

San Francisco State University

Exchange Program Advising Guide

<http://oip.sfsu.edu/prospective-exchange>



SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY

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Greetings from San Francisco State University!

From your colleagues at SF State:

The SF State [Office of International Programs \(OIP\)](#) is a multi-faceted university department housed under the Division of International Education. San Francisco State University is a proud national leader in international education, pioneering innovations in long-term study abroad, diversity, equity, and inclusion in international education and student leadership development. Our staff regularly present at national conferences and collaborate with other U.S. institutions.

SF State boasts a thriving exchange program in partnership with 100+ global institutions. Among U.S. institutions, our program is unique in that 95% of inbound and outbound students study abroad on semester- and year-long programs. Whether you are a new exchange partner or an old friend, we look forward to our continued collaboration and cherish your partnership.

This Guide

This guide is intended to provide a comprehensive overview the SF State exchange program and supply our partners with ample resources to guide students in making their study abroad decisions. If any of the information provided is unclear, please contact exchange@sfsu.edu.

Our Campus

[San Francisco State University](#) lies in southwest San Francisco near the peaceful Sunset District and Lake Merced. The campus is within walking distance of the beach and offers direct public transportation access to Downtown, the Golden Gate Bridge, and other desirable locations.

SF State is a comprehensive university offering bachelor's degrees in 72 academic areas, master's degrees in 62 academic areas, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership.



COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Course descriptions can be found in the [Course Index](#). Please keep in mind that not all courses are offered each semester.

SYLLABI

In general, syllabi are not available online prior to the first day of class. We kindly request that you advise students not to contact our office, departments, or professors to obtain syllabi prior to the start of classes.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Once posted, course availability for upcoming semesters can be found on the [Class Schedule](#). The class schedule for a given semester will become available several months before the start of the semester. Schedule release dates may be found on the [Academic Calendar](#). We understand that some institutions ask students to plan their schedules 6 months or a year in advance. Due to the short notice nature of SF State's schedule announcement process, we ask advisors and students to be flexible when planning their classes.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Most classes meet "MWF" (Monday, Wednesday, and Friday) or "TTH" (Tuesday and Thursday). Students must attend class each day, as new content will be covered in each class.

CLASS FORMATS

Beginning Fall 2023, exchange student may take **1 online course** while all other courses must be in person or hybrid.

In-Person: Instruction takes place in a classroom. **Online Asynchronous:** Instruction takes place online and may be accessed at any time.

Online Synchronous: Instruction takes place online at a specific time.

Online Bichronous: A combination of Asynchronous and Synchronous instruction. **Hybrid:** A combination of online and in-person instruction.

GRADING

Visit [Grading Policy and Systems](#) for additional information.



PROGRAM ADVISING

Field of Study

SF State exchange students enter the United States on a J-1 visa as part of the [Exchange Visitor Program](#). Students' home universities nominate them to pursue a specific field of study, which will be indicated on the students' DS-2019 immigration document. The field of study need not match the student's major at their home university. However, the student should possess adequate knowledge to succeed in classes in that field. In addition to courses in their field of study, students may take non-restricted courses in other disciplines, provided the student meets course requirements.

Restricted Departments/Programs/Majors

The following departments, programs, and majors are currently unavailable to exchange students, unless previously agreed upon with the partner university:

- Accounting Concentration, Business
- American Language Institute
- College of Extended Learning
- Design (Fashion Design and Merchandising, Interior Design, Industrial/Product Design, Visual Communication Design)
- Kinesiology - Exercise and Movement Sciences
- Music and Dance (individually taught courses)
- Nursing (BSN) and Pre-Nursing
- Psychology
- School of Education
- Social Work

Academic Expectations

As per J-1 visa requirements, all exchange students must enroll as full-time students. Full-time is defined as 12 units of course work each semester. Students should attend class, submit assignments, and maintain a satisfactory academic performance. Satisfactory performance is defined as a "C" average, (2.0 GPA or 72% overall average). If students experience academic difficulty or health concerns, please encourage them to contact OIP. We can connect students with academic as well as physical and mental health support.

Graduate Classes

Unless previously agreed upon with the partner university, all exchange students are classified as undergraduate students at SF State regardless of their status at their home universities. Therefore, exchange students may not enroll in graduate courses (level 700 and above).



HEALTH AND SAFETY

Health Insurance

As per J-1 immigration regulations and CSU policy, all exchange students on J-1 visas and J-2 dependents must maintain health insurance coverage for the duration of their program as indicated on the Form DS-2019. They must purchase the health insurance plan specified by SF State health prior to entering the United States. **No other insurance coverage will be accepted.**

In the United States, healthcare is not a public service. Therefore, the cost of healthcare is generally much higher than in countries that have a national healthcare system. Health insurance protects students financially, particularly when it comes to unexpected illnesses and injuries that lead to expensive medical bills.

Students are provided instructions for purchasing health insurance upon acceptance into the exchange program. Details for the current student health insurance plan can be found on the [Risk Strategies \(AHP\) Insurance website](#).

Immunization Requirements

SF State immunization policy requires that all students provide proof of immunization against Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR). SF State students who are 18 years old or younger must also show proof of Hepatitis B immunization. Students unable to receive the MMR immunization prior to travel may receive it after entering the United States. English translations of immunization records will be required if the record's original language is not English. Additional information regarding required immunizations may be found on the [Student Health Services website](#).

HOUSING

On-Campus Housing

Limited on-campus housing is available to exchange students. Students interested in on-campus housing must submit their application directly to the university's [Housing Office](#) by the specified deadline. Students may not apply for on-campus housing until they have been accepted into the exchange program and received their Student ID Number. Due to high demand, SF State cannot guarantee on-campus housing assignments. Students are, therefore, encouraged to apply early and be flexible when considering housing options.

Off-Campus Housing

Most exchange students live off campus and make their long-term housing arrangements after arriving in San Francisco. Looking for housing in a new country can be intimidating, but SF State offers many [Off-Campus Housing resources](#) to help students. Additional housing resources are provided in the Pre-Arrival Orientation module.

Due to San Francisco's high cost of living, most students choose to live with housemates and/or roommates.



TEMPORARY HOUSING

To avoid housing scams or uncomfortable living situations, OIP recommends that students commit to an off-campus housing arrangement **only after** arriving in San Francisco. Waiting until arrival allows the student to visit the property in-person prior to signing a contract or paying any money to a landlord. Waiting also allows the student to become familiar with neighborhoods, connect with potential roommates, and assess average rental prices prior to making accommodation commitments.

To accomplish this, OIP recommends that students arrange temporary housing (1-2 weeks) prior to arriving in San Francisco. This ensures that they have a place to stay while they look for a more permanent living situation.

San Francisco offers many temporary housing options, including hostels, hotels, and short-term apartment/room rentals such as those available on Airbnb and VRBO. Students can find more information about housing by visiting [Off-Campus Housing resources](#).

PROOF OF FUNDING

As per immigration requirements, exchange students on J-1 visas are not eligible for federal financial aid from the U.S. government. As part of the exchange program application, prospective exchange students must demonstrate adequate financial resources to support their living expenses for the duration of their studies. The amount of proven funding must meet or exceed the totals indicated in the Expenses chart below.

EXPENSES

Please find the upcoming academic semester costs below. All amounts are estimates in USD based on the SF State Bursar's Office recommendations and other sources.

Cost Category	Spring 2024	Calendar Year 2024*
Books & Supplies	\$549	\$1098
Housing & Meals	\$9499	\$18,998
Transportation & Personal Expenses	\$2101	\$4202
Health Insurance	\$975	\$1950
Total	\$13,124	\$26,248

*Estimates are for Spring and Fall semesters only. Estimates do not include cost of living for the Summer term.

TRANSCRIPTS

SF State sends one paper copy of each student's transcript to the student's home university at the end of each semester. As per the exchange agreement, the academic credits that students earn at SF State are to be applied to their academic record at their home university.

OIP does not issue transcripts directly to the student. However, students may request paper and digital copies for personal use at from the [SF State Registrar](#).

Regarding Transcript Availability

In general, official transcripts do not become available until several weeks after the last day of the semester. Once transcripts are available, OIP requests them from the SF State Registrar. It takes an additional two weeks after the request is made for OIP to receive, sort, and ship transcripts. OIP is unable to expedite this process.

Transcript availability dates may be found on the [Academic Calendar](#).

WORKING ON A J-1 VISA

On-Campus Employment

Students who successfully meet all other immigration status and program requirements may work in on-campus roles or roles for on-campus affiliate businesses (such as on-campus coffee shops or restaurants) up to 20 hours per week during the semester. To work on campus, students **MUST** receive Work Authorization from OIP and complete all subsequent paperwork.

As per J-1 immigration regulations, off-campus work is **NOT** permitted.

Academic Training

Academic Training is an off-campus professional development opportunity available to qualifying J-1 visa holders. Academic Training allows exchange students to participate in an off-campus job or internship directly related to the student's field of study as indicated on the student's Form DS-2019 immigration document.

Academic Training may be paid or unpaid and is available before and after completion of the student's program of study.

Academic Training Eligibility is determined by OIP. Requirements include exemplary academic standing, satisfactory completion of the campus internationalization (IEEC) requirement, and maintenance of J-1 status. Students may **NOT** work before receiving Academic Training Authorization from our office.

Extreme Hardship / Financial Need

Students may be granted special work permission if they experience unexpected financial need during their program of study. Qualifying circumstances include a financial sponsor's sudden loss of income or employment, natural or fiscal crises in the student's home country, or other unforeseen circumstances outside the student's control. Eligibility for Financial Need Work Authorization will be determined by OIP.

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION EXCHANGE COUNCIL (IEEC):

The [International Education Exchange Council \(IEEC\)](#) is a student-run service organization that supports international students and study abroad students at San Francisco State University. IEEC hosts hundreds of annual events, offers language exchange opportunities, and promotes study abroad and inter-cultural sharing.

As part of the SF State exchange program, students contribute to campus internationalization through participation in one of the following IEEC commitments: *

Officer

Gain leadership experience serving on one of the following committees: Executive, Events, Creative, Finance, Marketing, others as needed.

Study Abroad Ambassador

Promote study abroad on campus through weekly tabling, handing out flyers, the Study Abroad Fair.

Language Exchange

Assist SF State students who are interested in learning the exchange student's native language(s).

Flying

Provide resources for future students by posting flyers around campus to promote IEEC and Study Abroad.

*Commitment options vary semester to semester.



MANDATORY ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Prior to arrival in the United States, all incoming exchange students complete the Pre-Arrival Orientation. This online module covers the following:

- Information about the Office of International Programs and SF State
- Exchange Visitor Program and J-1 Immigration Requirements
- U.S. Entry and Reporting Requirements
- Housing in San Francisco
- International Education Exchange Council (IEEC)
- Course Registration and Academic Expectations
- Expenses and Budgeting
- Healthcare and Health Insurance
- Culture Shock
- Employment

During the week before classes, students must attend the International Student Orientation (ISO), which occurs over several days and may take place in-person or via Zoom. During ISO, students will:

- Learn about resources available at SF State.
- Meet the exchange advisors and have an opportunity to ask questions.
- Meet their fellow exchange students and other SF State students.
- Learn about J-1 immigration regulations.
- Select their IEEC commitment.
- Complete the Document Check-in to verify their arrival in J-1 status.

IMPORTANT: Pre-arrival orientation completion and post-arrival orientation attendance are **mandatory** as per J-1 visa requirements. Failure to complete/attend all sections of the orientation may result in loss of J-1 status.



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IMPORTANT DATES:

- **2024 Deadlines:**
 - Spring 2024/Calendar Year 2024
 - Nomination: September 24, 2023
 - Application: October 1, 2023
- **Program Dates:**
 - Spring 2024 (TBD – May 31, 2024)
 - Orientation: TBD
 - First day of instruction: January 29, 2024
 - Final exams: May 18- 24, 2024
 - Fall 2024 (TBD– December 31, 2024)
 - Orientation: TBD
 - First day of instruction: TBD
 - Final exams: TBD
- **When should students enter the United States?**
 - Students may enter the United States up to 30 days prior to the Program Start Date on their Form DS-2019 immigration document. Students must arrive no later than the program start date on their DS-2019. The program start date corresponds with the first day of the mandatory orientation. OIP recommends that students arrive one to two weeks prior to the orientation.
- **When can students return home?**
 - Students may leave the United States after completing their final exams. Students must leave the United States within 30 days after the program end date on their DS-2019.

APPLICATION TIMELINE AND PROCEDURES

Nomination & Application Cycle

- Fall semester/Academic Year: Instructions sent in January
- Spring semester/Calendar Year: instructions sent in August

Current nomination and application deadlines are indicated to the left under “Important Dates.” Partners nominate students via an online form. Students complete the application online and must include the following:

- Personal Essay (250-500 words)
- Course Proposal
- Official Transcripts
- Proof of English Proficiency
 - Accepted documents: iBT 61, IELTS 6.0, TOEFL 500, faculty/staff recommendation
- Proof of adequate funding
 - Accepted documents: banks statements, scholarship/financial aid award letters, sponsor letters
- Copy of valid passport

Acceptance Notification

Students will receive acceptance notification via email as follows:

- Fall semester/Academic Year: Mid to late April
- Spring semester/Calendar Year: Mid to late October

Pre-arrival Correspondence

Upon acceptance, students will receive the following communications:

- Welcome Packet (email)
- Student ID and Email Setup Instructions (email)
- Course Registration Instructions (email)
- Acceptance letter and Form DS-2019 (emailed to the student’s home university and the student)
- Pre-Arrival Orientation notification (email)
- Health insurance purchasing instructions (email)
- Additional correspondence as needed

Transcripts

Transcripts will be mailed on the following timeline:

- Fall semester: February
- Spring semester: July

NAFSA AND CAMPUS VISITS

OIP exchange staff regularly attend the NAFSA annual conference. We love to meet partners during this time, so please feel free to contact us in late April/early May to arrange conference meetings. Additionally, OIP is pleased to host representatives from your university (faculty or staff) at SF State.

CONTACT OIP

If you have any additional questions, please:

TEL: +1-415-338-1293

EMAIL: exchange@sfsu.edu

MAILING ADDRESS:

ATTN: Inbound Exchange
Office of International Programs
1600 Holloway Ave., VCS-C
San Francisco, CA 94132
USA



Primary Contact Persons for Incoming Students (Exchange students coming to SF State)

Contact Person	Responsibilities	Contact Details
Alaric Trousdale, Ph.D	Lead Officer, Exchange & Scholar Services & ARO Incoming Students—CSU IP, Bilateral Exchange Incoming Exchange Research (J-1 Visa) Scholars	Tel: +1.415.338.6757 Email: alarictrousdale@sfsu.edu
Ashley Burch	Exchange Student Advisor & ARO Incoming Students—CSU IP, Bilateral Exchange	Tel: +1.415.405.4251 Email: aburch@sfsu.edu

Primary Contact Persons for Outgoing Students (Study Abroad students leaving from SF State)

Contact Person	Responsibilities	Contact Details
Janelle Waldrep, Ed.D	Lead Study Abroad Officer International Education Exchange Council Advisor Outgoing Students—Bilateral Exchange, CSU IP	Tel: +1.415.405.4253 Email: waldrep@sfsu.edu
Mark Belocura	Study Abroad Coordinator Outgoing Students—Bilateral Exchange, CSU IP	Tel: +1.415.405.4439 Email: mbelocur@sfsu.edu
Taylor Jones	Study Abroad Advisor Outgoing Students—Bilateral Exchange, CSU IP	Tel: Email: tjones11@sfsu.edu

Division of International Education/Office of International Programs Administration

Contact Person	Responsibilities	Contact Details
Marilyn Jackson, Ed.D	Interim Assistant Vice President Division of International Education	Tel: +1.415.338.3317 Email: mjackson@sfsu.edu