



## *CSU International Programs Applicant Guide*

**This is THE guide for CSU International Program Study Abroad applicants! Please read this page carefully and thoroughly for questions you may have regarding the application, recommendation forms, transcripts, statement of purpose and many other questions!**

### **When are the applications due?**

December 15<sup>th</sup> is the recommended deadline for the Fall academic year start CSU International Programs. The official deadline for the program is February 1<sup>st</sup>. The recommended deadline increases your chances of being accepted for the program as it gives the advisor more time to review your application. International Services is closed for the Winter break and open during the month of January for questions regarding your application.

Another reason for the earlier deadline is the fact that most professors are not available during the Winter break and you will find it difficult to get the required faculty recommendations completed.

Applications for programs beginning in Spring semester (Australia, New Zealand and South Africa) are due May 1<sup>st</sup>, with a recommended deadline of April 15<sup>th</sup>.

### **What if I don't have my application completed by the deadline date?**

With some programs we may be able to give an application extension, but be sure to contact a study abroad advisor BEFORE the deadline to request an extension.

**Is there an application fee?** No, not a penny!

### **Should my application be hand-written or typed?**

You may hand-write the application on the application PDF for your application approval meeting and your essay needs to be typed on two pages double spaced, 12 point font. The final application is online so that will naturally be typed.

### **How many faculty recommendations do I need?**

You will need TWO faculty recommendations. Both need to be from professors (NO graduate teaching assistants or former high school teachers!) who have given you a **LETTER GRADE** (NO credit/no credit courses) and hopefully that letter grade was an A or a B. One **MUST** be from a faculty member in your department or major area, and the other can be from your major department or any other department. The form that the faculty member is required to fill out is EASY and FAST and should take no more than five minutes. Some professors may want to attach an additional letter to the required form but this is NOT required. If they want to include a letter, that is fine, but the form is required. Just have them write, "see attached letter" in the box at the bottom of the recommendation page.

**What if I have not yet taken any courses in my major?**

Please speak to a study abroad advisor to find out which professor or department would be appropriate.

**Can I get a recommendation from outside SONOMA STATE UNIVERSITY?**

Yes, if this is your first semester here at Sonoma State University you may need to get a recommendation from someone at your community college. BUT the other recommendation should come from a professor here at Sonoma State University. If you have any further questions about who to get recommendations from you should speak a study abroad advisor.

**Do the recommendations need to be type-written?**

No, we do not require that the professors type the recommendations.

**Is it OK if I read the recommendation or if the professor gives it to me to deliver to International Services?**

Yes, if it is OK with the professor that you read and deliver the recommendation. The professor may also prefer to deliver it him or herself, or send to it by campus mail. Either way is fine.

**What if the recommendation is going to be late or I am not sure if the professor has turned it on or not?**

Please stop by International Services and speak to a representative to find out if the recommendation has been received. If the professor has told you that they have sent it, be sure to let an advisor know that it is on the way. It is ultimately your responsibility to see that the recommendation forms are submitted by the deadline date. Your file will be considered incomplete without them.

**Do you have any tips for getting a professor to fill out the recommendation form?**

You should make sure the professor knows who you are. Participate and ask questions in class, show up on time, visit the professor during office hours **BEFORE** you ask for the recommendation.

When asking for the recommendation it may be a good idea to provide them with a brief Statement of Purpose. You can use an abridged version of the Statement of Purpose from the application. They will appreciate this because it helps them to know where you are coming from, why you want to study abroad and how this fits into your academic and career goals. We recommend that you attach a copy of the CSU country specific brochure (or email the PDF) to the recommendation form, in case the faculty member has questions about the program.

All of the country flyers can be found online on the bottom of the country pages at:  
<http://www.calstate.edu/ip/programs/programs.shtml>

**Can my work supervisor fill out a recommendation?**

NO, you cannot get a recommendation from a work supervisor. Do not submit recommendations from employers, university staff, advisors or administrators who have not had you as a student in a course.

**Do I need a Foreign Language Recommendation?**

Check with a study abroad advisor to see if this is required for your program.

### **What if my GPA is below the minimum requirement, should I still apply?**

YES! If your GPA is below the minimum you should still apply but be sure to speak to an advisor about your concerns. They may be able to help you find a less competitive program or alternative options.

### **What if I am missing a prerequisite course, should I still apply?**

YES! If you are missing a prerequisite you should still apply but be sure to speak to an advisor about your concerns. They may be able to help you find a less competitive program or alternative options.

### **What if I am in the process of changing my major, what should I put on my application?**

***Please speak to an advisor about your concerns.*** For many programs, your major must be related to the fields available. Keep in mind it is clearly NOT enough to just declare the new major; in many cases you must also have the lower division requirements for the major completed before departure.

### **Should I declare my language double major or minor before I apply?**

YES! If you are planning to work on a double major or minor while on study abroad you will want to speak to an advisor in that department before departure. All credit earned on these programs is displayed on your transcript as RESIDENT CREDIT but the individual department may have limits on the number of units not taken at Sonoma State University that may be applied to your degree.

### **I am planning on applying for the program next year. Is there anything I can do to prepare myself?**

Great! Planning ahead is a great way to stay on track for graduation! Please attend the Information Meeting to find out more! One thing many students do is focus on major core requirements and save the elective units to do while on study abroad. Also keep in mind that General Education requirements can be fulfilled on study abroad.

### **Application Tips**

*The cover sheets to the CSU International Programs application thoroughly answers many of the questions you will have while working on the application. Please refer to these pages and this application guide when you have any questions.*

#### **Question 11.**

This should be the **TOTAL** number of college level units completed by the end of the semester before departure.

#### **Question 12.**

#### **How do I calculate my major GPA?**

First, just look at the courses you have completed for a letter grade in your lower and upper division major requirements. Add up the grade points earned from ALL COLLEGE level coursework (on the Sonoma State University transcript this shows up under the PTS (points) column). Divide that number by the Units Attempted from ALL COLLEGE level coursework (on the Sonoma State University transcript, this shows up as UNIT).

Cumulative College grade point average (GPA = Grade Points ÷ Units Attempted)

For more help with calculating your Cumulative GPA please refer to the GPA Calculator Sheet which can be found online at <http://www.sonoma.edu/sas/is/abroad/forms.shtml>

## Question 20. Transcripts

List all colleges and universities attended in REVERSE chronological order. A transcript from Sonoma State University and from all previous institutions attended is due by the deadline date. Please make sure the transcript includes Fall grades.

You must provide an **OFFICIAL** transcript from each university or college you have attended. Be sure to check that they have been received, as your application will be considered incomplete without them. Transcript requests may take three to four weeks to process, so take this into consideration in order to meet the deadline. The Registrar's Office at Sonoma State University **cannot** provide copies of transcripts from previous institutions attended. When your file is complete during the week after the deadline, International Services will request your SSU transcript from Admissions & Records on your behalf.

**IMPORTANT! Have these transcripts sent to your home address so you will know when and if they arrive. You will then hand carry them to International Services in Salazar Hall 1060.**

**What if I can't get official transcripts before deadline date?**

*Please speak to an advisor about your concerns.* You may need to rush order these transcripts as your file will be considered incomplete without them.

**Do I need transcripts from ALL previous institutions even if the units show up on the SSU transcript already?**

YES!!! We must have an **OFFICIAL** transcript for every institution listed on your SSU transcript.

## Question 22.

To complete this item, you will need to refer to the Eligibility Requirements section on the appropriate program specific flyer. The purpose of question 22 is to show that you are qualified for the program to which you are applying and, thus, should be answered carefully to reflect courses you **have taken, are taking, or will take** to meet the eligibility requirements of the program. If the title of a course you list below doesn't obviously identify the content of the course, please attach a copy of the description.

This is the part of the application where you can "pad" your application so list any course that you feel would make you more competitive, i.e. major courses, GE courses that relate to the program, and language courses (where applicable).

## Question 23. Courses

Please list all courses in which you have enrolled or will enroll during the terms indicated on the application. If you are planning to take courses that are applicable to your program during the **SUMMER** semester or quarter (May 1<sup>st</sup> applicants ONLY!), please submit a similarly formatted addition sheet listing these courses.

## Question 24. Courses on program

**Will the courses I list be my set schedule for next year if I am accepted into the program?**

NO, this is a very preliminary stage and shows the committee that you have reviewed the appropriate materials and websites for course information. There is room for 12 courses so please list at least nine courses on the application. Classes can be found on the country IP Bulletins which can be found for each country on the right side of the page at:

<http://www.calstate.edu/ip/programs/programs.shtml>

### Question 30. Expenses

#### Where do I find out the estimated total expense of the program?

Please refer to the section on “Financing Your Year or Semester” on the appropriate program specific flyer, enter the total amount you will need for study overseas.

### Question 31. Resources

#### How do I fill in the Estimated Resources section?

Estimate your resources to finance the amount you listed on Question 30. Your resources should hopefully equal your expenses and if expenses exceed resources, you will need to explore additional sources to finance the difference.

### Statement of Purpose

Please read before you complete: This should be a carefully written essay of three to five paragraphs. As the Statement of Purpose is one of the most important parts of your application, give it serious thought before putting the final version directly on this page. Use the space provided only; do not attach additional pages. Pay special attention to grammar, spelling, and form.

It is a good idea to follow the basic format of the bulleted outline provided on the application. Pay attention to the **bolded key words** below and be sure to address the questions in a **clear** and **concise** manner.

- Please indicate the extent to which your **course work** and **educational experience** have **prepared** you to study abroad.

This is ‘**PREPARATION**’ **PARAGRAPH**. Please tell us how you are prepared in the following areas: The topic of “course work” relates to ACADEMIC courses and any related academic experiences. The topic of “education experiences” refers to any experiences outside of the classroom that have helped to develop your skills to function as a study abroad student. This includes previous travel experiences, internships, work and volunteer experiences.

- Discuss **how** overseas study will contribute to your **academic** and **career goals**.

This is the ‘**HOW**’ **PARAGRAPH**. First define your academic goals and connect your participation in the program to those goals. Secondly, define your career goals and connect your participation in the program to those goals. How does this program help you to achieve those goals?

- If you do **not** meet the minimum published requirements, you may wish to explain any extenuating circumstances.

This is important if your GPA is below the minimum requirement, you are missing pre-requisite coursework, or there are any other circumstances you may wish to address. You should be specific with details such as semester or circumstance that you are addressing. You should not only explain the circumstance, but also explain why you should be considered with this deficiency.

## **Passports**

Because of the time involved in obtaining a passport, applicants are **STRONGLY** advised to apply for one even before selection results are known.

Applicants for ALL overseas programs are encouraged to begin the passport application process early, or at least to assemble the documents necessary for application. If you are not a U.S. citizen and do not hold a U.S. passport, investigate the visa procedure of your host country to see if there are special requirements that apply to you.

Information on how to get a passport can be found at <http://travel.state.gov/passport/index.html>

## **Photos**

Please provide 2 passport sized photos (2" x 2") with your application. These photos can be taken at Kinko's, Costco, RiteAid, etc. It is recommended to have 6 – 8 additional passport photos for other possible visa and document requirements.