

VII. Academic Matters

A. YOUR COURSE LOAD ABROAD

At Swarthmore the semester course credit is the unit of credit. One semester course credit is normally equivalent to 4 semester hours elsewhere. Four or five units of credit comprise a normal full semester.

Swarthmore requires that you, while abroad, take a full academic load by the standards of the program or university you are attending. 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 credits. Swarthmore permits you to take more than a full load. If you wish to do so, and if the program requires approval of the home institution, this office will be glad to provide you with a supporting letter. If you have any uncertainty as to what 'full academic load' means for your program or university, please be in touch with Rosa Bernard.

Students are expected to earn the normal load of four credits per semester, or eight credits per year. Students are eligible to earn up to a maximum of five credits per semester, or up to a maximum of ten credits per year. Receiving more than five credits per semester or ten credits per year is not permitted.

You are also required to take a course load that corresponds to what will transfer back to Swarthmore as at least four credits per semester.

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

B. PRE-ESTIMATION OF CREDIT

Students work with Rosa Bernard to complete the *Application for Pre-Estimation of Study Abroad Credit* form before consulting departments about pre-estimation of credit (see **Appendix**).

Students who plan regular term (not summer school) study abroad must have approval in advance from the major department/program adviser(s) (actual or prospective), as well as from the Off-Campus Study office. Proposed courses must be approved for evaluation for credit by chairs (or other nominated person) of appropriate departments/programs or, for intercultural credit, by the Off-Campus Study Faculty Adviser. Approval of courses will estimate but not guarantee an amount of credit for successful completion of the courses. Award of credit will occur upon your return to Swarthmore. It will require you to provide the Registrar's Office with an official record (normally a transcript) certifying the work you have completed as well as substantiating materials as required by the departments/programs (e.g., syllabi, papers, exams). The accrediting of work done abroad should be attended to immediately upon your return.

If a department grants auto-credit on the pre-estimation of credit form then you will not be obligated to bring back your work to the department in order to receive credit.

1. During your post-admission meeting with Rosa Bernard, she will advise you on the credit system and credit weightings for your study abroad program. Be prepared during that meeting to develop your preliminary list of courses (with syllabi if available) and to discuss the suggested credit weightings.

2. The form instructs you to obtain the signatures of the chairs of the Swarthmore departments, programs, special majors, or concentrations that will, upon your return, evaluate your study abroad courses for Swarthmore credit, as well the signature(s) of your major adviser(s) from your actual or prospective major department(s).

The next step is to walk the form around to the chairs of the departments or programs that correspond to the courses you propose to take while abroad. Take course descriptions with you, and, if possible, fuller information, e.g., syllabi. You may sensibly seek pre-approval and credit pre-estimation for more courses than you will actually take. The chairs' pre-approval of your courses mean that they agree that, on subject matter grounds, the courses can be evaluated for credit by their departments when you return. The chairs will also pre-estimate the amount of credit you 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 you 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 or program. This will be the case only as long as the semester and yearly maximums are not exceeded.

Keep in mind that it is your responsibility to ask about prerequisites that some departments/programs might have in order to get credit for courses taken abroad. You 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.

Most Swarthmore students studying abroad do not need to take any specific course, or type of course, to complete the degree on schedule. A minority do need to get a specific course (e.g., biochemistry) or type of course (e.g., electrical engineering) to complete the degree on schedule. If you are one of the latter, it is important to get a confirmation from the study abroad program or university that the course will be available to you at your study abroad destination. If we are getting the uncertainty message, it is your responsibility to decide whether or not to chance it.

3. Next review your study abroad plans with your faculty adviser, who - for this purpose - is the chair of your actual or prospective major department (note that in some departments a faculty member other than the chair might be designated to review credit for study abroad). For most students, this is not the same person as their underclass adviser. If you are uncertain as to whom you should see, please ask Rosa Bernard or

Dean Diane Anderson. Review with your faculty adviser the courses that you plan to take abroad. The two of you, together, should be able to see clearly that your study abroad plans are compatible with completing all of the requirements for the Swarthmore degree on schedule. These include thirty-two units of credit, completion of major, distribution requirements, and the twenty-course rule. Your faculty adviser should sign this form on the line entitled, "Major Academic Adviser (Actual or Prospective)."

4. Off-Campus Study will sign off on the form after you have pre-estimation of credit for a sufficient number of courses for what is equivalent to at least four Swarthmore credits for one semester, or eight Swarthmore credits for the academic year.

C. CHANGING YOUR PRE-APPROVED COURSES ONCE ABROAD

You may want or need to change your schedule of pre-approved courses when you reach your study abroad program, for a number of reasons: i) a course or courses that you had planned to take is not offered; ii) when you get there, you get plugged into the grapevine and learn all sorts of things that you couldn't have learned at a distance; iii) your interests change. If you wish to change your pre-approved program of courses after you have joined the program, here is what to do and remember:

You should notify the department that pre-estimated your credit immediately of the changes that you propose to undertake in your program, and send the department descriptions (at least, course descriptions; if possible, syllabi) of the courses that you propose to add. Please remember that some departments may not evaluate a course done elsewhere for Swarthmore credit unless the student has completed a course in the department, or program, here at Swarthmore, either prior or in some cases following study abroad (e.g., history and art history - see individual department policies on their websites or in the College Bulletin). Additionally, if you would like to take two history courses abroad for credit, you must have already taken two history courses at Swarthmore. Some departments require that you have taken specific introductory courses before taking other courses in that discipline (e.g., economics, education, psychology). The economics department also requires that you take a specific introductory course in order to get credit for business courses (you can only transfer in two business courses to Swarthmore total, study abroad included).

Some departments, even if you have completed work in that subject at Swarthmore, will not evaluate a course done elsewhere unless the department has pre-estimated it. If, e.g., your major department has required you to complete a specific course while you are abroad, and you are thinking of replacing this course with another, be sure to be in touch about this with the chair of your major department.

The Off-Campus Study office will contact you while abroad to request your course registrations and to remind you to make sure that you have obtained pre-estimation for all of the courses being taken abroad. Be sure to log in to your Swarthmore Off-Campus study homepage to complete this information.

D. DOCUMENTATION OF WORK COMPLETED ABROAD TO BE PRESENTED UPON YOUR RETURN

By College regulation, a fixed amount of Swarthmore credit cannot be guaranteed in advance for successful completion of academic work done elsewhere, domestic or abroad (except Haverford, Bryn Mawr, and Penn, under the four school arrangement). This regulation expresses an important educational principle for Swarthmore, viz., all college level work submitted for credit toward the Swarthmore degree must be evaluated by the appropriate members of the Swarthmore faculty. This means that your successfully completed study abroad courses must be evaluated for Swarthmore credit when you return. There is a straightforward procedure for this, not time consuming, and when you return this office will direct you individually and specifically about this. The exception to this rule is if a department granted automatic credit to a course during the pre-estimation of credit process.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY FULLY TO DOCUMENT THE ACADEMIC WORK THAT YOU DO ABROAD FOR THIS PROCEDURE.

1. Ideally, this will involve your presentation, for each course, of a syllabus and copies of all of your assigned written work (we 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 your knowledge of the course, you 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), language class exercises, and it is a good idea to hang onto class and reading notes. If you are required to do oral reports for one or more courses, provide a brief summary of what the report consisted of and what you read in preparation for it. Whenever possible, and it is usually possible, make an extra copy of required written work before submitting it, and hang on to it, in the event that your submitted copy is not returned to you.

2. However, (1.) does not always work.

a) 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. You can't change this. What you can do, if you face this examination situation, is return to your room as soon as the exam is over and, from memory, write out the questions and a brief summary of how you answered them (e.g., what readings you referred to, brief outline of your essays). This should take 30-45 minutes, two or three pages of writing.

b) On fieldwork programs, often the required field reports or papers don't begin to express what the work actually consisted of. But you can present your field notes, and a brief written summary of the organization of your field work, topical or descriptive foci, time allocated to this and that, methods (e.g., interview, observation, participation) employed, consultations with program staff re your ongoing work, etc.

c) Often, there are out of class 'extras', which enhance the educational value of the course, e.g., field trips, museum visits, lectures, films, and concerts. Be prepared to present a record of these kinds of activities whether assigned or not, which for you was part of the educational experience.

These are guidelines, not an instruction manual. Re the documentation of work requirement, it's impossible to write a manual that will specifically gloss any and every study abroad situation in which you may find yourself. The general point is: YOU will know in full detail what you did for each course you complete while abroad. It is your responsibility to devise ways fully to represent what you did for the Swarthmore faculty members who will be evaluating your study abroad courses for Swarthmore credit. Please remember: it is the prerogative of the credit awarding departments to give you less than full credit, right down to no credit at all, for courses that they judge to be insufficiently documented. If while you are abroad you have questions, for any of your courses, about what sufficient documentation of work comprises, please be in touch either with this office or the chair of the department that will evaluate the course, or both.

Note: for any abroad course to be eligible for evaluation for Swarthmore credit, it must receive a US equivalent grade of straight C or better.

Note: Students are not allowed to take courses pass/fail.

3. As per the Swarthmore Semester/Year Abroad Program guidelines you will be registered as a full-time student at Swarthmore; and you are required to complete your academic obligations to Swarthmore for this period. You are obliged to complete the evaluation of all your study abroad courses in which you earned a grade of straight C or better, regardless of how much Swarthmore credit you have. Upon completion of your study abroad program and your return to campus, and following your return meeting with the Faculty Adviser for Off-Campus Study, you will be required to submit a *Course Material Submission* form (see appendix) along with your academic materials, to the departments that pre-estimated your courses for credit. The departments will then notify the registrar what credit they have granted for the academic work done abroad. At that time the Off-Campus Study course registrations will be removed from your transcript and the courses taken abroad will be listed on your transcript along with US letter grades. The grades are not included in a Swarthmore grade point average.

E. PRE-REGISTRATION WHILE AWAY (see Office of the Registrar website)

Students on approved off-campus study programs should follow these instructions for how to pre-register from away.

* Try to use mySwarthmore to pre-register. Use the lettered steps below to ensure your pre-registration.

*** Make note of the dates for pre-enrollment for the semester you plan to return to campus.**

1. Confer with your Academic Adviser(s): The ideal is to communicate with your academic adviser(s) and/or the chair(s) of your actual or prospective major department(s) before pre-registration to make sure that whatever credits you may be earning while away as well as your future registration plans are compatible with completion of the major(s) and all other requirements for the degree on schedule with your planned graduation date. If you can't confer with your adviser before pre-registration, try to pre-register anyway, and confer with your adviser after. This should include examining in detail how, in your

remaining semesters (including the ones away), all of your requirements will be met and, especially, how you will complete your major and your honors program, if you are hoping or planning to do honors.

2. Pre-Register for your Return Semester:

* Use mySwarthmore if you can, just as if you were on campus (try this on the first day of pre-registration)

* If somehow you cannot use mySwarthmore:

a) Tell the instructor(s) your wish to be in their course(s) or seminar(s), and then request in writing (email) to have your name entered on the list for the course(s) and/or seminar(s) offered at that future time. If you cannot tell who the instructor is, contact the Department Chair.

* b) Also send a copy of these communications to the Off-Campus Study Office.

* Please note: This procedure does not guarantee you 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 you were here next semester to participate in the pre-registration.

3. As Needed, Use a Drop/Add Form upon Returning to Swarthmore: If you were not able to use mySwarthmore to pre-register, when you arrive at Swarthmore to begin your return semester, formally register for that semester by completing either a green registration form or a drop/add form and submitting this to the Registrar's Office on or before the first two (2) days of classes. You may drop/add after that, but please do so on a separate form, after having registered. Forms are available at the Registrar's Office. If, for your return semester, you happen to be on campus during First-Year Registration in August, you may attend, but you are not required to do so; you may simply complete the form and hand it in to the Registrar during the first two days of classes.

F. STUDY ABROAD REGISTRATION AND CREDIT POLICY FROM THE OFFICES OF OFF-CAMPUS STUDY AND THE REGISTRAR

To ensure that students receive the study abroad credits they deserve, students must begin the credit approval process and obtain departmental signatures on the *Course Material Submission* form (available from the Off-Campus Study Office), following their return student meeting with the Faculty Advisor for Off-Campus Study. The deadline for the submission of the form (with departmental signatures) is normally five weeks into the first semester back.

Prior to departure, students planning study abroad must obtain pre-estimation of no less than 4.0 Swarthmore credits per semester for the work they intend to do abroad. Students must both take what is considered to be a full course load at the abroad program as well as what equates to a full normal course load at Swarthmore.

Please note the following registration and accreditation procedures:

1. Following admission by programs, students will - upon the approval of the Off-Campus Study Office and faculty advisers - be registered by the Registrar's Office for a full time load of Off-Campus Study (OCST) credit registrations. The Off-Campus Study Office will notify the Registrar's Office, each semester, of all students to be so registered for the following semester(s).

All courses must be taken for a grade. Pass/fail grades are not permitted.

2. Upon completion of programs abroad, the grade of Incomplete (INC) will be recorded by the Registrar for all OCST registrations for which transfer of credit has not yet been approved at Swarthmore (this will be virtually all of them).

3. Returning study abroad students must submit all of their study abroad work for evaluation by Swarthmore departments. As credit for study abroad work is reported to Swarthmore on official transcripts from the programs, and validated for credit at Swarthmore by departmental approvals, the Registrar will enter it upon students' permanent records. When doing so, the Registrar will delete the equivalent amount (rounded down to the nearest whole number) of OCST registration credit and the corresponding INC grade(s) and replace them with departmental credits and program grades. OCST registration credit is always in units of 1.0, although transfer credit often is not.

All completed study abroad work receiving a US equivalent grade of straight C or better must be evaluated for credit at Swarthmore. Study abroad work with grades lower than C is not eligible for transfer of credit to Swarthmore.

Students are expected to earn the normal load of four to five credits per semester, or eight to ten credits per year. More than five credits per semester or ten credits per year are not permitted. Students must keep in mind any department policies such as limits on the amount of outside credit that is allowed for the major (which included study abroad credit), academic pre-requisites that must be fulfilled in order to take certain courses, any additional conditions for the final receipt of credit, as well as the twenty-course rule.

The extra-work credit option will only be used in situations in which a student needs to obtain four credits for a semester, or eight credits for a year abroad, and/or when this is necessary to complete a major or minor requirement, with the approval of the appropriate department or program. This will be the case only as long as the semester and yearly maximums are not exceeded.

4. If the credit approval process has not yet been initiated with departmental signatures by the deadline for the submission of the completed *Course Material Submission* form to the Off-Campus Study Office, the Registrar will convert any remaining OCST INC grades to NC (No credit). The NC grades will appear on students' grade reports and transcripts. At the discretion of the Registrar, late credit approvals may be accepted prior to graduation to replace the OCST registration grades of NC.

Additionally, failure to complete the credit approval process in a timely way will result in possible ineligibility for further financial aid, a hold on the release of transcripts by the College, a hold on pre-registration for the next semester, and parent notification.