications

Students considering spring term study abroad should be aware of financial aid implications related to Winter Block enrollment. If study abroad plans change after Winter Block enrollment or if the program is canceled post-Spring semester add/drop, financial aid adjustments may be necessary. Contact the Financial Aid Office for guidance on these implications.

### Conduct Policy: Dismissal from the Study Abroad Program

Students must adhere to host institution conduct standards. Dismissal may occur for improper behavior or failure to comply with local laws. Written notification of dismissal undergoes review by SUA and the Program Provider. Dismissed students cannot register at SUA during the original study abroad semester. Re-registration may occur in the subsequent semester, pending university policies.

### Policy on Returning Temporarily to SUA

Students should avoid returning to SUA during their study abroad program unless necessary. Absences must be communicated to the On-site Residential Director and SAIL Office. Accidents, severe illness, or family emergencies will be evaluated individually. Non-emergency absences may impact re-entry.

### Re-Entry

Upon return, students must complete an online program evaluation and the Post-Study Abroad STAMP Test within the timeframe specified. Students who take the STAMP test abroad and submit scores to the SAIL Office may waive the test at SUA.

### Housing for Study Abroad Students

Fall study abroad students may stay in university residence halls during the preceding summer, requiring summer housing purchase. Check-out before the fall session is mandatory. Spring study abroad students may reside in halls during the winter period, with a similar check-out requirement before the spring session begins.

### Finance for Study Abroad

Students are obligated to pay SUA for tuition and room/board fees regardless of the study abroad program or location they attend.

The cost of Study Abroad and International Internships has been integrated into SUA's tuition structure. SUA's comprehensive fees, encompassing tuition, room/board, and medical insurance, encompass study abroad program expenses such as tuition, room/board, SUA medical insurance, airfare, application fees, and visas. Students are accountable for expenses related to non-SUA medical insurance, postage, and all other personal and miscellaneous costs (refer to the table below for further details). Discrepancies in program fees will not impact SUA's overall fees, as students, whether enrolled in SUA-administered or approved provider programs, are considered SUA students and earn academic credits through SUA's oversight. To ensure parity in education quality abroad compared to SUA, the SAII Office and Study Abroad Committee convene annually to review all approved programs.

Note: Students residing off-campus must still remit SUA room and board charges during their study abroad semester.