Study Abroad & Away Application Directions

Deadline for all application materials: January 25, 2025

Application document directions

Email application materials to the FASA office: **SAapplications@caltech.edu**
Reference writers should email the recommendation forms to: **SAreferences@caltech.edu**

- All application materials must be submitted via email as one continuous PDF document.
- Assemble your application pages within the PDF in the order listed in the list below.
- Application document naming convention: "First name Last name" (Jannie Postit)
- Add your name in the right upper corner of each page.
- Include page numbers in the bottom right corner of each page.

All applicants must include the following:

1. Study Abroad Application Form
2. Personal Essay
3. Program fit essay and proposed course list (one for each location you are applying to)
4. Current copy of your Caltech transcript. Unofficial transcript is acceptable
5. Two reference forms emailed direct from the writer to the address listed above

Please look over the individual program handouts to obtain the specifics on each academic program, which options can apply and specific websites to prepare your program fit essay and proposed course list. fasa.caltech.edu/studyabroad

Essay Directions

1. **Personal essay:** provide a brief personal narrative around one page, single spaced. Express why you value a term abroad for your academic and personal growth. These should be thoughtful and personal statement and students selected to study abroad will have their statement reviewed by the faculty selection committee (CEPSA).

2. **Program fit essay and proposed course list:** Briefly describe how the program you are applying for fits in with your course of study at Caltech. Explain why you want to go to that specific program and what you will gain from the experience. The proposed course list is a list of course you wish to take at that location.

    a. Submit one program fit essay and one proposed course list for each program you wish to apply for
    b. Review the course list templates here:
        - University of Cambridge: https://fasa.caltech.edu/documents/35714/Course_List_Example_.pdf
        - All other programs: https://fasa.caltech.edu/documents/35715/Course_List_Example_-_Camb.pdf
    c. Ensure the program fit essay and proposed course list are in the order corresponding to your order of preference indicated in the application form.
    d. If applying to the University of Cambridge, École Polytechnique, or University College London, you must also apply for at least a second option (a third location option if your first two preferences are the two Cambridge terms) as these locations have limited placements.
    e. When listing classes, list the admitting department and option credit classes first
    f. Use the current year's course list at the partner university, next years' class list is not usually available until the summer prior to the fall term.
    g. Due to course availability, students elected to study abroad or away may need to make changes to their course list during summer or fall (this process will be reviewed later)

For more examples of course lists, please visit the FASA office library.

If you are planning to take a "course by correspondence" while abroad, it should be listed last. Taking a “Course by Correspondence” means you are enrolled in a Caltech course in which you and an instructor communicate by email or zoom to complete the class and coursework. Course by Correspondence dose not count towards your 36 units you must take abroad.

If you are a senior during their term abroad/away and intends to complete an undergraduate thesis, the faculty member responsible for supervising the thesis work should sign a statement or send the student an email agreeing to the fact that the thesis requirement may be satisfied by increased work during the other two terms, or by some other method. Submit this letter or email with your application. It is possible to work on non-experimental aspects of your thesis while away or abroad.

References: 2 references are required, the third is optional

Please find the reference form on our website. The top of the form must be completed by the student, then sent to your reference writers. Reference writers must submit it back to our office via email **SAreferences@caltech.edu**. *References should not be turned in with your application or submitted by students.*

First Reference: This reference must be from a member of the professorial faculty at Caltech or from a Caltech postdoc instructor (not a TA) in the student’s option or a closely related field who has taught the student, officially advised the student, or supervised the student’s research.

> In the case of transfer students or 3/2 students, this letter may also be from a faculty member at their previous university. Professorial faculty includes those with the title of assistant, associate, or full professor.

Second Reference: This letter may be from another professor or instructor from Caltech or any university who has taught the applicant in a class related to their STEM option, who supervised (SURF) them in their STEM option, or from an advisor in their STEM option. This letter may be from a non-professorial Caltech faculty member, an instructor, faculty/professionals from other universities who have advised the student, taught the student or supervised the applicant’s research or work in a field related to their STEM option.

> Also acceptable is a letter from a postdoc who has supervised the student’s research or a graduate student who has been a TA or who has helped supervise research that relates to the applicant’s STEM option.
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> Letters from undergraduate TA’s, from employers, or from any HSS faculty will not be accepted as a required letter. If an applicant has a second option under HSS, the required letters must be from someone who has observed the applicant in a STEM capacity.

Optional Third Reference: Students may submit a third letter ONLY if the third letter can tell the committee about some aspect of your experience that the first two letter writers have no knowledge of, especially academic. This is not required and students with three letters are not viewed more favorably than those with two letters.

> A third letter should only be submitted if you feel your two required letters are from people who do not know you as well as the author of the third letter. Letters from your R.A., a Caltech administrator, dean, an employer, or instructor in the humanities or social sciences are acceptable for the third letter. Please do not submit letters from high school teachers or counselors, peers, or family friends.

Please request letter writers to comment on your academic qualifications and record, research, experience, character and maturity for study abroad/away, and how a term away/abroad might add to your personal growth and academic experience. The focus of the references is academic, but your reference writers should comment on your motivation and personal preparation for study abroad. To obtain the strongest references, it is best to provide them with information about your academic and personal motivation for studying abroad (or away) with a copy of your transcript and resume.

> If you are nominated to attend the University of Cambridge, the reference forms must be converted into an official letter of reference. Those letters should be typed with signature on appropriate letterhead. *Please do not take this step until requested to do so in March.*

All applicants nominated by Caltech to study abroad or away must also be accepted by the host university — this process happens after the Caltech nomination process is completed, in early March. The FASA office will walk you through the process during orientations.

Timeline

1.25.2027 – Application and Reference Forms Due	2.2027 Interviews – Every student will have an in-person interview	3.2027 - CEPSA committee finalizes placements, email notifications go out to students
3.2027-5.2027 Program specific applications process and housing applications submitted	4.2027-6.2027 Caltech program specific orientation, FA info session, MOU meeting, Bon Voyage Party, Course Credit Agreements, Visa Applications	7.2027-9.2027 Embark on your Study Abroad Adventure and have the best time!

More information on each program can be found in the specific university handouts. Please review these handouts before filling out the application.

https://fasa.caltech.edu/studyabroad

Caltech
FASA Office
Fellowships Advising & Study Abroad