

# Handbook for Study Abroad

Office of International Education and Programs  
SUNY Oswego

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Office of International Education and Programs (OIEP) offers carefully designed and closely administered academic programs to mature and highly-motivated students to provide them with an educational program overseas that will enhance their academic experience. Each of the overseas academic programs offered by the office has specific objectives, which are clearly articulated in promotional and orientation materials. This *Handbook* contains information about procedures and policies relative to SUNY-Oswego's overseas academic programs. It is organized as follows: first, pre-departure information, such as admissions procedures, orientation and travel documents is discussed; second, departure and post- departure information, such as arrival and housing abroad, and the position of resident director, is presented; third, registration and financial matters, such as advanced registration, financial obligations, payment options, are dealt with; fourth, the processing of grades, credits and transcripts are discussed; fifth, the conditions under which refunds and cancellations can be given are outlined. The *Handbook* concludes with some useful general information about study abroad.

Participants are advised that only written information issued by the OIEP for the semester of participation is valid. In addition, the office insists that any requests for deviations from standard program rules, requests for early departures, withdrawals from programs and the like, be sent in writing. It is too easy for misunderstandings to arise when such requests are communicated verbally over the telephone. Fax and e-mail (when printed) are considered "written communication." The OIEP routinely prints and saves all e-mail messages that it sends and receives about each participant. These are filed in the participant's dossier to document accurately who has e-mailed what to whom.

## II. APPLYING

Studying abroad on a State University of New York at Oswego program is a privilege not a right. Applicants will be reviewed for acceptance/rejection only after all application materials have been received. A student who wishes to study abroad on one of SUNY-Oswego's overseas academic programs must be a full-time matriculated student. Exception: Adult applicants not enrolled in a university are permitted to apply for our short-term programs. Interested students will be sent an application pack, which contains the following forms:

A. State University of New York Overseas Academic Programs Application

When filling in this form, please type or print legibly with a ballpoint pen. Make a photocopy of this form for your records.

B. Study Statement

This form asks you to provide the OIEP with a concise statement of why you want to study abroad in light of your present course of study. Please make sure your statement is written in grammatical English, correctly punctuated and spelled.

C. Foreign Language Proficiency

This form is designed to indicate whether or not you have the requisite level of foreign language proficiency for programs in which English is not the language of instruction.

D. Confidential References

The OIEP requires three confidential references from students applying for semester and academic year programs and one confidential reference for summer programs. Two of the three references must be academic (i.e., from two professors) and one must be non-academic (e.g., from your employer, rabbi, minister, coach).

E. Agreement and Release

Your signature on this form indicates that you acknowledge and agree, first, to abide by the policies of the OIEP, the *State University of New York at Oswego Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct*, the rules and regulations of the host institution and the host country; and, second, to meet all financial obligations by the deadline specified on the invoice for your program. Also, your signature on this form exempts the State University of New York from paying compensation for hurt, loss or damage incurred while studying abroad. If you are not financially independent and under 21 years of age, this form must be co-signed by your parents or guardians. If you are financially independent, the form requires your signature only. You must prove your financial independence by attaching a confirmation from the Office of Financial Aid.

F. Physician's Statement

This form assures the OIEP that you are physically fit enough to study overseas. It may be completed by the home campus health service, provided that you have a basic health history on file. There is no need to have a major physical examination for this form unless you wish to do so. The purpose of the form is to give the OIEP the assurance that you are in good general health by a qualified healthcare provider. Please note, however, that some overseas host institutions require a thorough physical examination done by a physician before they will allow you to begin your studies.

G. Student Health Information

This is a confidential form that allows you to answer questions regarding any medical or dietary restrictions, and any injuries, diseases or ailments you may have or are currently experiencing. We suggest that you complete this form and review it with your physician. This form also allows you to indicate the name of the person who should be contacted in the case of emergency, illness, or accident.

H. The two-page SUNY Overseas Academic Programs Application; Study Statement; Foreign Language Proficiency Form, if applicable; Confidential References; as well as official transcript must be submitted in order to be reviewed for acceptance.

The Overseas Study Course Approval Form; Agreement and Release form; Physician's Statement; and Student Health Information form must be submitted to the OIEP 14 days after the receipt of your letter of acceptance. Failure to do so will jeopardize your opportunity to study abroad.

### III. ADMISSION

After you have been admitted to an Oswego overseas academic program, you will receive additional information, which will be sent to you at your campus address close to the end of the academic year and, thereafter, to the address that you have given as your permanent home address. It is, therefore, imperative that the OIEP has an accurate and current permanent address where materials can be sent to you immediately prior to your departure for the host site. Please note that it is your responsibility to keep the OIEP informed of your current address and any change of address. If you change addresses and fail to notify the OIEP, you could miss important mailings, meetings, and payment deadlines. Once you are admitted, you will receive an admissions pack, which contains the following:

A. Program Acceptance letter

This letter from the director formally accepts you into the program to which you have applied and is the means by which you formally accept the OIEP's offer of admissions by signing and dating it in the space provided.

B. Financial Arrangements Form

By completing this form, you advise the OIEP of the method by which you will pay for your study abroad, either by using your own funds or by using financial aid funds. If you intend to pay for your study abroad using financial aid, the obverse of this form must be completed by your student accounts office or your bursar's office.

C. Scholarship/Grant Application (Oswego Students ONLY)

The OIEP administers several scholarships each semester for Oswego students planning to study abroad the following semester or summer on an Oswego-sponsored program. These scholarships range from \$300 to \$1,000, with \$500 being the average grant, and are primarily need-based, although academics are taken into consideration. If you apply for a scholarship, you must include documentation of financial need.

D. Current Program Brochure and Cost Information

The cost sheet will give you, your parents, and the financial aid office an itemization of the program costs. It documents the amount of money you will need to pay for your overseas study.

E. Overseas Study Course Approval

Although this form does not have to accompany your application, it is sent to you with the application materials to give you time to consult with your academic advisor who must approve your course selections. Please note: you should never plan to take required courses overseas because the OIEP cannot guarantee that the courses you have selected will actually be offered. All students must enroll in AND remain enrolled in 12 or more credits (FULL TIME) per semester while overseas. Failure to do this is a violation of student Visa status in some countries, can affect Title IV funding for financial aid, and can be grounds for immediate expulsion from the program.

NOTE: Regardless of overseas university policy, students participating on SUNY overseas academic programs CANNOT drop or withdraw from classes after the ninth week of the semester unless he/she can document extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control to the OIEP at SUNY Oswego. The OIEP has the final authority to approve or disapprove the documented course withdrawal.

F. Waiver of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 prohibits the release of privileged information to anyone except authorized individuals. If you do not sign this waiver, the OIEP will not discuss privileged information about you with anyone. If you do sign this form, you are authorizing the OIEP to release and discuss matters pertaining to your records with the persons authorized by indicating their names and relationship in the space provided on the form.

G. Health and Accident Insurance Form

SUNY policies require that ALL students participating in Oswego overseas academic programs have adequate health insurance coverage. The health and safety of those who participate in its study abroad programs is the overriding concern of OIEP. To ensure that your health requirements (and potential requirements) can be met while you are abroad, the OIEP must be certain that you have adequate health insurance. This form provides the OIEP with verification that you have coverage for the following provisions:

1. treatment for accidents or illness that occur abroad (for a minimum of \$75,000);
2. treatment of pre-existing conditions that might need to be treated while you are abroad;
3. medical evacuation in the event of catastrophic accident or illness; and
4. repatriation of your remains in the event of death.

For a waiver of the mandatory SUNY health insurance premium to be granted, the Health Insurance Coverage form must be accompanied by a statement from the participant's health insurance provider (or HMO, parent's employer's benefits office, etc.) on the letterhead of that provider (or on similar "official" stationary) explicitly identifying what coverage is in effect for the participant: (1) during the period when the participant will be abroad; and (2) for medical treatment received by the participant while outside of the United States.

The intent of SUNY's policy of requiring health insurance is to prevent an accident or illness while abroad from creating a crushing financial burden on you and/or your family. The intent of SUNY's policy of waiving the requirement that a student purchase the SUNY OAP health insurance policy, if that student already has the same level and type of health insurance coverage from another provider, is to allow you to avoid the costs and burden of "double coverage." Please note that health insurance obtained by overseas academic program participants from the following agencies DO NOT provide "comparable coverage" and therefore cannot be used as the basis of a request for a waiver:

1. The Council for the International Educational Exchange (CIEE)
2. Rotary International
3. The Institute of International Education (IIE)

Inquires about SUNY's Mandatory Health Insurance waiver policies should be made to:

The Director  
Student Affairs, Programs and Training  
SUNY System Administration  
SUNY Plaza Albany, NY 12246

There are no exceptions, waivers, or exemptions from the requirement that you have SUNY health insurance coverage or its equivalent during the time you will be participating in an Oswego overseas academic program. If your health insurance policy, in paragraphs 1, 2, 3, and 4 does not provide the coverage and/or in the amounts specified above, appropriate health and accident insurance must be purchased from SUNY. If no request for a waiver or if no statement of existing coverage is received two weeks after receiving the acceptance letter, a charge for the full SUNY health insurance policy will be added to your bill by the OIEP and must be paid.

#### H. Acceptance Checklist

The acceptance pack contains a checklist designed to help you keep track of what you need to do and when you need to do it in order to secure your admissions to your program. The acceptance pack also contains additional forms: Agreement and Release for Study Abroad, Student Health Information, and Physician's Statement, in case you have misplaced the ones sent to you earlier. These forms must be completed and returned to the OIEP within 14 days of acceptance.

### **IV. PROGRAM INFORMATION**

After you have returned the materials in the acceptance pack and have paid your \$250 deposit, you will receive a program information pack, which contains the following items:

#### A. Flight Information

If a group flight has been arranged for your program, a flight itinerary information sheet (including prices, deadlines and deposits) will be sent to you, together with a Flight Memo Sheet to be sent back to the OIEP and a Registration Form to be sent to the travel agency handling the group flight. If you are making your own flight arrangements, a copy of your travel itinerary **MUST** be sent to the OIEP.

#### B. Program-Specific Course Selection and Application Materials (if applicable)

For some overseas programs, course information is available for distribution. It is important that you send back course selection forms, signed by your advisor as soon as possible. Some of the OIEP overseas

partners require that you send back a completed application from the host university. Please check with the program specialist for the deadline date.

C. Housing Selection Form (only programs with a housing choice)

This form is the means by which you inform the OIEP of your choices regarding the accommodations that are available at the program site.

D. Visa Information/Visa Applications

When the information and applications regarding the student visa for the specific country is known, the OIEP will send this information to you as a service. However, the office is not responsible for any information changes. Therefore, no matter what information is sent to you, you must verify that information with the country's consulate or embassy. It is your responsibility to obtain a passport (if you do not already have one) and a student visa in plenty of time before departure. The OIEP suggests that you call the individual embassies and consulates of the country in which your program is situated at the time of program application. An official letter from the OIEP verifying that you will be participating in an overseas academic program; will be included with the visa information provided by the OIEP.

E. Program – Specific Application (if applicable)

Several of the overseas academic programs require you to submit program-specific application forms directly to the host overseas institution in which you will be enrolled during the period of your participation. Usually this is required because the host institution wishes to have a document on file in order to formally enroll you. The completion and submission of all required forms prior to the start of the program are basic conditions of participation in an overseas academic program. Always check with program specialist before mailing anything.

F. Reminders

The OIEP will send any necessary reminders about payments, missing forms or materials needed by our office. Please note: All forms are sent to participants with a deadline for their return to the Oswego OIEP. Participants are responsible for meeting these deadlines, and failure to do so will jeopardize the student's ability to enroll in the program or courses of their choice and may result in the student's removal from the program.

## **V. Responsibilities of Participants**

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety through the decisions they make before and during their program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

- A. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the OIEP that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country.
- C. Conduct their own research on the country they plan to visit with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, as well as the social, cultural, and political situations.
- D. Consider their physical and mental health, and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program, and make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- E. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- F. Inform parents/guardians/families and any other who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed of their whereabouts and activities.
- G. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- H. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to your program specialist or the OIEP before and/or during the program.
- I. Accept responsibility for their own actions and decisions.
- J. Obey ALL host-country laws.
- K. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- L. Avoid illegal drugs and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- M. Become familiar with procedures for obtaining emergency health and legal system services in the host country.

## **VI. Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families**

In study abroad, as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

Parents/guardians/families should:

- A. Be informed about and involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular overseas academic program.
- B. Obtain and carefully evaluate program materials, as well as related health, safety, and security information.
- C. Discuss with the participant any of his/her travel plans and activities that may be independent of the study abroad program.
- D. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- E. Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information regarding the participant.
- F. Keep in touch with the participant.
- G. Be aware that the participant rather than the program must provide some information.

## **VII. PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION MATERIALS**

Since many Oswego programs enroll students from campuses across New York State and the U.S., it is not possible to hold an on-campus pre-departure orientation at Oswego for those programs. If your program does provide an orientation at Oswego, the OIEP program specialist will contact you directly. All participants are required to attend the campus orientation if you live within a three-hour driving distance of the Oswego campus. Otherwise, expect to receive all your pre-departure program information materials through the mail. This material may consist of booklets, brochures, travel and tourist information, and, in some cases, Web site URL's. It is crucial to the success of the program that you read and understand all the material you are sent. In almost every case, there will be an orientation soon after you arrive at your overseas program site. However, in those few cases where the host campus does not have an on-site orientation for international students, you will be given instructions and orientation by mail prior to departure.

Before your departure you will receive information about what to do when you get to the program site. It consists of the following items:

A. Immigration Letter

If a country does not require a student visa for entry, a letter will be sent to you to enable you to enter the country in which your overseas program is located. Normally this is a "To Whom It May Concern" letter from the OIEP. Its purpose is to identify you as a full-time student and a participant in an overseas academic program. It specifies the educational institution with which you will be affiliated and the duration of your stay. This should always be carried with you while you are abroad, together with a copy of your passport. Replacing a lost passport will be easier if you have a copy of it.

In most cases, the general immigration letter from Oswego is all the identification you will need to enter the host country. However, in some cases you will also need a specific "Admissions Letter" from the host institution.

B. Housing Placements

If housing is assigned by the program director and the housing placement is known prior to your departure, it will be sent to you. Please note that for this pre-departure (state-side) written orientation to achieve its goal of preparing participants to begin their term, semester, or year abroad, we remind you that it is essential that the OIEP has an accurate and up-to-date address to send all of these materials. You are responsible for keeping the OIEP informed of any changes in your address.

It is equally important that you respond quickly to our requests for information, complete and submit the required forms, and make payments in a timely manner. At any time during the period between your acceptance into the program and your departure, if you have any questions about the contents of any of these orientation materials, contact the Oswego program specialist for your particular study abroad program.

C. Travel Documents and Inoculations

It is recommended that even before being admitted to a program, you apply for a US passport, if you do not already have one. If you do have a passport, check to see if it is valid for the entire period you will be abroad plus at least six months. If not, renew it immediately. Many countries will not issue a visa or admit a traveler with less than six months' validity remaining on his/her passport.

If you have questions about how to obtain a passport, or other travel documents, direct them to the study abroad advisor at your home campus or the OIEP at Oswego.

It is the responsibility of participants to obtain a passport, the required visas (if any) and also the required inoculations (if any) for entry to the country in which the overseas academic program is located (and for return

to the United States). These requirements change frequently, and it is the participant's responsibility to keep informed of them.

## **VIII. DEPARTURE AND POST – DEPARTURE INFORMATION**

### **A. Travel to Host Country**

For many programs, flight arrangements are made by the Oswego OIEP. It is important for you to understand the difference between a group flight, a suggested flight, and independent travel.

1. A **GROUP FLIGHT** is planned when a minimum number of participants are expected to travel together. For some flights, this number is 10; for others, it may be 20. Generally, a special low fare will be negotiated for a group flight. Group flights are created so that all students depart at the same time, but students are free to make separate return arrangements. Group flights are also arranged when Oswego faculty accompany the group overseas. For such programs, it is possible that students will be required to travel with the group as part of the condition of enrollment in the program. Generally, this is the case for quarter course programs and some summer programs. Group flights are met by the program director or housing coordinator for some of the overseas programs. When a group flight is arranged, only that group flight is met in this way. Students traveling independently are required to arrive at the program site on the designated date.
2. A **SUGGESTED FLIGHT** is one that is designated by the OIEP as a flight which participants are advised to take when there is no group flight. A "suggested flight" is used when fewer than 10 participants are expected to take the flight and when no group rate will apply to the fare. Students are free to take this flight or to make their own arrangements. If a flight for that program is met by the overseas director or a representative of a host university, it will be only the suggested flight.
3. **INDEPENDENT FLIGHTS** are used for some programs, generally when only one or two participants are expected to travel to a destination on the same date. In this case, transportation arrangements are left entirely to the participants. The Oswego OIEP will provide participants with the name and phone number of a travel agency well versed in the particular destination, but there is no requirement to use this agency.

In all cases, it is strongly recommended that whenever possible students arrange to travel with at least one other participant. And the OIEP must be kept informed of your travel plans. Participants must send a copy of their flight itinerary, whether they take a group or suggested flight or make their own arrangements.

It should be understood that the OIEP makes arrangements for a group flight to the program site country solely as a convenience for the participants. The OIEP is neither a travel agency nor a ticketing office. Its role is simply to make arrangements for a group flight and identify a travel agency through which tickets for this flight may be purchased at the group rate discount. It is always your responsibility to contact the travel agency designated by the OIEP to make arrangements to participate in a suggested or group flight, to choose a return date if different from the group return date, and to arrange for payment of the ticket.

The choice, selection and payment for travel to the program site are ultimately the participant's responsibility. The OIEP does not assume liability for costs or damages resulting from the travel or transportation arrangements finally made by each participant.

A group flight is merely a group-rate, discounted fare. The members of the group usually do not actually sit together as a "group," unless they happen to make such arrangements prior to departure. Oswego's OIEP distributes a list prior to departure of program participants who have agreed to have their names and phone numbers sent to other participants in the same program.

Distribution of the list of program participants is done solely to facilitate informal contacts among members of the group prior to departure. Remember that you are under no obligation to allow us to distribute information about you, just as you are under no obligation to participate in the group flight. If you do not wish to be included in this distribution list, please contact the program specialist. You may wish to confer with the other members of your family before you give us permission to give your phone number and address to other group participants. If you do not wish to have your name distributed to other group participants, please contact the program specialist for your particular study abroad program as soon as possible.

#### B. Upon Arrival Abroad

Information about what to do upon arrival at the host country will be sent to you. In some cases, there will be a SUNY representative at the overseas host institution to meet you; or an authorized member of the host institution's staff will be there to advise you. Some programs do not provide for students to be met at the airport, and students in these programs are given directions to the host institution. Soon after your arrival at the host campus there may be an on-site orientation session. Not every program has a formal orientation, however.

Participants are required to arrive at the host institution at the time specified by the materials contained in the Program Information Pack. Participants should NOT expect to be met at the airport in the site country unless such a meeting is explicitly described in their program information. Typically, it is only the group/suggested flight arranged by the OIEP that will be met. However, some universities overseas faithfully meet students arriving independently (in Australia, for example), provided that the student has sent the overseas institution

his/her arrival information and has requested to be picked up. In some cases, there is a small charge for this service. Students should try, if possible, to arrive during normal business hours.

#### C. Housing Abroad

Housing arrangements abroad vary from program to program. In some programs, for example, participants live in on-campus housing completely integrated with the host country students. In others, participants live in nearby off-campus housing. Other programs may have arranged for students to live with local families, or help students rent apartments, houses, etc. Information and specific details about the housing facilities in your program are contained in the Program Information Pack for your program. Participants are advised that when several housing choices are available, it is not always possible to guarantee that participants will receive their preference. When students are directly enrolled at a host university overseas, it is the accommodations office at the host university that makes the arrangements for housing, and it assigns students to housing based on availability at the time housing requests are received. In most Oswego overseas programs, participants have the option of finding their own housing overseas. Generally, such a decision must be made at the time that housing choices are offered. Once a participant has chosen to live in Oswego-arranged housing or housing offered by a host institution overseas, he/she cannot later decide to vacate that housing and live on his/her own. At the very least, there will be a financial penalty for such a decision, often the total amount of the housing paid for the semester.

No housing preference made by a participant prior to arrival to the overseas program can be guaranteed. Students should, if possible, make more than one housing selection, and indicate *order of preference*. The Oswego OIEP is not responsible if a student is not placed in his/her first choice of housing.

#### D. The Resident Director

Some SUNY Oswego overseas academic programs are administered abroad by a resident director. The resident director is, in many instances, a member of the faculty or staff from the host institution, in which case s/he is called the "program representative."

The program's resident director (or program representative) is an academic officer whose primary function is to support the inter-institutional relationship that exists between the host institution and SUNY Oswego. Many of the decisions that participants will make when they first arrive will be made with the resident director's advice, and made in much the same way that the decisions about course selection are made with the advice of an academic advisor at the participants home campus.

Please note that the resident director is not a real estate agent, a travel agent, a tour guide, a social director, or a surrogate parent.

Among the responsibilities of the resident director and/ or the program representative are the following:

1. advise students and help them deal with any major problem that may arise;
2. keep track of their academic progress;
3. serve as liaison between students and the host institution; and
4. prepare reports of grades, transcript supplements, etc.

The resident director or program representative will be the person with whom you will have the greatest contact while abroad. In the great majority of instances involving many of the conditions of participants in a study abroad program (i.e., housing, academic placement, etc.) the decisions of the resident director or program representative are final.

Overseas academic programs that involve complete integration into the host institution and/or direct enrollment in courses typically do not have a resident director and may not have a program representative. The International Student Office at the host institution is the place where you are advised to go when any problems arise.

## **IX. REGISTRATION AND FINANCIAL MATTERS**

### **A. Registering for Study Abroad**

All SUNY students who participate in overseas academic programs must register and pay tuition at their home SUNY campus for the semester(s)/terms(s) during which they will be abroad. You should register for study abroad during the pre-registration period or prior to the end of the semester *before* you are to go abroad. It is very important that you make the necessary arrangements for the payment of tuition for your semester(s)/term(s) abroad. All students should check with the international programs office or their major department for registration instructions. NOTE: Oswego students will receive an email from the OIEP regarding registration instructions.

In addition, make certain that all your institutional financial obligations (i.e., library fines, telephone bills, bookstore accounts, etc.) at your home campus are settled before departure for overseas. Please Note: Students with “holds” on their account, for any reason, will NOT be permitted to study abroad. It is the student’s responsibility to notify the OIEP of any change in your “hold” status.

### **B. Registration and Payment of Tuition at Home SUNY Campus**

SUNY policies require that SUNY students participating in SUNY overseas academic programs register and pay their tuition at their home SUNY campus for the entire period they will be abroad. All overseas academic

program participants are also required to pay a program differential to the administering campus. **FAILURE TO REGISTER AND/OR PAY TUITION OR THE PROGRAM DIFFERENTIAL, OR HAVE A FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FORM ON FILE IN THE OIEP BEFORE DEPARTURE TO THE OVERSEAS SITE, WILL RESULT IN IMMEDIATE CANCELLATION OF ENROLLMENT IN THE OVERSEAS PROGRAM.**

Tuition owed to the overseas host institution at which the program is located is always paid by Oswego on behalf of each participant. Tuition payments to the host institution are NEVER paid directly by the participants. THERE IS NEVER AN EXCEPTION TO THIS POLICY.

Students whose home campus is not a SUNY college or university center and who participate in an Oswego overseas program will be considered visiting students at Oswego, and will register and pay tuition to Oswego. Such students will sometimes take a formal academic leave of absence from their home campus. Non-SUNY students must arrange such leave on their own with their home campus.

The OIEP at Oswego deals directly with the Oswego registrar's office to handle registration for visiting students participating in an Oswego administered program. Visiting students should anticipate that they will be billed for both tuition and college fees and the program differential by Oswego's OIEP and should pay this bill in a timely manner. Students from other SUNY campuses should anticipate that they will be billed for the program differential by Oswego's OIEP and should pay this bill in a timely manner, and pay their tuition and college fees at their home campus bursar's office.

In addition to registering at your home university, all students must also register for their overseas program with SUNY Oswego. Procedures on how to do this can be obtained through your program specialist at the time you pay your program deposit.

C. Registration and Enrollment at your Overseas Academic University

All students must enroll in AND remain enrolled in 12 or more credits (FULL TIME) per semester while overseas. Failure to do this is a violation of student Visa status in some countries, can affect Title IV funding for financial aid, and can be grounds for immediate expulsion from the program. NOTE: Regardless of overseas university policy, students participating on SUNY overseas academic programs CANNOT drop or withdraw from classes after the ninth week of the semester unless he/she can document extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control to the OIEP at SUNY Oswego. The OIEP has the final authority to approve or disapprove the documented course withdrawal.

D. Advanced Registration from Abroad for the Following Semester

If you are a non-Oswego student, you should discuss with your home campus's OIEP or registrar's office what procedures may be in place to help you pre-register from abroad for the next semester's courses. This effort

may not always be successful since the materials needed for pre-registration do not always arrive on time. If this is the case, you will have to register for courses at the beginning of the semester you return. Or, you may make arrangements with friends or relatives to register you for the following semester.

#### E. Financial Obligations

By accepting Oswego's offer of admission to one of its exchanges or overseas academic programs you acknowledge that you are ultimately responsible for all payments paid by the OIEP on your behalf, including but not limited to, any unrecoverable money deposits for the purchase of airline tickets, housing, tuition, fees, etc., should you withdraw after these funds have been paid, except for documented ill health.

By accepting Oswego's offer of admission you also acknowledge that it is your responsibility to insure that your financial aid (if applicable) is forwarded to the OIEP at Oswego; OR if you do not receive financial aid, you acknowledge that it is your responsibility to make payment to the OIEP directly. Any failure to confirm payment may result in your removal from your overseas program.

In general, you can anticipate the following costs:

##### 1. Program Acceptance Deposit

All Oswego overseas academic programs require the payment of a NON-REFUNDABLE program deposit. This is collected upon the acceptance of our offer of admission, and its payment guarantees the place reserved for the student on the program.

The deposit is used to defray some of the costs that the OIEP undertakes on your behalf after your acceptance (e.g., faxes, and courier service mailings of your documents overseas; costs of reproducing the program information packs, etc.).

Since the program deposit is always, and in all circumstances, non-refundable, and since you will be obligated to pay the OIEP for any money paid on your behalf before the program begins, you should not confirm admission to an overseas program unless you are CERTAIN you will be participating. The program deposit holds a place for you and is used, as stated above, for expenses relating to your participation that the OIEP incurs before your departure.

PLEASE NOTE: Payments must be in the form of a MONEY ORDER or BANK CERTIFIED CHECK payable to SUCO AUXILIARY SERVICES. Personal checks are NOT accepted and will be returned to the sender.

## 2. Instructional fees

These payments cover the actual “costs of the program,” including tuition for the instruction that you will receive abroad. Typically, the fees for instruction consist of:

### a. SUNY Tuition and fees and the OIEP program differential.

The OIEP program differential, which the Comptroller of the State University of New York defines as “student charges over normal SUNY tuition,” was established in 1989 by the SUNY Board of Trustees, as “a charge (in addition to tuition) for the cost of the program in which each student is participating.”

The OIEP program differential is, therefore, not an administrative surcharge for study abroad. It is simply that portion of the “cost of the program” that is charged over and above tuition, to pay for the program overseas.

Because the term “OIEP program differential” is unfamiliar to participants, many may misunderstand the purpose and function of this charge. Occasionally, a participant will request a refund of a portion of the program differential because, s/he missed a couple of the field trips, because s/he only took four (not five) of the courses that were offered, or because, s/he never used e-mail at the host institution.

The items that together make up the “cost of the program” of an Oswego administered overseas academic program are always inclusive and fixed; they are never offered on a “pick and choose” or “mix and match” basis. The use of, or participation in, some of the items that are included in the “cost of the program”, such as field trips or excursions, library memberships, lecture series, etc., may be “optional” for the participants, but paying the entire “cost of the program” is never “optional.” These total program costs always include tuition and administrative support services at the host institution, they frequently include on-site orientations and field trips, and they sometimes include housing. The items that are included in the “cost of the program”, and only those items specified in that section of each brochure are included in the “cost of the program.” All other costs related to participation in an Oswego study abroad program are the exclusive responsibility of the participant.

This does not mean that no services may be offered by host institutions themselves, or by the program administration overseas on an individual basis. For example, a small membership fee is required to join university clubs in most overseas institutions. Those who desire to join the hiking club will do so and will pay that membership. Those students who would like an e-mail account can sign up for one; those who do not are not obligated to do so. Some field trips in the Oswego

Sorbonne program are available on a fee basis, and students may choose to participate or not. None of these optional items would be listed as inclusions in the “cost of the program:”

b. Method of Payment

All payments billed by the Oswego OIEP MUST be made in the form of a **MONEY ORDER OR CERTIFIED BANK CHECK** made payable to **SUCO AUXILIARY SERVICES**. These are the only forms of payment accepted. Personal checks and credit cards are NOT accepted.

If you are a SUNY student, you will pay the tuition portion of your instructional fees at your home campus. You will pay the program differential portion of your bill to the Oswego OIEP.

If you are a non-SUNY student, the Oswego OIEP will bill you directly for both tuition and the program differential, and you will pay both to the OIEP.

c. Mandatory Health Insurance Premium

SUNY policies regarding health insurance are explained above in the application section. The cost of your health insurance will appear on the invoice sent from the OIEP and is paid directly to the OIEP.

d. Transportation Costs

The cost of transportation varies from program to program and is dependent upon the site and the time of the year. For example, flights to London are significantly less expensive in January, when spring semester students are flying, than in May, when summer students depart. All of Oswego's overseas programs involve air travel, and the flights depart from a gateway city, usually a New York City area airport. Travel to the departure city is an additional expense, which again varies, depending on a student's hometown.

e. Lodging costs (room and board)

Frequently, lodging costs are paid while abroad either monthly, or in the form of a single payment at the start of the semester. A few of Oswego's overseas programs have housing included in their program differential, but most do not. An estimate of the housing and food costs for each program is given in the basic program brochure for that program. In some cases, students will be required to pay a housing deposit to the overseas host institution prior to arrival in the host country. This deposit may be either a portion of the total cost of housing for the semester(s)/term(s) abroad, or the total cost of housing itself. This may include a damage deposit that is refundable and/or administrative fee that is not refundable. In any case, students are responsible for making this directly to the overseas institution and for reading all materials thoroughly to determine what forms of payment (i.e., a bank draft in the currency of the host country) are acceptable.

f. Miscellaneous expenses while abroad

Miscellaneous expenses are the hardest expenses to anticipate. There is no upper limit on what students can spend abroad, but it is possible to live frugally and still have a wonderful experience. You should expect your style of living to change while you are overseas, but you should also plan to model your living on the student lifestyle at the host site. *Students participating in programs located in larger European cities should plan to spend more on food and housing expenses than they would at home.*

E. Financial Aid While Abroad

If you plan to have financial aid applied to your “cost of the program”, please check with the financial aid office at your home campus to see whether and how your financial aid will transfer to an Oswego overseas academic program. You should complete the Financial Arrangements form, which was included with your acceptance letter, and return it to Oswego’s Student Accounts office. Generally, financial aid transfers easily between SUNY campuses, but paperwork is required to make this happen.

If you are a non-SUNY student and your home campus is not able to transfer your financial aid, Oswego can process your aid ONLY if you temporarily withdraw from your home university, apply to, and are accepted by the Oswego admissions office as a matriculated student.

Please note that if financial aid does not cover the full cost of the program, you are expected to pay the difference by the appropriate payment deadline.

If you will be receiving financial aid, which will not be received by you and/ or your home campus before your payments are due to Oswego, you must make arrangements for the OIEP to receive written notice of the source, the amount, and the release date of the funding from your home campus’s financial aid office. When we receive such notice we will defer payment of those charges until that aid is received.

Please note that regardless of any deferment of any payment against the anticipated arrival of financial aid, the participant remains ultimately responsible for the payment of the entire cost of the program.

It is the policy of the OIEP to send an accurate estimate of costs to prospective participants with each offer of admission to enable participants to make an informed decision about participation knowing what costs are involved in participation and to enable participants and their parents to begin preparations for financing their semester or year abroad as soon as possible.

Students who are planning to finance all or part of their study abroad by financial aid should be aware that:

1. The rules and regulations governing financial aid change frequently and the only completely accurate source of information about your financial aid package is the financial aid office at your home campus.
2. A participant in a SUNY overseas academic program is usually eligible for the same aid package that s/he would be eligible were s/he attending his/her home SUNY campus with the exception of college work-study.
3. The participant's home campus (i.e., the campus at which the student is matriculated and admitted to a degree program) is the only school that can process that student's financial aid forms. The student must check with his/her home campus financial aid office for further details.
4. A student must be registered for a minimum of six credits to qualify for financial aid (all of Oswego's regular semester overseas academic programs are 12 to 15 credits; therefore, all participants are enrolled as full-time students). Summer and winter session programs have different requirements.
5. Participants should confer with their home campus financial aid office about their financial aid eligibility as soon as they have made the decision to study abroad.

Participants who are planning to finance all or part of their semester or year abroad by means of some form of financial aid are required to submit to the OIEP at Oswego a statement from the student accounts office at their home campus certifying that:

1. The participant has been awarded sufficient financial aid to cover the costs of study abroad.
2. The home campus will forward this financial aid directly to the OIEP at SUNY Oswego when it is received at the home campus.

#### F. Other Payment Options

##### Direct Billing by Your Home (Non-SUNY) Campus

Some colleges insist that their students participating in Oswego's overseas academic programs pay tuition directly to them. These colleges request that SUNY Oswego OIEP bill them directly for the "cost of the program" (tuition and program differential), rather than their. Check with your campus director of international education to see if arrangements are in place (or can be made) to have your home campus cover all (or a significant part) of your payments to Oswego as part of your tuition.

## G. Late Payment

Failure to pay your bill by the deadline will result in a late fee. Additional late fees will be added for every month your bill remains unpaid.

## H. Refunds

The following payments are **ALWAYS NON-REFUNDABLE** (except in the event of the cancellation of the program by Oswego):

1. the program acceptance deposit
2. the housing deposit (when billed as a separate item)
3. the repatriation insurance premium.

The following payments are frequently (but not always) at least **PARTIALLY REFUNDABLE** *prior* to the starting date of an overseas academic program:

1. tuition
2. the program differential
3. full health insurance premium

The amount of any refund depends upon the date of the **WRITTEN NOTIFICATION** of a participant's withdrawal from the program and the ability of the OIEP to recover the payments it has already made on the student's behalf. For those programs in which the cost of housing is part of the program fee or is contained within the program differential (most short-term [i.e., summer and winter-session programs] and several semester and year programs), a participant's withdrawal on less than 30 days notice will result in a substantially reduced refund. Please note: Normally, refunds of any kind are not made after the start of the overseas academic program since charges by most overseas host institutions are billed at the start of the term/semester/year.

Participants are advised that the Oswego OIEP's policies regarding refunds may be different from their home campus's policies on refunds and withdrawals. For example, normally, a withdrawal from an overseas academic program for an illness or other health related matter does NOT result in a refund as it might in a home campus-based program. However, each case is treated individually, depending on the individual circumstances.

The question of whether an airline ticket is partially refundable or non-refundable depends upon the airline and the travel agency that issues the ticket. Oswego is not involved in any issues regarding airline tickets. (If

cancelled by participants, or deposits forfeited by a subsequent failure to make timely payments to the travel agency.)

## **X. Grades, Credits and Evaluations**

### **A. GRADES**

Grading policies vary from program to program. In most instances, a program's grading policies are the same as the grading policies of the SUNY campus, which administers the program. However, there is one major difference between grades earned at home and grades that are earned abroad: **GRADES EARNED ABROAD WILL TAKE MORE TIME TO PROCESS.**

Overseas programs operate on the calendar of the host institution abroad, which sometimes meshes with Oswego's calendar, but usually does not. Even when the two calendars are identical, your grades must be mailed from overseas to Oswego's OIEP and then entered on a transcript supplement, which is sent to Oswego's registrar's office, and from there to your home OIEP and registrar's office. Thus, even when the postal systems of both countries are working at peak efficiency, we invariably receive your grades after the final date for reporting grades to your home campus's computer.

At some universities (e.g., in Australia), the host university may give directly to the students a copy of their grades. These grades will appear in the format used by the host institution (e.g., "Pass," "Distinction," etc.). The grades will be converted by the Oswego OIEP to the Oswego equivalents (A-E). This student copy is NOT your official SUNY transcript and should be considered only as a memento of your experience overseas. It also cannot be used by the Oswego OIEP to produce your official SUNY transcript. The grades must come to our office directly from our counterpart office overseas, or from the resident program director.

Our office does not produce a transcript until we have received your grades from abroad and this may result in a "blank transcript" from your home campus's registrar's computer at the end of your semester abroad.

#### **1. Transcripts and Financial Obligations**

**THE OIEP AT OSWEGO WILL ISSUE NO TRANSCRIPT OF GRADES EARNED IN AN EXCHANGE OR OVERSEAS ACADEMIC PROGRAM IT ADMINISTERS UNTIL ALL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS INCURRED BY THE PARTICIPANT ARE MET.** This includes obligations incurred at the host site (overdue rent, library fines, unpaid telephone bills) as well as financial obligations to Oswego.

#### **2. Grade Appeals**

Oswego's OIEP reports grades earned by participants in the overseas academic programs that it administers by means of the SUNY Transcript Supplement. The Transcript Supplement is sent to the registrar of the participant's home campus.

Grades reported by the OIEP are those recommended by the program's resident director or program representative or the registrar of the host institution abroad. Grade appeals are based on the regulations of the host institution.

In all instances of appeals of grades earned in overseas academic programs administered by the OIEP at Oswego, the participant bears the whole responsibility of substantiating the basis for a grade appeal. Participants are therefore advised to keep copies of all assignments and records to prove that these assignments were done, were turned in, and/or that exams were taken. **THERE ARE ONLY TWO REASONS FOR CHANGING A GRADE ON AN APPEAL:**

- A. THAT THE ORIGINAL GRADE WAS AWARDED ARBITRARILY AND CAPRICIOUSLY AND CAN BE DEMONSTRATED TO THE SATISFACTION OF THE AUTHORITIES AT THE HOST INSTITUTION; OR**
- B. THAT THE ORIGINAL GRADE WAS AWARDED AS THE RESULT OF A COMPUTATIONAL ERROR.**

A participant who wishes to appeal a grade should begin the appeal process prior to departing from the host site abroad, if possible. The normal appeal process (after all remedies at the host institution have been exhausted) moves to Oswego through the OIEP, then to the appropriate deans, and then to the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. This phase of the appeal process conforms to the normal grade appeals policies of the State University of New York at Oswego

### 3. Termination and Grades

Participants expelled from participation after the start of the program will be dealt with according to the grading policy as set forth in the SUNY Oswego undergraduate and graduate catalogs.

## B. CREDITS

### 1. Number of Credits

All students must enroll in AND remain enrolled in 12 or more credits (FULL TIME) per semester while overseas. Failure to do this is a violation of student Visa status in some countries, can affect Title IV funding for financial aid, and can be grounds for immediate expulsion from the program.

NOTE: Regardless of overseas university policy, students participating on SUNY overseas academic programs CANNOT drop or withdraw from classes after the ninth week of the semester unless he/she can document extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control to the OIEP at SUNY Oswego. The OIEP has the final authority to approve or disapprove the documented course withdrawal.

## 2. Transferability of Credits

The credits earned by participants in Oswego overseas academic programs are awarded by the State University of New York at Oswego. Oswego is a comprehensive college of the State University of New York system, accredited by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York and the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. The Middle States Association is the only one of the nine regional accrediting agencies of the US Commissions on Higher Education that evaluates overseas academic programs. The purpose of these Middle States evaluations is to ensure the maintenance of high academic standards. Oswego's overseas academic programs have been regularly evaluated by the Middle States Association and granted its highest rating.

Because participants are actually enrolled at a SUNY campus during their semester, term or year of participation, the credits they earn are treated as if they were earned at the SUNY campus at which they are registered. Oswego students participating in other SUNY programs will receive both credit and grades for their semester abroad. Other SUNY and Non-SUNY students on an Oswego program must check with their home campus to find out how the SUNY credits earned on an Oswego's overseas academic programs will transfer back to their campuses.

## 3. Applicability of Credit

Participants should be aware that:

- a. The credits earned in a SUNY overseas academic program will always count toward the total number of credits needed to graduate from a SUNY college or university center.
- b. The credits earned in a SUNY overseas academic program will usually be counted as meeting the SUNY campus residency requirement (typically, students must earn 24 of the last 30 hours of their degrees at the campus that awards the degree).
- c. If you intend to use specific courses taken abroad to fulfill any part of the requirements in your major, you must consult with your academic advisor or your major department and receive prior approval from that department. Be sure to get such approval in writing.

#### 4. Level of Credits

Many of the credits earned in an Oswego overseas academic program are upper division (that is, Junior- or Senior-level) credit. Exceptions to this rule include credits in beginning- and intermediate-level language courses, and courses of a clearly introductory nature taken at a host institution. For example, a beginning anthropology course designed for students who have never studied anthropology before will be a 100-level course regardless of whether it is taken at Oswego or an Australian university, for example.

Credits earned in language courses at the elementary and intermediate level are typically reported as 100(beginning-) or 200(intermediate-) level course work, paralleling the level of work done at Oswego.

- a. Beginning-level (100): semesters one and two of the study of a language;
- b. Intermediate-level (200): semesters three and four of the study of a language;
- c. Advanced Intermediate-level (300): semesters five and six;
- d. Advanced-level (400): study of a language after six semesters.

The study of literature in a foreign language in an Oswego overseas academic program is always done at the upper division / advanced level.

#### 5. Graduate Credit

Oswego offers a few overseas academic programs specifically designed for graduate study, and individual course in other overseas academic programs. If the department in which the graduate student is matriculated agrees to accept the credits earned in an Oswego overseas academic program toward the graduate degree, arrangements can be made to enroll the student in appropriate courses. Usually, graduate programs allow no more than six graduate credits to be earned outside the department awarding the degree.

#### C. Transcript Supplements

After the conclusion of the program, the program's resident director or the host institution's registrar's office will prepare a report of grades. This report will normally indicate: a) the courses taken abroad, b) the number of credits earned for each course, and c) the grade for each course. These grades are forwarded to the Oswego OIEP.

A Transcript Supplement is prepared by the OIEP on the basis of the overseas grade report. The Transcript Supplement is mailed to the Oswego Registrar's Office, which in turn mails one copy to the student and the original to the OIEP at the student's home campus, if a non-Oswego student. If additional copies of the Transcript Supplement are needed, immediately or in future years, they can be requested from the registrar's office at the student's home campus, or by contacting the Office of the Registrar at SUNY Oswego.

### **A Special Note for Oswego Students**

The registrar's office transfers the course information, grades, and credits earned in an Oswego overseas academic program to the regular Oswego transcript, thereby eliminating the necessity for Oswego students to require or request two separate transcripts for their work done on Oswego overseas academic programs. The grades Oswego students earn during their Oswego-sponsored overseas study program are counted in the overall GPA.

### **A Note for other SUNY students and non- SUNY students**

You must check with your home campus to see if the grades earned abroad will be calculated into your GPA, because the policy at each campus varies.

#### **D. Program Evaluation Questionnaire**

The Oswego OIEP requests that you complete the program evaluation questionnaire for your overseas program that will be sent to you after you return home. This evaluation is very important to us. We seriously believe that your evaluation is one of the most important elements in the continued improvement of our programs.

## **XI. WITHDRAWALS, EXPULSIONS, AND CANCELLATIONS**

### **A. Withdrawal from a Program**

1. If a student withdraws from an OIEP exchange or overseas academic program before the program starts, he/she is liable to the OIEP for any unrecoverable deposits paid by the OIEP in his/her behalf, even if the student has not paid any portion of the program fee.
2. If a student withdraws after the program begins and has paid the program costs, a refund will be made according to section IX, H above.

### **B. Expulsion from a Program**

The OIEP at Oswego, in consultation with program directors and other college officials, reserves the right to terminate a student's participation in an overseas program for the following reasons:

1. the student is found to be in violation of the Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities and Conduct as ([http://www.oswego.edu/administration/judicial/student\\_code.html](http://www.oswego.edu/administration/judicial/student_code.html)) prior to departure;
2. the student is found to have an academic, financial, or judicial hold on his/her records;
3. the student engages in action endangering to himself/herself, or others during the program;

4. the student's actions or conduct are considered to be detrimental to, or incompatible with, the best interests and welfare of the program.
5. the student participates in any travel outside of the study abroad program itinerary that hinders his/her class attendance, at any time during the duration of the study abroad program that has not been arranged by the home or the host universities; (Independent travel during weekends and semester breaks is permitted, but student must plan to return prior to the start of weekly classes); and
6. the student's registration falls below full-time (12 credits – semester, 6 credits – summer).

C. Cancellation of a Program

The OIEP at Oswego reserves the right to cancel a program at any time for the following reasons:

1. Insufficient enrollment;
2. Advice from the US Dept. of State that it is unsafe for US citizens and nationals of other countries to be at the host site, or that US citizens and nationals are not advised to travel or reside in the host site; and
3. The inability of the host institution to provide or support the program adequately.

If the program is cancelled, all payments that have been made to Oswego by the participant will be refunded.

## XII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Non-Discrimination

The Oswego OIEP encourages participation in its overseas academic programs by women, minorities, veterans, and the disabled. It is the explicit policy of the Oswego OIEP that all decisions about admission to Oswego's overseas academic programs as well as all decisions about academic placements abroad are made in ways that are wholly blind to a participant's gender, race, religious affiliation, or ethnic background.

B. On the Settlements of Accounts

**THE OIEP AT OSWEGO WILL ISSUE NO TRANSCRIPT OF GRADES EARNED OR ANY OTHER RECORD (FORMAL OR INFORMAL) OF PARTICIPATION IN AN OSWEGO OVERSEAS ACADEMIC PROGRAM UNTIL ALL FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS INCURRED BY A PARTICIPANT ARE MET.** This includes obligations incurred at the host site – overdue rent, library fines, unpaid telephone bills – as well as unmet obligations to SUNY Oswego or to the participant's home campus.

If thirty-five days after the conclusion of an overseas academic program, there remains an unpaid balance due to Oswego, it is a requirement of New York state debt collection legislation that SUNY Oswego must:

1. Assess interest on the unpaid balance; and

2. Turn the account over to the Office of the Attorney General of the State of New York for collection.

Participants should therefore make every effort to settle their account with SUNY Oswego within thirty-five days of the conclusion of the overseas program. If sent to the Office of Attorney General of the State of New York, there will be added (as the fee for collection) an amount equal to at least 22 percent of the unpaid balance (including all interest charges).

#### C. On Affording Study Abroad

SUNY Oswego prides itself on making available to students a wide range of programs with varying costs. Scholarship assistance is available to selected Oswego students. Nevertheless, every participant must determine if s/he can actually afford the program that s/he has chosen. If, after adding up all the resources that will be available, s/he determines that it will be *just barely possible* to afford to participate, it is very likely that s/he cannot really afford to participate. Each program's cost sheet presents a scrupulously accurate description of the costs of participating in that program to enable prospective participants to make an accurate assessment of their ability to afford to participate. Despite the accuracy of the description of the cost of the program, participants are warned that the "unexpected" might occur and may have financial consequences.

Each participant must determine if s/he can afford to participate in a specific program. If not, there are often other programs options available, and the staff of the Oswego OIEP will be happy to work with students to find a program that matches their interests and finances.

#### D. On Deadlines

The Oswego OIEP establishes deadlines to ensure the smooth functioning of its programs. Usually these deadlines concern payments (as, for example, the date by which airline tickets must be paid for, or the date by which participants must notify the OIEP of a withdrawal from a program). Sometimes deadlines are established to enable the program to function efficiently (as in the case when a resident director establishes a deadline for notification about participation in a field trip). For whatever purpose, deadlines set by the OIEP apply fully and equally to all participants, unless that deadline had been waived (in writing) by the OIEP.

#### E. On Admissions

Admission to an Oswego sponsored overseas academic program is not guaranteed to all applicants who meet the basic admissions criteria. This means that, as a general rule, applicants who meet the admissions criteria (usually sophomore standing or above and a cumulative of 2.5 or better, many programs have additional requirements) can usually expect to be offered a place in the program to which they have applied. However, because most of our programs have enrollment limits, certain restrictions and orders of preferences apply.

1. Preference is usually given to the “better qualified” applicant. If for example, a program’s published minimum required GPA for admissions is a 3.00, and there are two candidates for a single remaining unfilled place on that program, the applicant with the 3.30 GPA will receive preference over the applicant with a 3.20 GPA.
2. Preference is usually given to the “better qualified” applicant. If, for example, a program’s published admissions criteria requires a minimum of “two semesters of college level work in Spanish,” and there are two candidates for a single remaining unfilled place on that program, the applicant with three semesters of college level work in Spanish will usually receive preference over the applicant with only two semesters.
3. Preference is usually given to the “more timely” applicant. If, for example, there are two equally qualified candidates for a single remaining unfilled place on an overseas academic program, the candidate whose application was received first will usually be given preference over candidates whose applications are received later.
4. Preference is usually given to Oswego State students when there are two candidates whose qualifications, preparation, and timeliness appear to be equal. Preference is always given to Oswego State students in DIRECT EXCHANGE programs, those university-to-university programs that bring students from the partner university overseas to the Oswego campus.

The OIEP at Oswego has sole responsibility for the admission process for Oswego sponsored overseas academic programs and its decisions concerning admissions to these programs are final. All application forms (and all supporting documentation) become the property of the OIEP.

An offer of admission is always to a specific program in a specific semester, term, session or year. That offer of admission does not automatically “carry over” to a subsequent semester or term, if a student is unable to participate in a program in the semester to which s/he has been admitted (for whatever reason). A student who wishes to defer his/her admission to a subsequent semester should make such a request in writing to the Oswego OIEP. Generally, such requests are granted for the following semester. After that time, a student must re-apply for admission to the same program in a subsequent semester.

Candidates for admission are offered admission to an Oswego overseas academic program on the condition (usually based on the contents of the candidate’s admission file) that the candidate can be placed in an appropriate group of courses at the host university. If, however, during the process of selecting courses, an appropriate schedule of classes cannot be found for the candidate (or there are other reasons that prevent the candidate from completing the process of selecting course), Oswego’s offer of admissions may be withdrawn. Below are some hypothetical situations in which withdrawal would be warranted:

1. A candidate is admitted to an Oswego program at the University of X, because, from the information contained in the candidate's admission file, it would appear that s/he has the potential to succeed in (and benefit from) participation in the program. However, later in the process, it is discovered that the candidate has not taken the appropriate prerequisite courses needed for admission to the courses s/he has chosen, and cannot (because of the degree requirements at his/her home campus) select alternative courses. The offer of admission to that program would have to be withdrawn.
2. A candidate is admitted to the Oswego overseas academic program at host University Y, but during the course selection process, it is discovered that the individual department in which the student wishes to take courses has a GPA requirement that effectively prevents him/her from being able to take course in that program. The offer of admission to that program would have to be withdrawn.
3. A candidate is admitted by Oswego's OIEP to an Oswego overseas academic program at University Z, but as the result of a fire in the resident halls, a cutback in governmental appropriations, or a strike by the university's faculty stops the OIEP from sending students to University Z. The offer admission to that program would have to be withdrawn.

F. The Nature of Descriptions of an Overseas Academic Program

Information about Oswego's overseas academic programs contained in brochures, advertisements, program information packs, Web sites, and other print and non-print materials is intended only as a descriptive guide to these overseas academic programs and the various elements of those programs, as they are (or were) at the time those materials were prepared. **IT MUST BE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THAT THESE DESCRIPTIONS DO NOT CONSTITUTE A CONTRACT CONCERNING THESE PROGRAMS OR THEIR ELEMENTS.**

G. The "Official" Statement of the Cost of an Oswego Overseas Academic Program

Information about the cost of participating in Oswego overseas programs, contained in brochures, advertisements, Oswego's Web site and other print and non-print materials, is intended only as a guide to the costs associated with these overseas academic programs and the various elements of those programs, as they are (or were) at the time that those materials were prepared. The "official" and specific "cost of the program" for the semester/term/session to which a student is admitted is contained only in the program information pack and the program cost sheet that are sent to a prospective participant with the acceptance letter to that program.

H. Privacy

The privacy of the participant on a State University of New York at Oswego overseas academic program is absolute and is guaranteed by the U.S. Federal law (The Family and Educational Privacy Act of 1974 as amended in the so-called, "Buckley Amendment"). It is policy of the OIEP not to discuss or release any

confidential information about the student or the details of the student's participation in its programs with anyone without the student's explicit permission in writing. This includes parents (custodial and non-custodial, alike), spouses (estranged or otherwise), children, aunts, uncles, cousins, other relatives, best friends, former (or current) roommates, members of the media, collection agencies, and so forth.

The OIEP regards the following information as confidential:

1. Courses and grades (at home or abroad);
2. Student Account Information;
3. Address and telephone numbers (at home or abroad);
4. Circumstances of housing and placement (academic or otherwise);
5. Participation in extracurricular activities;
6. Dates or itineraries of field trips, excursion or vacations; and
7. Participant's activities and/or travel outside the program.

It is important that this policy be clearly understood by a participant's family and friends. The OIEP cannot respond to any inquiries about the participant made by members of a participant's family, unless the participant has authorized it to release that information by explicitly waiving his/her privacy rights.

To waive "Buckley Amendment" rights to privacy, a student must send written permission to the OIEP at Oswego, specifically identifying those persons and agencies that the student authorizes it to release information about you and/or your participation in an Oswego overseas academic program. This authorization applies equally to participants who are older than or younger than 21 years of age.

The OIEP at Oswego will, however, release information about the student's participation in an overseas academic program to appropriate offices at the student's home campus. The application process contains an implicit permission to do this and the student's acceptance of its offer of admission to the program constitutes an explicit permission to report information such as grades and other reports of the student's participation to the registrar, the OIEP, the chair of the student's major department, and other appropriate officials at the student's home campus.

#### I. Unpredictable Events versus Real Emergencies

The safety of participants on Oswego State University overseas academic programs is of paramount importance to the OIEP. Concern for participants' safety is the basis for all our decision-making from the choice of a group flight carrier to the choice of a program site. Any circumstance that endangers the life or well-being of a participant is strenuously avoided, and participants can expect whatever assistance that is possible for the OIEP to render in the event of an emergency.

In the event of a true emergency, participants on an Oswego overseas academic program should first get in touch with the program director, the program representative, or the host institution's designated contact for their program. These people are in a position to react quickly and efficiently to any emergency and to take care of Oswego's participants. Participants should not hesitate also to call collect to the Oswego OIEP.

Genuine emergencies are very unusual, but in any program that involves travel, unpredictable events are quite common.

Oswego's OIEP works hard to ensure the accuracy of its descriptions of the conditions of participation in its overseas academic programs. That is, it tries to provide the student with reasonable and realistic expectations about such items as: course availability; description of types of housing available; organization of its orientation programs; library resources at the host institution; details of the group flight, and the like.

Participants need to be aware that Oswego's OIEP does not have direct control over many of those aspects of the programs that are operated by the host institution abroad. Although it seems obvious to point this out, the realities of study abroad are that:

1. Courses that are listed in the host institution's catalog are sometimes cancelled, (or offered at times other than the times which were advertised);
2. Airlines sometimes over-book flights and sometimes even "bump" passengers holding confirmed reservations;
3. Students and sometimes faculty at overseas educational institutions occasionally go on strike;
4. Starting dates get changed at the last minute, or at least at a point at which it may be too late to change the flight arrangements;
5. The exact housing option you expected, and /or asked for is not available and you are offered another (and perhaps apparently less acceptable) housing situation;
6. Natural disasters sometimes occur such as floods, fires, hurricanes, earthquakes;
7. Political disasters sometimes occur such as revolutions, elections, coups, etc.;
8. Landlords raise rent unexpectedly after the lease was signed; and
9. The value of the US dollar decreases, which increases the costs of the program.

The experience of the OIEP is that the overwhelming majority of these unpredictable events will occur either at the start or at the end of the program, exactly at those moments when you will be feeling the most vulnerable. This is why we only admit mature individuals with the requisite level of responsibility and flexibility to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. That is why our programs are NOT "excursions", "trips", "safaris", "cruises" or "vacations." Oswego overseas academic programs are college-level academic programs in which participants can expect to be treated like adults. Unless participants are prepared to cope with these

UNPREDICTABLES, they should stay home, where things are much more predictable. Participants can be fully assured that the OIEP at Oswego will do all it can to help you cope with these events. It is the policy of the OIEP to deal directly (and only) with the participant in the resolution of whatever difficulties a participant may encounter in coping with the unpredictable. This may seem either obvious or unfair. Students (and their parents) often prefer that the OIEP “solves” problems as related to us by parents. It has been the experience of the OIEP that when something appears to have gone “wrong” on a study abroad program (and this most frequently happens soon after arrival at the overseas program site, when the participant may be feeling most strongly the effect of jet-lag combined with the disorientation of being in a completely new environment), there is an overwhelming impulse to immediately contact an interested third party (usually a parent or other close relative, but occasionally a state legislator or member of Congress) for help.

It is OIEP policy to deal directly and only with the participant in the resolution of whatever difficulties are encountered by the participant. A third party, no matter how caring, frequently does not fully understand, or cannot adequately explain, the exact nature of a problem and regardless of that third party’s good intentions, frequently gets in the way of a resolution to the problem. Besides, the OIEP’s policy on privacy would prevent it from discussing most issues with a third party unless the participant had filed a “Buckley Amendment” waiver in favor of that third party.

The following are several typical UNPREDICTABLE EVENTS, which have actually happened to Oswego overseas academic program participants:

1. A student’s family made travel arrangements that were not the suggested flight and failed to send the Oswego OIEP her travel itinerary. Because the family obtained a “great deal” on a ticket, but the flight was unfortunately to a different airport from the one where the program representative was waiting. Thus, from the student’s point of view “no one” was at the airport. The student immediately called home, and the parents called the OIEP, wanting to know “What are you (in Oswego) doing about it?”

The OIEP’s answer to this parent was: at this distance (1,200 miles away), there is very little the office could do. First of all, unless we had a “Buckley Amendment” waiver on file from that participant, we could not even discuss the situation with the parent who called. Second, what would the participant have done if this had been a flight to Cincinnati to be met by a friend and had ended up in Akron? The participant would probably have waited until s/he was sure the friend would be at a phone number where s/he could be reached and then called and discuss together how best to meet up. What makes sense in Cincinnati should prove to be equally useful, say, in Puerto Rico where distances are not too great.

2. Shortly after a group’s arrival, the participants learned from the host university’s liaison officer that there was not enough available on-campus housing to house all members of the group (who were promised

on-campus accommodation) and that some would have to be placed in off-campus accommodations. Those affected called home immediately; their parents called the Oswego OIEP, the Oswego president's office, and local Congress-members, whose administrative assistants called the OIEP demanding to know what we were doing about this "problem".

The OIEP's answer to all of these individuals was: Since we had just learned about this "problem", we at the OIEP needed to discuss the situation with the host university's administration and the participants before commenting. Here too, unless we had a "Buckley Amendment" waiver on file from the participant involved, we could not even discuss this with the well-intentioned and interested third party, except in general terms.

3. Because of a new, but inadequate, computer system which was installed over the summer, a host university was unable to provide one comprehensive schedule listing all classes in the fall semester, so that students (and faculty) would know when and where the courses were being offered and canceled several classes that students had expected to be permitted to enroll in. The participants affected immediately called their parents and their home campus academic advisors, who then called Oswego's OIEP, demanding a solution to these "problems."

The OIEP's answer to this individual was: If there is no "Buckley Amendment" waiver on file in the OIEP, we simply cannot discuss this "problem" with a third party. We would (and did) discuss these "problems" with the participants, but the "solution" that the students were hoping for was not ours to provide. The advice we gave to the participants was that they needed to make the best of the situation. This was one of those "have no control over" circumstances. Flexibility on the participant helps and often, from the perspective of a few weeks, the "problem" frequently is seen as a "stroke of unexpected good luck."

4. When they arrived at a New York City area airport upon returning home at the end of their program, the participants who were planning to take a connecting flight to Syracuse were informed that the airline had changed the flight schedule and they had missed the last flight out that night. Further, they were told, the airline would NOT provide overnight accommodation for the students. Several participants immediately called their parents who, in turn, immediately demanded that the OIEP "do something."

The OIEP's answer was: Unless a "Buckley Amendment" waiver on file in the OIEP, we could simply not discuss this "problem" with a third party (even parents). We did, advise the participants who asked our advice directly that they should do the same as they would probably do if they missed a flight to Cancun for spring break: Find cheap accommodations until departure time; save all receipts, and when they get home, contact the travel agency and pursue the airline that failed to provide overnight accommodations.

In short, just because you are 3,000 (and not 30 or 300) miles from home; and on an overseas academic program sponsored by a branch of the SUNY system, you are not exempt from general rule that the UNEXPECTED happens, and when it does, as an adult, you will be expected to cope. Basically, you should go abroad prepared to “roll with the punches.”

#### J. Some Additional Advice

1. Do Your Geography Homework - Before you depart for your overseas program site, do some basic research about the place(s) to which you will be going. Visit a bookstore, go to the “Travel” section, and find the best guidebook it has on the place you will be going to; buy it and read it. Next, go to your college or university library and find at least one book, fiction or non-fiction, about the city, the region, or the nation (but preferably the city) in which you will be living while abroad. The US Government publishes excellent studies on all the world’s countries. Borrow, read, and return one of these before you depart.
2. Things Are Different - Every semester, in every group, on the end-of-term evaluation questionnaire, there is at least one participant who writes, “I was never told that the plumbing/ newspapers/ food/ weather/ electrical appliances/ television shows/ etc. were going to be so different.” Please be warned: Everything (this includes room sizes, bathing facilities, clothing sizes, light switches, radio stations, eating times, etc.) is going to be different overseas; but that is one of the reasons that you are studying abroad in the first place! It is the belief of the OIEP that different is good; different is one of the main reasons for studying abroad. Students who are NOT eager to experience such differences are advised to remain at home.
3. Keep in Touch - But Not Too Much! - During the time that you are overseas, it will be more difficult for you family and friends to contact you than at any other time in your life, though in overseas locations where e-mail access is available (and this is increasingly most of the world), this difficulty will be eased significantly. Your friends and members of your family need to understand this and you must make some very specific arrangements to stay in contact with the people you have left behind.
4. Get a PHONE CARD - Before you leave home, or sign up with a billing system that sharply reduces the cost of international calls made from overseas. Sprint, MCI and AT&T can be found everywhere (the AT&T Calling Card is slightly more widely accepted). Why bother with an unfamiliar telephone system that only accepts currency that you are not yet used to using? Plug in your phone card and PHONE HOME. Phone home within two days (sooner if possible) of arriving at the program site even though these are the most hectic and disorganized and exhausting days of the whole experience.
5. Maintain Regular Contact – Discuss regular contact times with those whom you are leaving behind and determine a “comfort level” that suits both parties. For some, this will be a brief weekly phone call, for others, it will be a post card every other month.
6. Emergency contact - Establish a means whereby you can be reached quickly and directly in the event of an emergency at home (and, while you are at it, you should also set up a way in which you can reach

your loved ones quickly in case of an emergency). These arrangements for communication in event of an emergency must be independent of the OIEP at Oswego because this office is only open on Monday to Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. during the academic year, and 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. during the summer.

7. Leave a trail - When traveling away from the program site, inform those you care about where you will be, when you will be there, and how they can get in touch with you.
8. Itinerary - Leave a reasonably detailed (name, dates, address, phone numbers) itinerary of your trip with someone at the program site. Before you depart, tell your loved ones who have the itinerary.
9. Messages - Make arrangements to receive messages at times and places where you are certain you will be. Prior to your departure, you may not be certain at which hotel or youth hostel you will be staying in Nairobi; but if you do know that you will be in Nairobi on the 20<sup>th</sup>, within a day or two your arrival there, you can manage to go to the Nairobi office of the American Express or Thomas Cook Agency to collect messages.
10. Be Smart – DO NOT HITCH-HIKE (which is defined as accepting rides from strangers, whether or not you use your thumb to get the ride). Never do it, under any circumstances, no matter what anybody tells you. No matter if they say “it’s perfectly safe”, or “everybody does it!” It is not perfectly safe, and not everybody does it. You, for one. DO NOT HITCH-HIKE, PERIOD.

## **DISCLAIMER**

The Office of International Education and Programs (OIEP) at the State University of New York at Oswego works hard to make sure that the information contained in its brochures, advertisements, program information packs, and other print and non-print materials fairly and accurately describes its overseas academic programs and the various elements of those programs, as they are at the time that those materials were prepared.

However, you should be aware that the conditions of participation in the overseas academic programs are subject to change without notice.

The Oswego OIEP undertakes no guarantee that costs, fees, rates of exchange, starting dates, ending dates, conditions of housing, content of academic programs or the availability of courses or instruction will remain the same as they are described in its printed and non-printed materials. Further, the Oswego OIEP of the State University of New York assumes no liability for any losses caused by changes to or errors or inaccuracies in these materials.

