

# Guidelines for UCSB ES & Hydro Majors Planning to Participate in Third-Party Study Abroad and Environmental Field Studies Programs

Many Environmental Studies (ES) and Hydrology (HYDRO) students elect to participate in non-UCEAP sponsored study abroad and environmental field studies programs called "Third-Party" experiential education opportunities. These programs allow them to study environmental phenomena in either formal academic venues at host universities or in real-world settings where they learn professional field research methods and explore a new country/landscape. Students often camp, backpack, and/or visit remote field research stations during a significant portion of these field programs which range in length from 2 weeks to a full semester. Participants earn academic credit through an affiliated host university that once completed and transferred back to UCSB are often applicable towards major requirements, most often the Area C (Outside Concentration). Popular third-party programs include Wildlands Studies, the School for Field Studies, and Wild Rockies Field Institute, Semester at Sea, and Sea Semester to name a few and links to these and similar opportunities are available on the [ES Field Studies webpage](#).

**Below, you'll find essential information** for students planning to participate in a non-UCEAP study abroad or environmental field studies program. Students considering participating in one of these should read this document carefully and speak with an [ES Academic Advisor](#) (Bren Hall 4L, Rm. 4312 or 4313) or visit the [College of L&S](#) if they have any questions about how units earned may apply towards major or university requirements.

## APPLYING THIRD-PARTY ACADEMIC CREDIT TOWARDS MAJOR REQUIREMENTS:

ES & HYDRO majors are welcome to petition non-UCEAP units towards their major assuming they are UC transferable, the right class level (i.e. lower vs upper-division), and meet specific content or subject requirements. NOTE: any non-UCSB courses/units one wishes to apply towards ES or HYDRO major requirements must be [petitioned](#) to become official and restrictions on the total number of units one can apply may be enforced.

**Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind as you consider enrolling in a third-party university, study abroad, or field studies program:**

- Upper-division units earned through popular **environmental field programs** such as Wildlands Studies and School for Field Studies almost exclusively apply towards the Area C (Outside Concentration) or the Area C (Electives) for the HYDRO major. The only exception is if one fulfills their ES Area C with an official UCSB minor or double major, in which case ES will allow a max of 8 units towards the Area B (ES Electives).
- **More traditional classroom-based courses** offered at or by a college or university outside UCSB may be considered to apply towards any part of the major assuming they are UC transferable, the right class level (i.e. lower vs upper-division), and the course content is appropriate. Such programs might include Colorado State's Semester at Sea or OSIT Study Abroad. Generally, if a class is at least 75% the same as the ES or UCSB course(s) accepted towards a particular requirement, they will be considered. Note: A [petition](#) will be required for these courses and limits as to how many upper-division units may apply towards Areas A and B in the ES and Hydro majors may apply. Please consult an ES Advisor or see the [ES Guidelines for Applying UCEAP Courses Towards the Major](#) for more info on how ES evaluates these courses.
- Some field programs may award less than the 16 required units needed to satisfy Area C. In such cases one will need to "backfill" their Outside Concentration by taking additional upper-division coursework from a non-Environmental Studies department related to their field program's theme (petition is required).
- ALL third-party units one wishes to apply towards any ES or HYDRO major requirement **MUST be petitioned using the [ES Major Degree Petition](#)**. This can only be done once the units have been completed, successfully transferred to UCSB, and posted to one's Course History on GOLD.
- If you have any questions about transferability and/or if third-party units are applicable towards major requirements be sure to review the [UCSB L&S Transfer Credit webpage](#) and/or see an academic advisor. You can also visit the Office of the Registrar's [Non-UC Study Abroad FAQs](#) page.

## STEPS TO PARTICIPATE IN THIRD-PARTY STUDY ABROAD OR FIELD STUDIES PROGRAMS:

1. **Identify and thoroughly investigate** any third-party program you want to participate in. Viable programs will have extensive info about their courses and how academic credit is awarded and by what accredited institution on their websites. Make sure the program meets your academic goals and the units are UC transferable and at the right class level before you commit.
2. **Meet with an ES Academic Advisor:** Consult with the ES advising team to determine if a field studies or study abroad program is right for you and how it can fit into your academic plan. Seniors should also verify their [academic residency requirements](#) (incl. senior residency) will still be met if they enroll in a program.
3. **Assess Financial Aid:** UCSB financial aid or scholarships (i.e. UC Regents) will not apply towards most third-party abroad and field studies programs. The one current exception is Wildlands Studies, which can only utilize FAFSA-related aid. One should contact the UCSB [Financial Aid Office](#) immediately after being accepted into a Wildlands Studies program to initiate the required *Consortium Agreement*.
4. **Apply for Scholarships [optional]:** Many field studies programs have their own scholarships and financial aid students can apply for to reduce the cost of the program. Deadlines may vary, so check early. Also, consider applying for one of the many UCSB [ES Scholarships](#) available to help cover costs associated with participation in a field studies program (i.e. *Decker* and the *Stapelmann Scholarships*).
5. **Check UCSB Leave Status Eligibility:** All third-party programs during the academic year (excluding summer) will require one to take a formal leave of absence from UCSB during the quarter(s) you participate, so be sure you meet all eligibility requirements (i.e. cumulative GPA is above 2.0, in good academic standing, etc). This also means you will not pay any UCSB tuition/fees during your leave.
6. **Complete UCSB Leave Forms:** Fill out the [Non-UC Sponsored Study Abroad Leave and Return Request Form](#), and submit it to the Registrar's Office at least 4 weeks before your departure term. A \$70.00 non-refundable leave request fee is payable to the UC Regents through the BARC office. Successfully filing for a Leave of Absence will allow one to retain their registration priority status for the subsequent quarter they plan to return to UCSB. **NOTE: Summer programs don't require one to fill out this form.**

### Upon Your Return to UCSB:

7. **Verify Transcript Delivery to UCSB:** Ensure your program sends transcripts to [UCSB's Admissions Office](#); some programs, like Wildland Studies, do this automatically, but students should still confirm.
8. **Petition for Major Requirement Credit:** If you intend to use third-party abroad or field studies coursework to fulfill major requirement one must file an ES [Petition for Major Requirements Form](#), or for GE's, [a petition with the College of L&S](#).  
**Note:** ES can't consider any petition until the coursework has been posted to your UCSB Course History on GOLD. If you're petitioning units to fulfill the Area C (Outside Concentration) be sure to include ALL 16 units you're using to meet this requirement. If you are still waiting to enroll in additional units, please delay sending in your petition until you are at least enrolled in the last of your Area C coursework. Petitions can take up to 3-4 weeks to get approved. Once approved, you will receive an email confirmation from the College of L&S and it will show up in your GOLD progress check a few days later.

*If you have any questions about participating in third-party study abroad or environmental field studies programs please consult an [ES Academic Advisor](#) (Bren Hall 4L, Rm. 4312 or 4313).*