

**Swarthmore College
Off-Campus Study Office**

SWARTHMORE OFF-CAMPUS STUDY PROGRAM

Introduction to Off-Campus Study
(Updated September 2021)

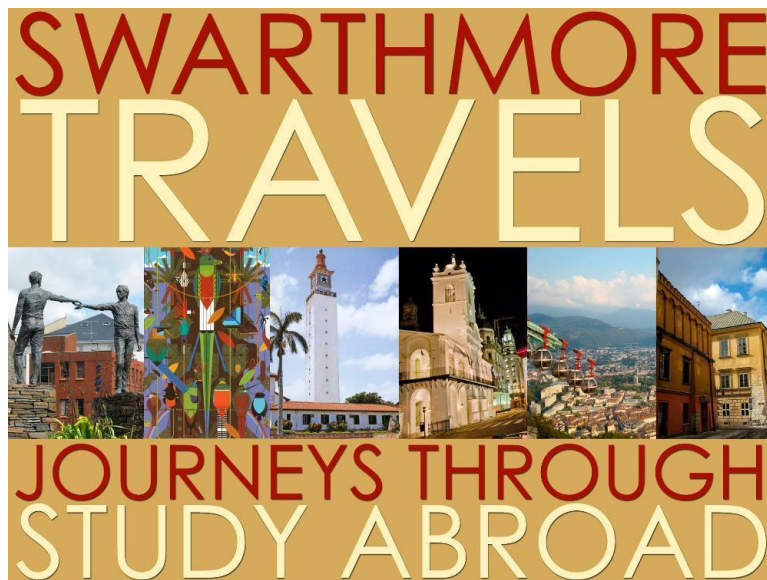
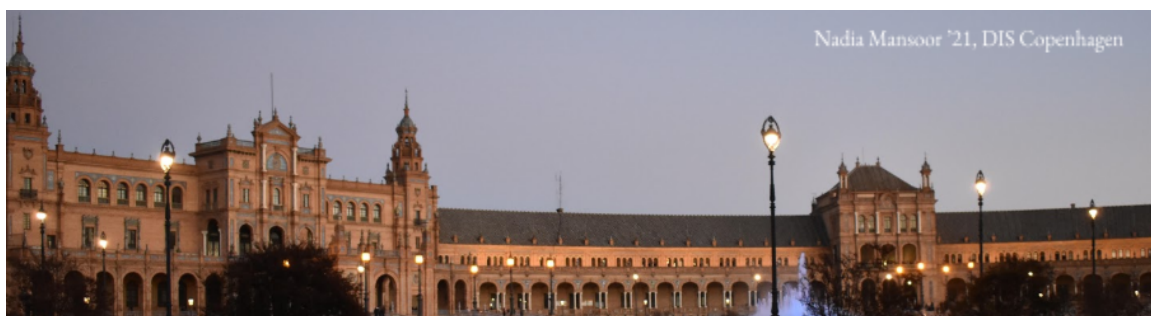


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FIRST STEPS

- Consult the OCS website for the most up to date information on getting started: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/getting-started>
- Attend a General Information Session. Dates and times are listed on the OCS website (<https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/dates-deadlines>).
- Complete the Applying/Preliminary Information Sheet on the OCS website before requesting an advising appointment.
- Make an appointment to meet with a study abroad advisor by sending an email to Diana Malick (dmalick1@swarthmore.edu). Indicate your preliminary off-campus study program interests and your free times (Monday - Friday) for an appointment.
- Setting Goals: Be prepared to talk about your goals (i.e., academic, personal, professional) in your advising appointment. What opportunities and challenges are you looking for?
- Discuss your academic needs and program options with your academic or major advisor.
- Apply for or renew your passport. It must be valid for at least 6 months beyond the return from study abroad. Plan on this taking at least a month.
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/passports/how-apply.html>

ELIGIBILITY

- Good academic and conduct standing at Swarthmore are required (further detailed within the OCS application).
- Normally students cannot have incompletes at the time they study abroad.
- Students must have a -0- balance in their student account.
- Swarthmore does not have a GPA requirement to apply. Students must meet the GPA requirements and prerequisites of the programs to which they apply.
- Students can participate in up to two different semesters or a year abroad. Students can study abroad spring of the sophomore year, during the junior year, or fall of the senior year, with approval from their major department. Some departments may indicate a preferred semester.
- Students who plan to complete honors should discuss timing of study abroad with major/minor departments.

CHOOSING A PROGRAM

OCS offers over 300 approved programs. Review the OCS website for different search options and information about the Off-Campus Study Program:

<https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/off-campus-study-program>. You will be able to access program information in the OCS portal. Each program has a brochure page with basic information and a link to the program or university website.



Program and Location Considerations

- **Program type.** Review the mission and goals of programs. Direct university enrollment requires a lot of independence and willingness to adapt to new academic expectations. Study abroad programs often provide a more familiar academic environment.
- **Academic content and other program elements:** Review methods of instruction and opportunities for service-learning, independent study, research, fieldwork, and internships. Review courses taken by previous students in the OCS Course Database on the OCS website. Consider whether cultural opportunities and travel are built into the structure of the program.
- **Does the program require or offer language study?** Consider using this opportunity to learn a new language or to develop greater proficiency in a language.
- **Co-curricular and extra-curricular activities.** What opportunities are available to help integrate with the local community such as volunteering, internships, and athletics?
- **Location:** Carefully review start and end dates of programs that may vary considerably from the Swarthmore academic calendar.
- **Living situations:** Be sure to review the housing options that may include dormitories, homestay, apartments, or other residences. Students are expected to live in housing provided by host universities and programs. *OCS will not pay for OCS participants to live with only Swarthmore students apart from program-sponsored housing.*
- **Ask OCS to connect you with past participants and read student evaluations.** Evaluations and other resources created by students are available on the OCS website under student experiences.
- **Read extensively about the host country including current events.**
- **Learn about health, safety, and security concerns** of the region. Important websites include the Centers for Disease Control for health information – www.cdc.gov and the US State Department for travel advisories and crime reports – www.state.gov/travelers/

Personal Needs and Accommodations

Consult the OCS website for important information about diversity and identity abroad:
<https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/diversity-identity-abroad>

- **Physical and mental well-being:** Be sure to discuss your physical and mental health needs with your health providers. Investigate how your needs can be met abroad by discussing with OCS and researching services provided by universities and programs, and through OCS's insurance provider, CISI.
- **Learning and living accommodations:** Be sure to consider your needs (e.g. dietary requirements) including living and learning accommodations and discuss them with the Swarthmore Academic Support & Student Disability Resources office, the study



abroad program, and your OCS advisor. It's important to assess whether accommodations provided at Swarthmore are available in locations abroad. Please consult the OCS website for many valuable external resources.

- **Diversity Abroad:** Consult the OCS website (<https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/diversity-identity-abroad>) for important information regarding race & ethnicity, LGBTQ+, heritage students and religion. The site also contains many valuable external resources.

Swarthmore Programs and Exchanges

- **Globalization, Environment & Society: Study Abroad in South Africa** (spring only) Macalester-Pomona-Swarthmore Consortium – see Professor Everbach. **Note that the deadline is early in the prior spring semester.**
- **Ashesi University Exchange** - Ghana (fall, spring, year)
- **University of Tokyo Exchange** - Japan (fall, spring, year)
- **Yale-NUS College Exchange** - Singapore (fall, spring, year)



Preferred Programs (special affiliations)

- **Consortium for Advanced Studies Abroad (CASA)** - Argentina, Chile, Cuba, Spain
- **HECUA** - Ecuador, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Northern Ireland
- **The Centro: Intercollegiate Center for Classical Studies (ICCS)** - Italy

Petitions

Students must discuss their interest in a program that is not on the approved list with OCS and their major department. OCS will explain the petition process. Before a student can attend one of these programs, approval must be gained from the student's major advisor; students must be able to get four credits pre-estimated; and the Off-Campus Study Committee must approve participation.

Study Abroad on a Leave of Absence

Students who study abroad while on a leave of absence from the College cannot transfer the credit to Swarthmore and are not eligible for Swarthmore financial aid.

CREDIT

Note: Academic departmental/program policies are subject to change. Students are responsible for knowing the academic policies that pertain to their course of study:

- **Types of credit:** Students can request either credit from departments/programs for major, minor or distributional requirements, or Off-Campus Study Credit, which is granted by the OCS Faculty Advisor, which can count as credit toward graduation, but cannot be used to fulfill other academic requirements.
- **Required pre-estimation of credit:** Students must get prospective courses pre-estimated for credit in the semester prior to study abroad and **no credit is guaranteed if courses are not pre-estimated.** Students will be guaranteed a full semester of credit (normally four credits) when pre-estimated for what is equivalent to four Swarthmore credits and if those courses are completed with what is equivalent to a minimum of US "C" or better. Any changes to courses either prior to study abroad, or while abroad, must be pre-estimated for credit at Swarthmore in order to be eligible for credit at Swarthmore.
- **Swarthmore prerequisites and other requirements to receive credit:** Some Swarthmore departments have prerequisites before credit will be granted. Some departments require that you have taken an introductory course before other courses can be taken for credit: **e.g., economics, education, psychology.** The **English, history and art history departments** require that a course be taken at Swarthmore in their department before a course can be transferred to Swarthmore. Note that you must



take a second history course at Swarthmore in order to get credit for a second history course taken abroad.

- **Extra work/credit.** Some (but not all) departments allow students to do additional work to get full credit for courses that otherwise would transfer as less than a full credit
- **Transfer credit limits:** Be aware of the limit on the number of all “transfer credits” that a department will allow for the major or minor or in general.
- **Credit weighting:** Be aware of credit weightings and how they will transfer to Swarthmore. A one credit course at Swarthmore is considered to be four credit hours. Therefore 3-credit hour courses taken abroad will normally transfer back as $\frac{3}{4}$ of a Swarthmore course credit. **Students must take both a full course load abroad and take sufficient courses that will equate to at least 4 Swarthmore credits.**
- **Additional academic policies:**
 - Be mindful of the 20-course rule.
 - Be mindful of any requirements that must be completed by the end of the sophomore year (including physical education requirements).
 - Writing course requirements cannot be completed abroad.
 - Taking courses pass/fail is not permitted.
 - Students must receive a straight C or better in order to get credit at Swarthmore.
 - Grades are recorded on the transcript but will not be calculated in the GPA.
 - Students should save all course materials for final credit review at Swarthmore.

FINANCES

- **Tuition, room & board:** Students are billed for the Swarthmore comprehensive fee that includes Swarthmore tuition, room, and board. Students are not billed for the student activity fee. OCS pays tuition to the abroad program and room and board are paid to the program or the student is given the funds, **based on the program budget**, to pay this themselves.
- **Financial aid:** Students continue to receive the same financial aid when participating in off-campus study.
- **Airfare:** Students are required to book their flights through Key Travel unless travel is booked through the abroad program. Swarthmore will cover one round-trip airfare for a semester program or two roundtrip airfares for an academic year program or two semester programs. The cost of airfare is calculated with Philadelphia as the gateway city. If travel is booked to and from different airports, any increase in cost will be owed by the student. Airfare is only provided to arrive at the program and depart at the end of the semester (not for vacation periods).
- **Scholarships:** Students are encouraged to look into scholarship opportunities and be aware of deadlines.



- **Insurance:** International health and travel insurance is provided either by OCS or by the study abroad program.
- **Covered costs:** One application fee (to the program that the student attends), required academic materials and books, local transportation, internet, utilities, student visa & other required immigration costs.
- **Additional costs:** Students need to be aware of withdrawal/refund policies of programs & universities (financial aid cannot be used for this purpose). Explore, plan, and budget for additional costs (i.e., immunizations & travel medicines, personal expenses such as laundry, & refundable deposits). Qualifying students can seek assistance from the Dean's Office Emergency Fund. Note that in most cases students will not have the opportunity to work while abroad.

APPLYING

- **How to apply:** Students complete a Swarthmore Off-Campus Study application as well as a program-specific application.
- **OCS application(s):** The OCS applications are on the individual program brochure pages in the OCS portal (click on "access your OCS application" here: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/programs-applying>).
- **Program & university applications:** These applications are available on the specific program or university website. The program application usually includes an essay, one or two letters of reference, a transcript, and a permission to study abroad form. Other materials may be required. Transcripts are provided for free from the Registrar's Office (request using mySwarthmore). Make sure you request an **official** transcript when required. Plan on requesting letters of reference a minimum of 3-4 weeks before the letter is needed. Consider providing a copy of your essay to your referee. Most programs have a form pertaining to academic standing and conduct that you must submit to OCS for approval.
- **Number of applications:** Students can submit two applications in the OCS system, and can request to submit more if necessary.
- **Deadlines:** OCS deadlines are available on the OCS website under announcements. The deadline for spring participation is in early October and the deadline for fall and academic year is in mid-February. NOTE: You must take note of the application deadline for the program you are interested in. Some deadlines will be much earlier than the OCS deadline (for some programs you must apply two semesters ahead). Some programs admit students on a rolling basis and you should apply early in that cycle.
- **Passports:** For U.S. citizens: processing times for passport applications (both new applications and renewals) are significantly delayed. [More information from the State Department here.](#) Routine applications take about 18 weeks to process, and expedited



applications about 12 weeks. To study abroad, you need a passport that's valid at least 6 months beyond the program end date. Reach out to OCS if you have any questions.

ONCE ADMITTED

Health Considerations: Once students are approved to study abroad they are required to have a travel health consultation at the Worth Health Center. For more information, see here: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/student-health>

Visas and Travel Timing: Some countries require a visa and there can be a significant amount of time during the application process when you will be without your passport. In some cases, you will have to secure fingerprinting, request FBI clearance, and/or visit the consulate or embassy in person. In some cases, this involves travel to New York or D.C.

Registration and Billing: Students will be registered in four off-campus course registrations while abroad. The regular billing cycle is followed and payment plans continue as usual.

Orientation: Admitted students will be required to attend orientation sessions that cover the practical aspects of studying abroad as well as other aspects of travel and living abroad.

Parents/Guardians: Be sure to discuss your off-campus study plans with your family/guardian early on and throughout the process. Share information with them that you receive from OCS. Resources for parents: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/parents-guardians>



WHO WE ARE

Pat Martin, OCS Director

María Luisa Guardiola, OCS Faculty Advisor & Professor of Spanish

Lotte Buiting, OCS Associate Director

Diana Malick, Program Coordinator

Office Location: Off-Campus Study Office @ Cunningham House

Office Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:30am – 4:30pm

Website: <https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office>

OCS newsletter: Information on visitors to campus, program deadlines and events

Instagram/Facebook: @swatabroad (use #SwatAbroad to share your photos and videos)

