

The Graduate School and Study Abroad Office University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Guidelines on Study Abroad Exchange Programs for Graduate Students

Revised: November, 2011

I. Overview

The Study Abroad Office and the Graduate School recognize an increasing interest in graduate student participation in study abroad and exchange programs. Learning experiences at foreign institutions, including coursework and research, are a valuable part of many graduate programs. In particular, agreements between UNC-Chapel Hill and international institutions will often include an exchange arrangement for graduate students.

These guidelines represent an effort to provide an overview of the types of programs supported, including their academic structure, funding considerations, and access to student services and benefits both at UNC-Chapel Hill and abroad. The guidelines apply to incoming foreign exchange graduate students, outgoing foreign exchange graduate students, and outgoing study abroad graduate students.

II. Student Academics and Processes

Agreements are in place for exchange programs between UNC-Chapel Hill and international institutions. The Study Abroad Office also runs third-party study abroad programs as well as their own internal programs led by UNC-Chapel Hill faculty that are fee-based and allow transfer of academic credit. Our campus also participates in a UNC system-wide exchange program based out of UNC Greensboro.

Students may earn academic credit for their degree at UNC-Chapel Hill while studying abroad through approved exchange programs. In return, foreign exchange students would attend UNC-Chapel Hill to earn credits for their home institutions' degree requirements. It is not necessary that the exchange occur in "real time" as the Study Abroad Office provides oversight to ensure equity over time. Both sets of students are earning their degrees at their home institution, not at the host institution. Exchange may be for coursework only or may also include research and fieldwork experiences.

These programs and guidelines apply to all graduate programs administered through the Graduate School, including the College of Arts and Sciences as well as other professional Schools on campus. Any interested graduate student should be eligible to participate in an exchange program.

Incoming Foreign Exchange Graduate Students

- Foreign exchange graduate students will apply as a visiting student to any graduate program at UNC-Chapel Hill.

- Applications will follow the Study Abroad Office process, guidelines, fees, and deadlines.
- The UNC-Chapel Hill graduate program has the ability to accept a foreign exchange applicant or not.
- All incoming foreign exchange graduate applicants are required to submit the following documents:
 - Personal Data Sheet*
 - Affidavit of Financial Support
 - College Transcript(s)*
 - Home College Approval Form*
 - UNC Honor Code Form*
 - Housing Preference Form
 - Essay (academic reasons for wanting to exchange at UNC)*
 - Passport Photocopy
 - TOEFL or IELTS score (if applicable)*
 - Proof of health insurance (upon acceptance and arrival students must either enroll in the UNC plan or waive out of the plan by providing evidence of another creditable policy to the campus' health insurance provider)
 - Application fee (applied to UNC account once on campus)

** Items which will be included in the materials sent to the graduate programs for review.*
- The Study Abroad Office will process the application, including routing it for approval by the graduate program and the Graduate School. The Study Abroad Office will be able to admit incoming exchange students as visiting graduate students (Program: ASFXG, Plans: NDGRADFX and VISGR) in ConnectCarolina.
- The Study Abroad Office will maintain the complete listing of all foreign exchange graduate student participants in study abroad programs.
- Foreign exchange graduate students will register as 'visiting foreign exchange students'.
 - To be considered full-time students, they must be registered for at least 9 hours of course credit or 3 hours of thesis/dissertation.
 - The Study Abroad Office orders an automatic transcript for the students upon their departure.
 - The students' home institutions should have policies in place for identifying course credit transfers.
- Foreign exchange graduate students who are at UNC-Chapel Hill are not required to pay tuition and fees to UNC-Chapel Hill, but they are eligible for all campus services. In theory, the exchange program functions because the UNC student has paid tuition and fees to UNC even though they are abroad in exchange for tuition and fees from the visiting exchange student (and vice versa for the foreign institution).

- Foreign exchange graduate students must complete an immunization form for Campus Health Services available online (<http://campushealth.unc.edu/>). Once the foreign exchange graduate students have arrived on campus, the Study Abroad Office provides a listing to Campus Health Services to ensure these students are able to receive health services.
- The Study Abroad Office has an office registrar and incoming student advisor on staff who assists foreign exchange graduate students with creating a campus PID, Onyen, and obtaining campus services (e.g., OneCard, Campus Health Services access).

UNC-Chapel Hill Outgoing Foreign Exchange Graduate Students

(All information contained in this section refers only to UNC graduate students going on outgoing foreign exchanges. This section does not apply to UNC graduate students doing international study or research programs outside the purview of UNC Study Abroad.)

- UNC-Chapel Hill graduate students who wish to participate in a foreign exchange program should consult the Study Abroad Office to determine first if an agreement exists with their desired host institution. The Study Abroad Office's website (<http://studyabroad.unc.edu/>) contains information about eligible programs and the application process.
- UNC-Chapel Hill graduate students may utilize the Study Abroad Office staff for visa assistance. Students should begin the visa process as soon as possible and note any deadlines which will impact their ability to travel to begin their exchange program. Ultimate responsibility for obtaining the visa lies with the student.
- UNC-Chapel Hill graduate students may meet with Study Abroad Office staff academic advisors to discuss course and research opportunities abroad. Graduate students must discuss their academic plans, including course transfer and research plans, with their program Director of Graduate Studies for approval.
 - The Study Abroad Office will not approve an application for an exchange program for graduate students who do not first obtain approval from their program's Director of Graduate Studies, documented in the application in the form of a letter from the DGS approving the exchange academic plan.
 - UNC-Chapel Hill graduate students will register in placeholder courses on their UNC record while they are abroad. The placeholder courses allow students to remain active at UNC-Chapel Hill even while they are abroad.
 - The placeholder courses will be set at 9.0 credit hours for most graduate students, unless they are only at the thesis or dissertation research stage, in which case the placeholder courses will be set at 3.0 credit hours.
 - Usual UNC-Chapel Hill tuition and fees will be charged for the placeholder courses.
 - Upon their return to campus, the Study Abroad Office works with the Graduate School to update the student transcripts with actual courses and hours taken abroad via the approved Study Abroad Credit Report which must have graduate program approval. The placeholder courses remain on the transcript to indicate

the work was completed abroad but will reflect zero hours. For reference, the placeholder courses are:

ISP 700	UNC EXCHANGE PROGRAM
ISP 900	UNC EXCHANGE PROGRAM

- UNC-Chapel Hill graduate students who are abroad are not required to pay tuition and fees at their host institutions but should receive any existing campus services. In theory, the exchange program functions because the UNC student has paid tuition and fees to UNC even though they are abroad in exchange for tuition and fees from the visiting exchange student (and vice versa for the foreign institution).
- The UNC-Chapel Hill graduate student health insurance plans (i.e., the TA/RA plan and the Voluntary student plan) already include worldwide coverage, thus if a student is enrolled and on either plan, their coverage will continue. If they are not on the University plans and wish to supplement their outside creditable policy, students could elect to sign up for the Study Abroad contracted plan through HTH (<http://www.hthstudents.com/>) and have it directly billed to their student accounts.

UNC-Chapel Hill Outgoing Study Abroad Graduate Students via Petition

There are instances when UNC-Chapel Hill graduate students want credit from a study abroad program with which the campus does not currently have an established agreement. They may also develop individualized study abroad experiences with their faculty advisors to conduct coursework or research at foreign institutions or locations.

Note: The Study Abroad Office and the Graduate School are working together to develop procedures for how such petitions can be developed and approved. These guidelines will be updated in the coming months with additional information.

III. Finances

The Study Abroad Office is a fee-based unit, and its fees reflect the level of service it provides to students who participate in its programs. The Office charges a \$50 application fee to any UNC-Chapel Hill student interested in participating in any study abroad experience, including exchange programs. Once accepted, the UNC-Chapel Hill student is also charged a \$600 study abroad fee which covers the Office's operational and staffing costs to monitor and maintain exchange programs. The student is expected to pay the application fee, and The Graduate School will cover the Study Abroad fee for interested graduate students.

IV. Visiting Research Scholars

There are instances when international graduate students who will receive their degrees from their home universities want to come to UNC-Chapel Hill to do dissertation research or take part-time coursework. They may want to study with a particular expert in their field or learn about technology and resources away from their home countries.

- The Office of International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) indicates the campus typically brings these students here as J-1 Research Scholars, not as F-1 Students.
- As long as the Visiting Scholar is pursuing his or her research purpose for being here, the Scholar may attend classes as non-degree seeking students, either through an audit or Continuing Studies. Visiting Scholars must arrange their course participation through each graduate program individually.
- Visiting Scholars will not be admitted to UNC-Chapel Hill graduate programs, nor will they enroll as degree seeking or visiting students.
- Visiting Scholars are eligible for campus services, including a UNC One Card. Once Scholars have been issued a PID and entered in the Affiliate System, they will be able to activate their expense account and pay for other campus privileges, such as gym privileges. See the UNC One Card website (<http://www.onecard.unc.edu/>) for additional details.
- Visiting scholars and their sponsoring departments should consult and comply with the Human Resources Policy found at: http://hr.unc.edu/policies-procedures-guidelines/spa-employee-policies/employment/CCM3_027082
- To initiate the process, the international student would need to contact the appropriate graduate program directly to inquire whether there are matching research interests, if space is available in an office or lab project, and if there are faculty to supervise the individual. Then, the program should contact ISSS (Jane Rosenberg) to request the application to begin the visa paperwork and the Office of Human Resources.