

Student Eligibility for Study Abroad

Following is the section on student eligibility excerpted from the International Programs Policy Manual. The complete manual may be found at this link: xxxxxxxx (to be added)

I ELIGIBILITY

Study abroad is a privileged educational opportunity, one which offers a uniquely rewarding experience but at the same time presents some significant challenges. As a first step toward success, the student applicant must meet certain defined standards and expectations, demonstrating evidence of both academic and personal suitability for a semester abroad. The following criteria are designed to help determine whether a student possesses the academic preparation and personal maturity to meet successfully the demands of living and studying in a foreign country, and whether Siena College will recommend a student as an “ambassador” of Siena on a study abroad program.

1. Interview

An interview with the Director is required of all students who wish to study abroad. A discussion of the student’s academic and personal achievements and goals leads to an assessment of the student’s suitability for study abroad, and leads also to recommendations regarding an appropriate study abroad program. Such recommendations and, ultimately, approval by the Director for the student to submit an application for a particular program are based first on curricular / academic needs in conjunction with a student’s qualifications. A student’s individual interests, affinity with the host culture, language ability, previous travel experience, co-curricular activities, financial needs, and other relevant issues may also be discussed as part of the advising process, and figure prominently in the student’s program choice. Additional meeting times may be required.

Through this advising process the Director may determine that a student is not adequately prepared, academically and/or personally, to succeed during a semester abroad, either in general or for a specified program. Should the Director not recommend a student for study abroad in general, or for a particular program, the Director will discuss with the student the particular reasoning behind the decision.

The Director gives written approval for the study abroad program choice. Minimally this takes the form of a signature on the application submitted to a program.

2. Recommendation from Dean of Students

The Dean of Students reviews each applicant’s disciplinary record and current probationary status, if applicable. Based on the review, the Dean recommends or does not recommend the student for study abroad. The recommendation is made verbally to the Director of International Programs. Students on probation during the period of application may be denied permission to study abroad. A student

whose disciplinary probation coincides, or will coincide, with the period abroad will be denied permission. The decision to deny permission to study abroad based on a student's social standing rests with the Director of International Programs.

A student on probation who does not receive the endorsement of the Director of International Programs will not be permitted to study abroad during the period the sanction is in effect, regardless of the student's acceptance into a study abroad program. Permission to study abroad may be rescinded if a student is placed on probation or is suspended or dismissed prior to departure. If this is the case and permission is rescinded, the student is responsible for all non-recoverable expenses incurred. Students may not apply to study abroad or transfer into Siena College any credits earned from study abroad programs while suspended or dismissed.

A student who participates on a study abroad program without the prior authorization of the International Programs Office will not be permitted to transfer any credits into Siena upon his or her return.

3. Declared major

A student must have a declared major at the time of application.

4. GPA requirement

A minimum overall GPA of 2.75 at the time of application is required.

The GPA requirement works in conjunction with the minimum standard expected by the majority of Approved Programs. Many Approved Programs require a 3.0.

Exceptions to the minimum GPA might be considered for extraordinary reasons, such as a specific academic need. For example, a Spanish major with a GPA below 2.75 may be given authorization to study abroad in a Spanish-speaking country.

A student with a GPA below 2.75 may appeal for permission to study abroad. A letter of appeal, addressed to the Director of International Programs, must describe the student's rationale for study abroad and, specifically, how it fits into the student's academic plan. The Director of International Programs may grant the exception, but the final decision rests with the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

The Director will not approve participation on a program with lower standards solely for the sake of accommodating a student with a GPA below 2.75. A student who does not meet Siena's eligibility requirements for academic reasons will not receive authorization to participate on a program simply because the student is able to meet the lower eligibility requirements or standards of a particular program. This would undermine the quality of programs which Siena College has endorsed and which appear on the Approved list.

A student who is ineligible for study abroad for academic reasons may not receive credit for a program for which prior authorization has not been granted.

5. Transfer students

If a transfer student, completion of a minimum of one semester of full-time study at Siena is required before undertaking study abroad.

6. Class standing

Normally, a student is a junior or a first-semester senior during the time abroad.

Juniors form the vast majority of students from the United States who study abroad, so as juniors and first-semester seniors, Siena students will live and study abroad with the appropriate peer cohort. It is expected that juniors and first-semester seniors will have reached a level of maturity and be well enough grounded in their major discipline to undertake advanced studies in a foreign university setting.

Exceptions are made for students with curricular restrictions, which include Social Work majors, ROTC students, and, in certain circumstances and with the recommendation of the faculty advisor, students (especially in the School of Science) who have complex sequencing of required courses. These students may request to study abroad as second-semester sophomores.

Students are highly discouraged from studying abroad in their last semester (second-semester seniors). In exceptional circumstances a student may present a valid rationale for studying abroad as a second-semester senior. Students are allowed to complete their academic career abroad only through special authorization from the Vice President for Academic Affairs, who will consult with the Director of International Programs on the suitability of the proposal. Since it is difficult, at best, to receive a foreign transcript in time for graduation, as a condition for approval the student must sign a waiver indicating that he/she understands that grades will not likely be received in time to be cleared for graduation.

First year students and first-semester sophomores are not eligible to study abroad.

7. Deadlines / Limited Enrollment

The Office of International Programs sets application deadlines. Siena deadlines rarely match those of a study abroad program provider or a foreign university. The Siena deadline is often in advance of that of the program provider, but it is nonetheless the Siena deadline to which the Siena student must adhere. This is to allow for appropriate pre-advising, including attendance at the Pre-Departure meeting, and issuance of necessary paperwork (i.e. visa documents) which must occur within the semester prior to going abroad. Once a deadline has passed a student may not expect to be authorized for study abroad. The student may be offered an opportunity to apply for a subsequent semester.

In some cases a program will have an enrollment cap and will fill before an application deadline. Most applications are rolling and are processed on a first-come, first-served basis. Room on a program cannot be guaranteed simply because a student expresses interest in advance of a deadline. The office website will post when programs fill.

8. Maintaining standards

Once approved for study abroad, the student must continue to maintain all standards which govern eligibility. If academic or social standing, or academic integrity, is compromised, then approval may be rescinded. If this occurs, the student is responsible for all financial or other obligations as determined by Siena College or the study abroad program. The student who participates on a study abroad program without prior authorization will not receive credits in transfer upon his or her return.