Policies and Procedures for Students in the Swarthmore Off-Campus Study Program

Fall 2023 Participants

Photo credit: Justin Chai ’24 (Australia, UNSW, fall 2022)

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This handbook serves as a reference for students to use before, during, and after off-campus study. It is important that students read this document carefully. It contains information that students will need to complete their preparations and succeed with their off-campus study experience.

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I. Eligibility Requirements to Participate in Off-Campus Study
To receive permission to participate in the Off-Campus Study (OCS) program, students must meet the following eligibility requirements:

1. The term of the OCS program must be the second semester of sophomore year, any semester junior year, or the first semester of senior year. Seniors must receive permission from their major department(s) to study abroad.

2. The maximum number of semesters of Off-Campus Study is two semesters.

3. Students must have good academic and conduct standing at the College.

4. Students must have completed four credits per semester on average prior to OCS.

5. There must be no incompletes on students’ academic records. The deadline for the completion of incompletes will correspond to deadlines related to the submission of program acceptance forms, deposits, the purchase of airfares, applying for visas, etc.

6. Students must have received acceptance into a major, or in the case of sophomores, provided a plan for applying for a major.

7. Students must have no outstanding charges on their accounts.

The Off-Campus Study Office (OCS) and the Dean’s Office review student standing and determine eligibility.

Students must also meet the eligibility requirements of the programs to which they apply (e.g., some programs have GPA or language requirements). Students are responsible for checking whether their programs have additional eligibility requirements.

Permission to participate in Off-Campus Study can be revoked at any time if the student no longer meets the stated eligibility requirements of Swarthmore College and/or the OCS program.

Students must withdraw from any programs they do not plan on attending, both in the OCS online system and directly with the programs to which they applied.

II. The Off-Campus Study Portal and Acceptance Procedures
1. Once admitted to an OCS program, students must notify OCS and let the office know if they accept the offer.

2. Students must also notify their study abroad program or university that they accept their offer and follow the program/university’s admission instructions. Follow instructions from the program to apply for housing and to attend the orientation program (if that is a separate process).

3. OCS will then change the student’s status in their application portal from “Pending” to “Accepted.” The application portal can be accessed here: https://swarthmore.studioabroad.com/. Students should then log in and change their status to “Committed.” Students will then see a
checklist of pre-departure items to complete.

The following items in the OCS application system will be checked off by OCS once permission is granted by the appropriate offices:

- Bursar Office Clearance
- Dean's Office Permission to Participate

The following must be completed by the student in order for OCS to pay deposits (OCS only pays for non-refundable deposits) and book travel. **Students should complete the following within one week of accepting their offer:**

1. Complete the travel health consultation request in the health center portal, then contact the Worth Health Center to schedule a travel health consultation.
2. Complete all questionnaires and documents on the OCS portal.

In order for tuition invoices to be paid, students must have completed their travel health consultations and completed their student health records in the OCS system.

In addition to all of the above, normally students must complete the following requirements in order to book travel.

1. Pre-estimation of Credit Submission (unless given an extension by OCS).
   - Students must submit courses to the OCS Credit Evaluation portal on MySwarthmore following the instructions on the OCS website: [https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/ocs-credits](https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/ocs-credits). The total credits for submitted courses must be equivalent to at least 4 Swarthmore credits, which typically means that students must submit a full course load as defined by the program. OCS will calculate equivalent Swarthmore credits based on the program’s credit units and number of recommended courses.
2. Complete outstanding items from the OCS application and post-admission checklists.
3. Attend a large group orientation session.
4. Attend a program-specific Post-Admission Planning Session with an OCS Staff Member.
   - The following information will be covered in this session: Financial planning/budgets; paying deposits and invoices for tuition, room and board (be sure to forward all requests for payment to OCS); the payment plan and withdrawal/refund policy; housing questions; credit approval questions; applying for a student visa (if required); travel questions (students must understand their arrival and departure dates); and other important preparation matters.
5. Attend at least one Intercultural Orientation Session. The list of available sessions will be available on the Moodle site for the student’s term of Off-Campus Study (staff will add all off-campus study participants to this site).

### III. Student Visa

Students are responsible for checking whether they are required to apply for a student visa for their host country. If yes, the student should research the process carefully, collect necessary documents, and apply for a visa unless otherwise instructed by their program or OCS. OCS will produce a letter that indicates that the office will pay for the student’s tuition, room, and board;
this letter can be used as part of the student’s financial documentation when applying for a visa. OCS strongly recommends that the student begins the visa application process as early as possible, if required, because visas can take time to process.

IV. Travel Arrangements
1. Once the student has completed their post-admission documents and the arrival and departure dates for their program have been confirmed, OCS will notify Key Travel (the office’s travel booking agency) that the student is eligible to book travel. Students may book travel through Key Travel following the instructions that will become available on their OCS portal once they have met the requirements for travel booking.

When booking travel, students must consider the following:

1. Students must participate in the program’s orientation (if offered) and stay until all examinations and any other program requirements are completed. Students can plan to arrive earlier or leave later if that is permitted by the program and by the country’s visa requirements (students need to check this carefully – they usually cannot enter the host country before the official start date on their visa).
   ○ Note that any additional living costs (room and food costs) outside of the program dates will not be covered by the College, and students must make sure they have appropriate travel and health insurance for those additional dates as well.

2. Students can book their flight from any location to the program site; it does not have to be from Philadelphia. However, OCS cannot pay more than the roundtrip cost from Philadelphia to the host site.
   ○ Note that OCS does not pay for travel other than to and from the study abroad site, and so students have to be prepared to pay for additional costs. We will not pay for flights during vacation periods.

Students should carefully check the travel and arrival instructions given by their program. OCS will give Key Travel the student’s latest day of arrival. The student’s program may allow them to arrive a few days earlier than that, so students should look into this carefully when making their decision about the day of travel. Each program may have detailed travel, arrival, meet up, pick up, or other instructions about the day of arrival. These may be in acceptance letters, in handbooks, emails, or on program websites. Students should read these very carefully.

Note: Students will be given a deadline to request travel. If students book travel after the deadline, they will be responsible for any increase in air fares after that date.

2. OCS can pay for the student’s round-trip airfare up to the cost of a round-trip from Philadelphia, taking into account a reasonable itinerary. If the student’s proposed travel costs more than a round-trip flight from Philadelphia, they will be responsible for paying the additional cost.

3. If the student’s flight does not include an allotment for checked bags, OCS will pay for up to two checked bags. OCS can reimburse the student for checked bags if receipts are provided in the designated time frame.
4. If applying for a student visa, the student should make sure not to book a ticket for a flight that will arrive before the start date on their visa. Students must be aware of the end date of the visa as well, and how long they will be allowed to remain in the host country.

5. The student must research whether they need to apply for a transit visa if they have a layover in a different country.

6. The student must be aware that many flights may leave one day and arrive the next, or they might cross the international date line. Therefore, the student should check their ARRIVAL DATE carefully!

7. Students are expected to purchase round-trip tickets for a flight to and departure from the host country. Swarthmore will not cover the additional cost of one-way tickets.

8. For students who are abroad for one semester, the travel allowance provides for one round trip. Students who are abroad for two semesters can be reimbursed for a second round-trip, according to Swarthmore College guidelines, to visit their home once during the year over the winter break. The budgeted amount cannot exceed the cost of a round-trip fare with Philadelphia as the gateway city. Students who receive a round-trip airfare to return home will not receive a stipend to live abroad during that winter break period.

9. If a student withdraws from the program after the ticket is issued, they will owe the cost of the unrecoverable tickets to Swarthmore College.

10. If students make changes to their ticket after it is issued (unless required and approved by OCS), they will be responsible for any costs incurred.

More detailed information about travel is available in the Practical Matters handbook.

V. Post-Admission Planning Sessions
Students are required to attend the following post-admission planning sessions during the semester prior to their OCS program.

1. Post-Admission Planning with an OCS Staff Member: Following the OCS deadline for submission of applications, the student will be contacted to schedule a meeting with an OCS staff member. If the student has not been admitted at that point in time, it is still important to meet. OCS will work closely with the student on billing, travel allowance, insurance questions, board and/or room arrangements while abroad (as necessary), preparing for pre-estimation of credit, student visa questions (if required), and any other preparation matters. Students should make sure to get this important work underway early.

Following this meeting, the student should be sure to read about policies and procedures on the Off-Campus Study website (under “Planning”) and in the Off-Campus Study handbooks. They should carefully read all documents on their study abroad portal.
2. **Group Post-Admission Meeting**: Students are required to attend one of several post-admission group sessions, which will be facilitated by an OCS staff member. The group sessions will cover the online OCS credit system, Key Travel, and other important policies that pertain to all study abroad participants.

3. **Intercultural Orientation Session**: Preparing to study abroad involves much more than just logistical issues. To help students prepare for the cultural aspects (culture shock, identity politics abroad, intercultural communication, etc.), OCS offers several intercultural orientation sessions. Some sessions are facilitated by students, others by OCS staff members, and still others are lectures offered by the college. Students are encouraged to attend several but only required to attend one.

4. **Pre-Departure Gathering**: All OCS participants are required to attend a Pre-Departure Gathering at the end of the semester prior to their OCS program. This gathering involves presentations of important information prior to travel (travel tips, money matters, safety and security tips, etc.), as well as a dinner with other students who will study off-campus.

**VI. Finances**

**A. Financial Aid Policy and Off-Campus Study**
Financial aid consideration is possible only during a normal eight-semester Swarthmore program of study and only if the student earns at least four credits each semester. Students must return to Swarthmore on schedule for the eight-semester graduation timetable. If this condition as well as those stated above is not met, continuation of financial aid will be in jeopardy.

Students’ eligibility for Swarthmore financial aid during study abroad will be based on Swarthmore’s actual charges and allowances for personal expenses as if students were living on campus. In practice, this policy allows for a more generous budget for study abroad, since students will not pay the student activity fee.

Note: Most study-abroad programs do not offer campus work opportunities, so students may wish to borrow additional funds to fill that gap. If that is the case, students should discuss this option with the Financial Aid Office.

**B. Payment Plan**
Students who wish to receive credit for their semester off-campus that counts toward their Swarthmore degree will pay to Swarthmore, for the semester or year abroad, the full cost of Swarthmore tuition, room, and board (minus their financial aid — see above). Swarthmore will pay the student’s program tuition, room, and board on the student's behalf. The student activity fee is not charged. If room and/or board are not fully provided by the program, an appropriate amount will be provided to the student to meet this expense. Swarthmore will pay for any portion of round-trip travel not covered by the program according to established practice for determining the appropriate travel budget (based on the cost of a round-trip from Philadelphia).

The payment schedule for study abroad is the same as the College payment schedule for
semesters in residence. Please contact the Office of Student Accounts (studentaccounts@swarthmore.edu) for more information.

Note: Students are responsible for paying any refundable program deposits. If this represents a hardship, students should discuss this with their study abroad advisor.

C. Withdrawal/Refund Policy

1. Withdrawal before the OCS program begins: As soon as Swarthmore makes a non-refundable payment on the student's behalf to an Off-Campus Study program (e.g., application fee, deposit, part or full payment for tuition and/or room and/or board and/or any other program costs), and/or as soon as Swarthmore has paid for round-trip travel in association with off-campus study, the student is obligated either to pay the College full Swarthmore tuition, room, and board for the semester or year off-campus (less whatever may be covered by financial aid), or to pay to Swarthmore the unrecoverable portion of the paid out or obligated amount. Failure to meet this condition will comprise an unfulfilled financial obligation on the student's part to the College. So long as the obligation remains unfulfilled, the student may be denied re-enrollment by the College; the student's College transcript may not leave the Registrar's Office; and the student will not be permitted to receive a degree from Swarthmore College. Financial aid will not be available for this purpose.

2. Withdrawal after the study abroad program begins: If the student withdraws after the program is underway, any adjustment of billed tuition, room, and board, due to involuntary or voluntary withdrawal, can only be made after all financial obligations to the Off-Campus Study program have been satisfied, as verified by the Off-Campus Study Office. Once the unrecoverable portion of the paid out and/or obligated amounts have been met by the student (these include but are not limited to the payment of tuition, room and board, and round-trip travel), the College charges will be reduced in a manner consistent with the charge reduction/withdrawal policy for tuition, room, and board set forth in the Swarthmore College Bulletin. In addition, if the student has received a deposit from Swarthmore for meals and/or lodgings and/or round-trip travel expenses, the unused part must be returned to the college before the student will be permitted to re-enroll at the college, receive an official transcript, or graduate.

3. Required withdrawal: If the student is required by the College for any reason to withdraw from the Off-Campus Study Program and/or to withdraw from Swarthmore College before or after being accepted by a study abroad program, the student will be ineligible to participate in the Off-Campus Study Program until and unless readmitted to Swarthmore. In this event, the student will be obliged to pay to Swarthmore the unrecoverable portion of any amount paid or obligated on their behalf by Swarthmore to a study abroad program along with funds released to the student and the cost of a purchased airfare. Failure to do so will comprise an unfulfilled financial obligation on the student's part to the College. So long as the obligation remains unfulfilled, the student will be denied re-enrollment and will not be allowed to graduate from the College, and the Registrar’s Office will not release the student's transcript.

D. Costs and Budgeting

1. Obligatory expenses
Some Off-Campus Study programs provide students with lodging and all of their regular meals.
If students attend one of these programs, they will not have to do any budgeting for room and board. Other programs will require students to make some or all of the payments for food or lodging, or both. In all such cases, an amount of money adequate for these payments will be provided to the student in advance, either by the program or by Swarthmore College, or both.

If money for room and/or board expenses is provided in advance to the student, it is imperative that the student understand clearly in advance what their obligatory expenses will be, how much money they have to cover these expenses, and how long this money has to last. Examples of expenses for which students may need to work out a budget are below. In all such cases, it will be the student’s responsibility to work out the budget for the time period involved.

- Students may attend a program that provides breakfast and dinner, and gives them a cash allowance to buy their own lunch. Students have to work out the relationship between the size of the allowance and the number of lunches over the time period involved.
- Lodgings are provided for the student, but the student is required to buy (and/or cook) all of their meals for themselves out of a cash allowance.
- The student is expected both to rent lodgings and pay for their meals out of a cash allowance.

On-campus students have an annual budget for the purchase of books through the Swarthmore Bookstore. The remainder of that annual budget from the fall is available to spring OCS participants for the purchase of required books for their classes. Fall OCS participants will have the remainder of their book stipend available for use at the Swarthmore Bookstore during the following Spring semester. Students must upload a copy of their syllabus, which shows the required books, and a copy of the receipt of purchase, to their OCS application portal for reimbursement by OCS.

If students have to take public transportation to and from classes, the Off-Campus Study Office will determine whether they are eligible for a local travel allowance.

2. **Refundable deposits**

Some programs may require of the student a refundable room/security deposit. Such deposits are not covered under the Off-Campus Study Program; the student must pay for this themselves. The student should check with the program regarding the amount of the deposit, conditions for full refund when the program is completed, and how the deposit is to be refunded upon completion of the program. If paying the refundable deposit represents a financial hardship, the student should contact their OCS advisor.

3. **Application fee**

OCS can reimburse the student for one application fee, for the program that they attend.

4. **Discretionary expenses**

Discretionary expenses include an international phone plan, toiletries and other personal items, gifts, recreation and entertainment, shopping, and vacation travel. It is the student’s responsibility to pay for discretionary expenses. Students should figure out at the beginning of their off-campus study program how much they can spend, total, on discretionary expenses. For necessary expenses (e.g., toiletries), OCS recommends that students learn where local people shop for these
items, and do their shopping there. Students should be willing to purchase local products that are comparable to those they use at home. If students are in a location where the cost of living is significantly higher than Swarthmore, they need to pick and choose their activities carefully, in line with their budget.

Usually, if the student attends a university, the recreational practices of university students from the host country will be affordable to them. This should also be the case if the student stays with a host family or participates in program-recommended activities. If students go to those places in their city or locale where lots of Americans hang out, they may expect to spend a lot more.

5. Additional expenses
Students may need to budget for additional items not covered by Swarthmore College, including printing costs, gym memberships, memberships in student organizations, bedding, and travel immunizations and medications (in some cases, some of these items are provided). Note that for those students who receive financial aid from Swarthmore College, the allowances that have been allocated for personal expenses at Swarthmore still apply. The Dean’s Office has an emergency fund that may apply in some cases to some of these expenses for students with a demonstrated financial need.

6. How much money will students need?
If the student will have obligatory expenses, as described above, it should be clear to them before they begin their program what these expenses will be and where they will receive the funds to meet them. For discretionary expenses, normally the student’s program can advise them very specifically about this. This advice will be informed by the standard of living that the program deems suitable for its participants.

7. Budgeting
A budgeting worksheet is provided in the Off-Campus Study Moodle site. This will help guide students as they plan their finances for the semester or year abroad.

VII. Academic Matters
A. Swarthmore Course Registration and Credit Policy
1. All courses for which students register on their Off-Campus Study Program must be pre-approved by Swarthmore departments/programs on the OCS Credit Evaluation Portal on MySwarthmore, including courses that students decide to take after beginning their OCS programs (see part C of this section for pre-estimation instructions).

2. While abroad, students will be registered by the Registrar’s Office for 4 credits of Off-Campus Study (OCST) credit registrations. Students are required to register for the equivalent of 4 Swarthmore credits on their OCS program.

3. Students must take all courses on their Off-Campus Study programs for a grade. Students are not permitted to take courses pass/fail.
4. For any abroad course to be eligible for evaluation for Swarthmore credit, it must receive the equivalent to a grade of straight C or better. All completed off-campus courses that receive the equivalent grade of straight C or better must be evaluated for credit at Swarthmore. Off-Campus Study courses with equivalent grades lower than C are not eligible for transfer of credit to Swarthmore.

5. Upon return, students are required to complete the program evaluations on their OCS portal, and to have a debriefing session with an OCS faculty or staff member. Failure to do so will prevent Swarthmore from processing the student’s off-campus courses for final credit.

6. Courses that were not approved for auto-credit by a Swarthmore department/program during pre-estimation need to be submitted through the Off-Campus Study Credit Evaluation System for final approval. Students should keep all their work for these courses and submit it to the department/program (instructions for final credit review are on the OCS website: https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/ocs-credits). Courses that were approved for auto-credit do not need to go through the separate final approval process (unless the student wishes to change the department/program that awards credit).

7. For students who completed courses that were pre-estimated for at least four credits at Swarthmore, and who passed these courses with an equivalent grade of a straight “C” or better, OCST credit will be used to round up the credit to four credits in cases in which students did not receive all of the credit that was pre-estimated during the final approval process. Note that OCST credit cannot be used for economics or business/finance classes.

8. Once all credits have been approved for final credit and verified on the student’s program transcript, the Registrar’s Office will enter the courses and credits on the Swarthmore transcript.

9. Off-Campus Study courses on the Swarthmore transcript will show department/program or OCST, course title, and corresponding U.S. letter grade. The grades will not count in the Swarthmore grade point average.

10. Note: If students fail to complete the credit review process within the established deadline, their case will be referred to the Dean’s Office and will be subject to policies and procedures that pertain to the incompletion of academic course requirements. Any courses that were supposed to be reviewed by academic departments will remain listed as OCST courses with grades of Incomplete.

**B. Off-Campus Study Course Load**

At Swarthmore, the semester course credit is the unit of credit. One semester course credit is normally equivalent to 4 semester hours elsewhere (for programs that use U.S. standard credit hours). Four or five Swarthmore units of credit comprise a normal full semester. Students are normally required to take a course load that corresponds to what will transfer back to Swarthmore as at least four credits per semester or eight credits per year. In some cases when participating in a trimester program, it may be possible to earn up to a maximum of six credits per semester (or two terms), or up to a maximum of ten credits per year (three terms). Normally, receiving more than five credits per semester or ten credits per year is not permitted.
Swarthmore requires that students, while abroad, take a full academic load by the standards of the program they are attending and what will transfer to Swarthmore as at least four course credits per semester. Sometimes this is a set number of courses or credits (e.g., at many universities four equally weighted courses comprise a full semester, or 15 units of credit comprise a full semester). For other programs or universities, 'full academic load' is defined by positing a range (e.g., four or five courses, 16 to 20 credits); for such situations, Swarthmore students are required to be at the upper end of the range (e.g., five courses or 19 or 20. Swarthmore permits students to take more than a full load. If students wish to do so, and if the program requires approval of the home institution, the Off-Campus Study Office will provide students with a supporting letter. If students have any uncertainty as to what 'full academic load' means for their program, they should contact OCS.

Please note this regulation is in force irrespective of how much Swarthmore credit students have in hand when they depart, and/or what they believe their credit needs to be for their semester or year abroad. No exceptions.

C. Pre-estimation of Credit
Students will be instructed on how to use the online OCS Credit Evaluation System, which is accessible through mySwarthmore (https://myswat.swarthmore.edu/). The group post-admission session covers the online system in detail.

Students will need to obtain course descriptions and, whenever possible, syllabi of proposed courses for the pre-estimation of credit process, which they will upload to the system.

Courses can be approved for credit in the following two ways:

1. Courses proposed for OCST credit will be reviewed by the Off-Campus Study Faculty Advisor. A course approved for OCST credit can be re-submitted for major/minor/departmental credit, as long as the course has not yet been processed by the Registrar. The course will go through the standard pre-estimation process and will be reviewed by the program/department, and pre-estimation of credit is not guaranteed. The extra credit option is not available for courses pre-estimated for OCST credit. Students cannot request OCST credit for coursework in their major/minor, unless the department gives the student written permission. OCST credit cannot be used for economics or business/finance courses.

2. Courses proposed for credit by academic departments or programs for major, minor, or departmental/distributional credit must be approved for evaluation for credit by chairs (or other credit evaluators in the department/program) of appropriate departments/programs. The departments/programs will determine whether the student will receive auto-credit or not. If the course is approved for auto-credit, the credit will be processed as long as the student receives the equivalent of a C or better. If the course is not approved for auto-credit, the student is required to submit their coursework for final approval. The student should communicate with the department/program to understand what type of final work the department/program would like to review (e.g. essays, lab reports, etc).
The chairs/credit evaluators will also pre-estimate the amount of credit students will receive for successful completion of the courses and will indicate whether or not their departments extend the extra work/credit added option. This option, which is available at the discretion of departments, allows students to do extra work set by the department to increase the amount of credit received for a study abroad course. The extra-work for credit option can only be used in situations in which a student needs it to obtain the expected four credits for a semester, or eight credits for a year abroad, or when extra-work for credit is specifically necessary to complete a major requirement or minor requirement, and then only with the approval of the appropriate department/program. This will be the case only as long as the semester and yearly maximums are not exceeded.

Keep in mind that it is the student’s responsibility to ask about prerequisites that some departments/programs might have in order to get credit for courses taken abroad. Students also must be aware of the limit of how many courses can be taken abroad in each subject area and counted in the major, minor, or toward graduation at Swarthmore College. Keep in mind that students cannot take the same subject matter in a course abroad that they have already taken at Swarthmore. This would result in not receiving full credit for the course at Swarthmore.

Please remember that some departments will not evaluate a course done elsewhere for Swarthmore credit unless the student has completed a course in the department, or program, here at Swarthmore prior to study abroad (e.g. English and art history). Other departments may require the student to take a course at Swarthmore after the OCS semester as a condition for credit transfer (e.g., history). Additionally, if students would like to take two history courses abroad for credit, they must take two history courses at Swarthmore (This may be true for other departments as well). Some departments require that students have taken specific introductory courses at Swarthmore before taking other courses in that discipline (e.g., economics, education, psychology). Some departments/programs will only pre-estimate credit for majors (e.g., psychology) and/or minors.

Some departments, even if students have completed work in that subject at Swarthmore, will not evaluate a course done elsewhere unless the department has pre-estimated it. If, for example, the student’s major department has required them to complete a specific course while they are abroad, and they are thinking of replacing this course with another, they should be in touch about this with the chair of their major department. Note that some departments also require that their own form be completed and submitted to them in order to request credit approval (e.g., psychology).

If in order to graduate on time, students must take a specific course while abroad, it is important to get confirmation from the study abroad program that the course will be available to them for their study abroad destination and term. This is not always possible, particularly for direct enrollment and exchange programs. If the student is uncertain, it is their responsibility to decide whether or not to take the risk of the course being unavailable.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Students are only allowed to transfer a total of two business or finance credits to Swarthmore. Consequently, students are limited to only taking business or finance courses that will transfer as up to two business credits. Business credits are approved by the
economics department and will be listed on the student’s transcript as BUSI. Business and finance courses cannot receive OCST credit.

Following the meeting with OCS, students will upload courses, along with the course syllabi/descriptions, to the OCS Credit Evaluation System. When seeking major or minor credit, students are expected to meet with the appropriate department credit reviewer to discuss their academic plans. This credit review normally takes place during the pre-enrollment advising period each semester. Please note that some departments will require students to translate a syllabus into English.

**Students must upload the syllabus for any courses they add to the system. Important:** Students must select “OCS pre-estimation documents” as the document type for any course they are submitting for pre-estimation.

**D. Changing Course Selections After Start of Program**
Students may want or need to change their course schedules after they have reached their off-campus study program. They will simply add the course(s) that have not yet been pre-estimated to the online OCS Credit Evaluation system (including the corresponding syllabi). It is important to complete this process before the program’s add/drop period, because if the new course(s) are not pre-approved for credit, students will need to make another change. Students do not need to worry about deleting courses that have already been pre-estimated from the OCS Credit Evaluation System.

**Ultimately all of the courses that students take abroad must be pre-estimated for credit. Remember that students are not guaranteed credit for any courses for which they do not seek pre-estimation of credit on the OCS Credit Evaluation system.**

**E. Requests to Drop a Course**

(a) In order to make the request to drop a course, students must discuss this with their host institution to determine that it is permitted. The host institution must communicate this permission in writing to the Off-Campus Study Office.

b) If dropping a course is permitted by the host institution, the student must submit the Application to Carry More or Less Work, available from the Swarthmore Registrar’s Office. The form requires a signature from their on campus academic advisor (following a brief discussion with the advisor), as well as a signature from the Dean of Students at Swarthmore. OCS will make a determination of whether dropping the course will result in the student receiving fewer than three credits at Swarthmore for the semester, which is not permitted.

c) Students must take note that if they drop below three credits for any reason, they will lose financial aid for the semester. Students are reminded that only courses with grades of “C” or above will transfer back to Swarthmore and courses taken abroad cannot be taken Pass/Fail (CR/NC). Students cannot submit CAR petitions for courses taken abroad. For these reasons OCS does not advise students to drop below a full course load that will result in four course credits at Swarthmore.
F. Procedures for Final Credit Approval Upon Program Completion

Courses that were approved for auto-credit do not need to go through the separate final approval process. Provided the student successfully completes the course with the equivalent of a C or better, the course will be processed by the Registrar’s Office.

Courses that were not approved for auto-credit need to go through the final credit approval process. In this case, credits that were pre-estimated are not a guarantee of final credit. However, as long as students took courses that were pre-estimated for at least four total Swarthmore credits before their departure, they are guaranteed to receive four credits at Swarthmore. Any deficit of credit awarded in the final approval process by academic departments/programs will be awarded OCST credit. This supplemental OCST credit will not receive a letter grade but will be recorded as CR/NCR.

Students need to start the final approval process upon their return, prior to or immediately following the meeting with the OCS staff member/OCS Faculty Advisor. In most cases, materials can be submitted electronically in the OCS Credit Evaluation System (instructions: https://www.swarthmore.edu/off-campus-study-office/ocs-credits), but in some cases materials need to be submitted directly to the department/program. It is the student’s responsibility to inquire what materials the department/program would like to see in the final approval phase.

IT IS THE STUDENT’S RESPONSIBILITY TO DOCUMENT FULLY THE ACADEMIC WORK THAT THEY DO ABROAD FOR THIS PROCEDURE.

 Ideally, for each course this will involve submission of a syllabus and copies of all of students’ assigned written work (students do NOT need graded copies, any copies will do). If the syllabus does not contain an organized and complete overview of the course (e.g., assigned readings, schedule of classes and topics treated, instructional format, written assignments), then, from their knowledge of the course, the student can write out an accompaniment to the syllabus which contains all of this information. Written work includes papers or essays, exams, reports (including lab reports), and language class exercises. It is a good idea to hang onto class and reading notes. If students are required to do oral reports for one or more courses, they should provide a brief summary of what the report consisted of and what they read in preparation for it. Whenever possible, students should make an extra copy of required written work before submitting it, and hang on to it, in the event that their submitted copy is not returned to them.

Note: Whenever possible, students should compile all their final materials into one pdf document (the SOAN department requires this.) Do NOT upload password-protected documents, and do not upload zip files. Some departments will not review work that is not in English. Students should check with the departments/programs before leaving for their off-campus study program what their requirements are for post-admission documents.

Frequently Asked Questions:

i.) What if the final exam is not returned? An example: Final exams (which often are the larger part of the course grade) are normally hand-written under proctored conditions, only one copy of the exam exists, and it is never returned to the student. Students cannot change this.
What they can do, if they face this examination situation, is return to their room as soon as the exam is over and, from memory, write out the questions and a brief summary of how they answered them (e.g., what readings they referred to, brief outline of their essays). This should take 30-45 minutes, two or three pages of writing. When possible, in advance, students should check with the department/program that will award credit for this course, to see if this is part of their expectation for the documentation of work completed for the course.

ii.) How do I provide information on fieldwork? On fieldwork programs, often the required field reports or papers do not begin to express what the work actually consisted of. However, students can also present their field notes, and a brief written summary of the organization of their field work, topics, time allocated to this and that, methods (e.g., interview, observation, participation) employed, consultations with program staff on their ongoing work, etc.

iii.) Should I document class “extras”? Often, there are out of class ‘extras,’ which enhance the educational value of the course. Examples include field trips, museum visits, lectures, films, and concerts. Students should be prepared to present a record of these kinds of activities whether assigned or not, which for them was part of the educational experience.

These are guidelines, not an instruction manual. The STUDENT will know in full detail what they did for each course they completed while abroad. It is the student’s responsibility to devise ways to fully represent what they did for the Swarthmore faculty members who will be evaluating their courses for Swarthmore credit. Please remember: it is the prerogative of the departments/programs that award credit to give students less than full credit, right down to no credit at all, for courses that they judge to be insufficiently documented. If while students are abroad they have questions, for any of their courses, about what sufficient documentation of work comprises, they should be in touch either with Off-Campus Study or the credit evaluator of the department/program that will evaluate the course, or both.

Through the OCS Credit Evaluation System, departments/programs will grant credit for the academic work done abroad. Once all of the department/program and OCST credits have been awarded, the Registrar’s Office will remove the temporary OCST course registrations from the student’s transcript, and the courses taken abroad will be listed on their transcript along with US letter grades. The grades are not included in a Swarthmore grade point average, except in cases in which departments/programs award actual Swarthmore credit for their courses (e.g., for certain courses in the Swarthmore/Pomona/Macalester Cape Town program).

Departments/programs have until the end of the semester in which the student returned to Swarthmore to complete their review of the work that the student did abroad and to award final credit. The student will be able to observe this process through the OCS Credit Evaluation system.

Note: If the student fails to complete the credit review process within the established deadline upon return, their case will be referred to the Dean’s Office and will be subject to policies and procedures that pertain to the incompleteness of academic course requirements. This is likely to result in a hold on the student’s transcript and a hold on their registration
for the following semester. Any courses that were supposed to be reviewed by academic
departments will remain listed as OCST courses with grades of Incomplete.

G. Pre-registration While Away
(see Office of the Registrar website)
*The student should make note of the dates for pre-enrollment for the semester they plan
to return to campus.

1. Confer with academic advisor(s): The ideal is for the students to communicate with their
academic adviser(s) and/or the chair(s) of their actual or prospective major department(s) before
pre-registration to make sure that whatever credits they may might earn while away, as well as
their future registration plans, allow for completion of their major(s) and all other requirements
for their intended degree(s) on schedule with their planned graduation date. The student should
discuss with their advisor(s) in detail how, in their remaining semesters (including the ones
away), all of their requirements will be met and, especially, how they will complete their major
and honors program, if they hope or plan to do honors. If students cannot confer with their
advisor(s) before pre-registration, they should try to pre-register anyway, and confer with their
advisor after.

2. Pre-registration for the student’s return semester: Students should use MySwarthmore if
they can, as if you were on campus (they should try this on the first day of pre-registra-
tion) If somehow they cannot use mySwarthmore, they should contact the instructor(s) about their wish
to be in their course(s) or seminar(s), and then request in writing (email) to have their name
entered on the list for the course(s) and/or seminar(s) offered at that future time. If the student
cannot tell who the instructor is, they should contact the Department Chair. Students should also
send a copy of these communications to the Off-Campus Study Office. Please note: This
procedure does not guarantee membership in the course(s) and/or seminar(s) at issue. Normally,
however, it will make the probability of membership the same as it would be if the student were
at Swarthmore next semester to participate in the pre-registration.

3. If the student misses pre-registration, they should use Drop/Add: If students were not able
to pre-register, they can register the semester of their return by completing the online Add
“e-form” available on MySwarthmore “Registration.” The online form is routed to the faculty,
who may need time to approve it, especially over a break. For many courses, adding the course
after the Add/Drop period begins may reduce chances of membership in the course.

H. Official Transcript from Off-Campus Study Program or University
Students are required to provide the Registrar’s Office with an official transcript certifying the
work they have completed. In some cases, students must personally request the transcript directly
from the host university or program.