Colby College

OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

A HANDBOOK
FOR FACULTY & STAFF

1/5/15
We are also assisted by student workers during the academic year.

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**Eustis 103**

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.  
To schedule an appointment with an OCS staff member please call (207) 859-4500 or stop by Eustis 103 between 8am and 5pm.

**Mailing address:**  
Office of Off-Campus Study  
Colby College  
4500 Mayflower Hill  
Waterville, ME 04901
Dear Colby Faculty & Staff:

In an increasingly interdependent world, an understanding of other parts of the world is an essential aspect of a student’s education. The opportunity to study in another country, for a semester or year offers students access to a wealth of knowledge and experience that can enrich their personal, academic, and professional lives.

More than two thirds of Colby students spend time studying off-campus before they graduate, choosing from over 200 academic programs in sixty countries and with Jan Plan, students have additional opportunities to extend their Colby experience around the globe. We see OCS as an important complement to the on-campus education you provide and your involvement and support is key to our students’ success here and off-campus.

The information included here is designed to help you better understand the role the OCS office plays as well as our policies and procedures. We hope this will assist you in providing guidance to your students.

Don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any questions, suggestions and/or would like to schedule a meeting with us. We welcome your feedback.

Nancy, Juliette and Sue
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Our Mission

The Office of Off-Campus Study is committed to making a substantive off-campus study opportunity available to every student who wishes to pursue one. The OCS staff works with students, faculty, administrators and program providers to match students with the most appropriate host university or study abroad program, to ensure that students participate in off-campus study programs that adhere to the college’s guidelines. We work to identify programs offer an academically rigorous curriculum and provide a holistic, intercultural experience that promotes maximum engagement in a distinct culture. We strive to provide students with opportunities to develop the skills required to address the challenges of our increasingly interconnected world.

Colby’s Off-Campus Study Philosophy

The opportunity to study in another country is an integral part of the educational philosophy of Colby College. The precepts adopted by the faculty in 1989 state that a Colby education should encourage students “to become acquainted with other cultures by learning a foreign language and by living and studying in another country or by closely examining a culture other than one’s own.”

Consistent with these principles, Colby’s philosophy of off-campus study is as follows:

• The off-campus study experience should be part of the student’s overall academic plan developed by the student and the student’s advisor, and should enhance the student’s program of study during the year(s) following return to Colby.

• Study abroad should provide a cultural experience substantially different from the student’s own.

• Study abroad should provide, when appropriate, a linguistic experience that involves a language different from one’s own.

• Financial aid should be applicable to Colby programs, and portable to other approved programs.

The Off-Campus Study Office is responsible for insuring that
Colby’s programs abroad, as well as other programs approved by the college, conform to these principles. The college has a vested interest in the quality of all off-campus study programs for which it grants Colby credit. This interest centers not only on the academic part of the program, but also on the extra-curricular and cultural part of the program, inasmuch as the knowledge of a culture other than one’s own is achieved both in and out of the classroom.

What We Do

The Office of Off-Campus Study and its Staff:

• Oversees the administration of study away from the Colby campus (except for summer & Jan Plan study and transfer credit from another U.S. institution).
• Monitors the quality of programs and institutions to which the College sends students
• Coordinates with off-campus study programs and institutions on all aspects of the student experience
• Manages Colby’s own off-campus programs in Salamanca, Dijon, St Petersburg, and at the Bigelow Laboratory
• Approves over 200 other off-campus programs, both foreign and domestic, for Colby credit.
• Advises students from program selection to re-entry offering a variety of resources and programming to help students make appropriate study plans, preparing for departure, assuring a smooth transition back to campus, and evaluating the quality of programs abroad.
• Guides students in the choice of a program, through the application process, pre-departure planning, through their return and reintegration back to Colby
• Serves as a liaison with program providers for Colby faculty, administrators, and students
• Tracks developments and expectations in the field of education abroad
• Works with faculty and staff in the academic and student advising process
• Holds informational meetings and fairs and conducts pre-departure orientations and re-entry workshops
• Monitors the approval of students’ OCS plans and programs
• Approves off-campus study courses for general Colby credit from semester/year off-campus study
• Communicates with overseas college staff from Colby programs
• Monitors safety and health concerns relating to programs abroad
• Advises faculty on logistics of developing Jan Plan courses abroad and collects safety and logistical information

What We Don’t Do

The Office of Off-Campus Study and its Staff does not (although we may be in a position to provide some guidance):
• Administer approval of summer or domestic off-campus opportunities (Registrar)
• Approve off-campus study courses to count towards a major/minor/distribution requirement (Faculty)
• Administer approval of independent studies or research abroad (that are not a program component) (Faculty)
• Advise or approve internships, volunteer, or work abroad programs (that are not part of an approved off-campus study program) (Career Center)
• Administer Jan Plan off-campus courses or short-term faculty-led programs (Faculty, Dean of the Faculty’s Office)
• Advise on fellowships or other forms of travel and cultural exchange (Faculty, Career Center)
• Arrange visas or international flights (except for Colby-run programs)
Why Should Students Study Off-Campus?

There are many benefits to study abroad.

**Academic**
- Experience a different educational system
- Earn credits towards the major, distribution requirements, and graduation
- Learn an entirely new language or become more fluent
- Take courses from faculty from around the world to enhance their perspective
- Re-energize their studies

**Career**
- Employers increasingly seek graduates who can articulate the skills gained from international experience
- Enhance their resume and employability
- Explore career opportunities
- Gain experience through an internship abroad
- Demonstrate their adaptability to potential employers and graduate schools
- Develop connections for future international travel and/or work
- Practice cultural awareness and leadership
- Gain new cross-cultural communication, flexibility, and problem solving skills

**Personal**
- Learn about another culture firsthand
- Expose themselves to new ways of thinking, living, and viewing the world
- Step out of their comfort zone and enhance their self-confidence, resilience and independence
- Experience a new way of learning and living
- Gain a new perspective on the United States
- Explore their heritage
- Dispel their own stereotypes and fight stereotypes by educating others
- Make friendships and create memories that will last a lifetime
- Become a 'global citizen'
Key Steps In The Application Process

All Colby students who wish to study off-campus must follow these steps:

**Step 1:** Students explore their options

**Step 2:** Preliminary Proposal for Approval to Study Off-Campus – Due to OCS by November 15

**Step 3:** Application for Colby Approval to Study Off-Campus – Due to OCS by February 20 **ATTENTION: NEW DEADLINE!!**

**Step 4:** Application to OCS program/university (except for a Colby program) – Deadlines vary

**Step 5:** Confirmation of Off-Campus Study Plans & Waiver of Liability – Requires Parent & Student signature
  - Due to OCS by May 1 for fall or full year study
  - Due to OCS by November 1 for spring study

**Step 6:** Pre-Departure Preparation
Key Dates & Deadlines

**Mid September:** Mandatory Sophomore Information Session 5 pm in Page Commons

**Late September-Early October:** Off-Campus Study Fair 3-5:30 pm in Page Commons

**By November 15:**
Students submit the **Preliminary Proposal for Approval** to Study Off-Campus (online) to indicate their intention to study off-campus either in the fall semester or the spring semester or for the full year of the following academic year.

**By February 20 ** **ATTENTION: NEW DEADLINE!!:**
Students submit the **Application for Colby Approval** to Study Off-Campus - including a petition statement, if applicable - (online) on a Colby Of-Campus program or a non-Colby program, *regardless of whether they plan to study off-campus in the fall/full year or spring.* Students may submit 1-3 applications. NOTE: A Petition of ANY kind requires a prior meeting with an OCS staff member by appointment - call (207) 859-4500

**Deadlines vary – Early application recommended!**
Students submit application(s) to their OCS program/university. This is in addition to the Colby Application for Approval (except for a Colby program i.e., Salamanca, Dijon, St. Petersburg, or Bigelow). Early application is recommended.

**NB:** Advisors of Sophomores may wish to manage advising appointments with these deadlines in mind to avoid several last minute advising meetings before the deadline.
Key OCS Academic Policies
(Some differ from on-campus policies)

- **Cumulative GPA of at least 2.7** by the end of January of the year before student plans to go. There is a petition process for those whose GPA is below 2.7 but no lower than 2.5.

- **Probation:** Good academic and social standing. No academic probation.

- **Junior Standing:** With the exception of Colby’s language-acquisition programs in Salamanca and Dijon, which are open to sophomores, students should generally have junior standing when they study abroad. Students may study off-campus during the fall of their senior year and may, in rare instances, petition to do so during their sophomore year.

- **Language Requirement:**
  a) For regions where the spoken language is taught at Colby, students are expected to have completed the equivalent of three semesters (through 127) of the given language (Spanish, German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, or Russian) prior to studying abroad. Some majors are granted an exemption or modification to this policy.
  
b) When studying in a non-English speaking country, students are required to study the language of host-country for the duration of their program. Some exceptions apply for certain majors. Some majors are granted an exemption or modification to this policy, and other accommodations may be possible.

- **Grades:** Grades on all Colby programs are calculated into the Colby GPA. Grades from Non-Colby programs are recorded on the transcript, but will not affect the GPA.

- **Pass/Fail:** Students may not take a course on a pass/fail basis unless this is the only grading option available for that particular course.

- **One-Semester Limit:** With only a few exceptions, students are
limited to one semester of off-campus study and will be asked to justify their choice of semester on specific academic grounds as the OCS office is responsible for maintaining a balanced campus enrollment.

- **Wait List:** Some students may be placed on a wait list for approval to go in a particular semester. In most cases, the wait list usually clears in time but it is not guaranteed.

- **Full year off-campus:** Language and area studies majors (studying in the target language both semesters), participants on the Dartmouth engineering exchange, and students who enroll in the fall Colby at Bigelow program are automatically granted a full year abroad. **All others must petition the Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study and** show compelling academic reasons to be allowed to study away for more than a semester, and they must show support of their major advisor/s.

- **Financial aid:** Financial aid is portable to both Colby and non-Colby programs once their plans (and petitions) have been approved by OCS.

- **Credit Transfer:** Students may transfer a maximum of 20 credits for a semester and 32 for a full year back to Colby.

- **Course Load Required:** Students are required to register and complete a full course load (at least equivalent of 15-16 Colby credits for the semester). Information on credit equivalencies and minimum/maximum course loads is available from the program or university you are attending or from the OCS course load requirements table on the OCS website.

- **Approval of OCS Courses:**
  - **General credit** courses are approved by the Off-Campus Study office.
  
  - **Credit applied towards the Major, Minor, Distribution or Diversity Credit** must be approved by appropriate Colby
faculty member in each department. Students are requested to send detailed course information including US equivalent credit values for each course. Because the OCS office tracks OCS credit, please share any approvals you provide to students with OCS (via email).

- **Attendance and Exam Requirements:** Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to comply with all the requirements of the program and to take the regular final examinations at the university/program in which they are enrolled.

- **Independent Study Projects (ISP):** Students participating in an SIT program with an ISP component are required to have their ISP project reviewed by a Colby faculty member upon return. The reviewing faculty member should notify OCS once it has been deemed suitable for Colby credit (You are not asked to grade it).

  **Note:** Students are told that a language department may not be the most appropriate evaluator for an environmental studies or economics paper written in Spanish just because the ISP is written in that language. If the ISP is written in a language other than English, and you are not able to review it, please, if possible, assist the student to identify another faculty member in your department who can read the original language well enough to assess credit worthiness or ask the student to translate it into English.

- **International Internship Programs:** International internship programs are encouraged, but must be done as part of a study abroad program that is predominantly credited in terms of the courses taken and must meet OCS requirements. In addition to general policies, internship programs must include a non-paid internship with considerable academic work done in tandem and not to exceed 4 credit hours in order to receive Colby credit. Typical models consist of 16 credits with the internship counting for 4 credits and three other courses counting for 4 credits each).
• **Jan Plan credit/exemption:** Students on programs meeting certain criteria qualify for Jan Plan credit/exemption for that year. Students studying off-campus for a full year are exempt from Jan Plan and receive Jan Plan credit on completion (an may not participate in an on-campus Jan Plan program, even if they are able).

• **Travel Warning (U.S. State Department):** Colby College discourages travel to countries and participation in a program in a country for which there is a U.S. State Department Travel Warning in effect at the time of departure. Students wishing to travel to a country currently under U.S. State Department Travel Warning are required to submit a petition to the Travel Warning Review Committee providing a complete description of and justification for their study/travel at a Travel Warning site. If approved, the student and his/her parents are required to sign a second risk waiver as part of the application for approval.
Off-Campus Study Programs

Colby has an extensive list of over 200 approved Off-Campus Program opportunities from which to choose. This list of programs can be found in the OCS handbook and via the OCS website.

Off-Campus Study may not be for everyone, but most anyone CAN study off-campus if they truly wish. There are many different types of off-campus study programs offering opportunities for students of all different majors, students involved in sports or extra-curricular activities, students of color, students with a low GPA (above 2.5 and no probation), LGBQT students, students with lots of travel experience and family resources, students with disabilities, international students, first generation college students with very limited family resources and no prior international travel experience. With careful planning, most students can study off-campus.

More information about different types of programs is available on OCS website.

Colby's Approved Programs list

In consultation with the Off-Campus Study Advisory Committee, OCS maintains a list of programs which is designed to meet the great majority of academic needs. The list represents a wide range of programs, in many countries, that have been attended successfully by Colby students in the past and continue to be recommended by academic departments.

Programs attain “approved status” once two or three students participate or two students and a faculty or staff member visit the program and review it favorably.

All Colby-approved study programs abroad must meet the following standards:
• They must provide an educational experience which is consistent in quality with the educational experience at Colby, and which can reinforce, complement, and broaden a student’s
educational program at Colby.

- They must contain a substantial academic component of high quality.
- Study abroad programs must provide a cultural experience and, when appropriate, a linguistic experience that are consistent with the goals stated above. To promote cultural integration, at least a full semester must normally be spent in a single host country.

Programs must meet certain guidelines; these include, but are not limited to:

- The program must have a duration of at least fourteen weeks of class time (including exam time but not including vacations and excursions), to match the length of a semester at Colby.
- The program must be situated in one host country (with the exception of certain specific approved programs) and touring or shipboard programs are not acceptable.
- The program or university must provide an academic program which is consistent in quality and quantity of work required at Colby. Off Campus Study reviews the courses and faculty qualifications on the program.
- With the exception of a foreign accredited university, the program must be sponsored by an accredited US college or university whose academic standards are high.
- For all programs in non-English speaking countries, students must study the language of the host country for the duration of their program.
- The program or university must provide a cultural experience substantially different from that of a typical U.S. campus experience.

Approved programs include:

**Colby Programs:**

- Colby in Salamanca (Spain) – Language Program
- Colby in Salamanca (Spain) - Integrated Program
- Colby in Dijon (France) - Language program (fall semester only)
• Colby in Dijon (France) – University level (fall semester only)
• Colby in St. Petersburg (Russia)- Advanced Language program
• Colby at Bigelow Laboratory (Boothbay, Maine, USA)- Marine science program (fall only)

Non-Colby Programs

Colby offers students the opportunity to study on non-Colby programs that meet our criteria and are consistent with our philosophy of study abroad and have been tried by Colby students and approved by Colby’s Off-Campus Study Advisory Committee. These programs are listed in the Opportunities section of the OCS website. Some programs listed may require a petition.

Knowledge of these programs is kept current through student evaluations and faculty visits. Programs may be added to or removed from the list as more appropriate opportunities emerge. Please do not assume that because a Colby student has participated in a particular program in the past, that the program is on the approved list.

OCS Program Information and Feedback

Information on Colby-approved programs can be found on the OCS website http://www.colby.edu/offcampus/programs/. Students and faculty are also encouraged to access these many campus-based resources for more information:

• Off-Campus Study Fair
• Off-Campus Study Handbook
• Program information online or in the OCS library in Eustis 103
• Choosing your off-campus study program worksheet
• Faculty members familiar with a program or who may have visited
• OCS Opportunities For Your Major
• Student Evaluations online (feedback from Colby students)
• Department and/or program information sessions
• OCS staff members with access to a wide network
OCS Program Evaluations by Colby Students

All students are required to complete an online program evaluation at the completion of their program. Colby considers these reflections on the experience an important part of the learning process. These evaluations are an extremely useful source of feedback for prospective students, faculty and the OCS staff as we regularly review the programs that we approve for our students. Student evaluations are accessible in the student/student experiences section on the OCS website to anyone with a Colby login [https://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/ocs/evals/index.cfm](https://www.colby.edu/academics_cs/ocs/evals/index.cfm).
Financial Issues

• **Program Costs and Billing:**
  Students studying on Colby-run programs (Colby in Salamanca, Dijon, St Petersburg or Bigelow Laboratory, and selected affiliated exchange programs) are billed by Colby in the same way as a semester or year on-campus. All others will be billed a $1,000 fee by Colby and pay the program’s/university’s fees (not Colby tuition) directly to the program.

• **Financial aid:**
  Financial aid is portable to both Colby and non-Colby programs as long as the student’s plans have been approved by the Off-Campus Study office.

  **NOTE:** Financial aid is NOT portable to a Jan Plan, summer, or study at another US institution.

• **Scholarships**
  There are many different scholarships for study abroad listed on the OCS website with their own guidelines and application deadlines.
Physical And Mental Health

- **Physical & Mental Health:** Studying abroad, like any educational experience, is by its very nature intellectually, physically, and emotionally challenging. It can create stress that may trigger or exacerbate mental and physical health issues. Please encourage students to review the advice in Part IV of the OCS handbook in considering off-campus study.

- **Learning Differences & Disabilities:** Not all destinations can provide the level of understanding or support that students may need or have grown accustomed to at home. If they have a learning or physical disability that could affect their participation, we can assist in identifying suitable options. The environment, facilities, and legal requirements will vary greatly in different countries and programs.

If you have any concerns about a student’s ability to study off-campus for any reason, please don’t hesitate to contact the OCS office, health center, counseling center or Dean of Students so that students may receive the appropriate advising.
Jan Plan Off-Campus

The OCS office works with the Associate Dean of the Faculty to support the development and smooth running of faculty-led Jan Plan courses off-campus (abroad or domestic) especially regarding safety. OCS is not directly involved in administering Jan Plan off-campus.

Students are reminded that:

• All Colby Jan Plan courses, including those abroad, are planned and administered by Academic Departments in conjunction with the Dean of Faculty’s Office.

• Independent study off-campus during Jan Plan may be arranged in advance in conjunction with a Colby faculty member.

• Off-campus January courses may be taken at another institution by seeking faculty approval and registering for "transfer credit" during Jan Plan registration.

• Colby College discourages travel to countries and participation in a program in a country for which there is a U.S. State Department Travel Warning in effect at the time of departure. Students wishing to travel to a country currently under U.S. State Department Travel Warning are required to, in advance of their application, submit a petition to the Travel Warning Review Committee providing a complete description of and justification for their study/travel at a Travel Warning site. The petition is due by October 15 for Jan Plan. If approved, student and parent will then be required to sign a waiver as part of the approval process.

Note: Colby financial aid is NOT portable to Jan Plan off-campus study. Certain departments on campus may have special funds or scholarships available.
Summer Off-Campus Study

The Office of Off-Campus Study does NOT administer approval of off-campus study or credit transfer during the summer and OCS policies in effect during the academic year do not apply. OCS staff, however, can usually assist students with advising on opportunities and other matters.

Transfer of credit for summer off-campus study or leave to study at another U.S. college/university during the summer or academic year must be approved by a faculty member in advance through the Registrar’s office using the Transfer of Credits Form available on the Registrar’s webpage under “forms for students”.

If the off-campus program requires an approval signature from a study abroad advisor or home school approval that can be signed by an OCS staff member.

Note: Colby financial aid is NOT portable to summer off-campus study though outside scholarships may be available.

Leave To Study At Another U.S. College/University

The Office of Off-Campus Study does NOT administer approval of off-campus study or credit transfer for study at another U.S. college or university, except for participation in the Dartmouth College Dual Degree in Engineering program, certain approved domestic programs in environmental studies and theatre, and Colby’s exchange programs with Pomona College in CA and Howard University in Washington, D.C.. All other domestic off-campus study requires credit transfer approval in advance through the Registrar’s office using the Transfer of Credits Form available on the Registrar’s webpage under “forms for students”.

Note: Colby financial aid is NOT portable to domestic off-campus study outside of the exception outlined above.
Application for Off-Campus Study
During Semester or Year

All Colby students who wish to study off-campus must follow the following steps:

Preliminary Proposal For Approval – Due By November 15

This is an online application form where students indicate their intention to consider off-campus study in the following academic year. It must be specific to a semester and must be approved by the academic advisor.

Students are not expected to have their plans fully formed, but must indicate their interests and justify their preferred semester

• Online form is automatically forwarded to student’s advisor of record (at that time)
• Requires Faculty Advisor approval
• Only the academic advisor on record can see this
• If your advisee plans to declare a different major, please encourage the student to consult with that department but please click the “approve” button (application cannot be transmitted to another person for their approval)
• You can write a comment in the comment box, but please understand that the student may not see it.

If you are not comfortable "approving" the plans of a student whom you do not know or whose intended major does not fall in your purview, that is understandable, but please note that this "approval" is preliminary only. You may wish to include a statement about your reservations or concerns to OCS and/or the student and email such a statement to the student.

NB: Advisors of sophomores may wish to manage advising appointments with these deadlines in mind to avoid several last minute advising meetings before the deadline.

If you have any questions or problems please contact Juliette at jmonet@colby.edu or 859-4505.
Colby Application For Approval - Due By February 20

This is an online application where students seek Colby approval for one or more specific off-campus study plans. If a petition is required, students must meet with OCS well before the February 20 deadline.

Students are encouraged to meet with their Advisor(s) and Departmental OCS Liaison(S) to discuss their plans PRIOR to beginning their application

• Each application is specific to an off-campus program or university abroad and there are two different forms: one for Colby-run programs and one for non-Colby programs.
• For Colby programs this form serves both as permission to study abroad and application to the program
• For non-Colby programs the form serves only as Colby approval for the student’s off-campus study plans.
• Students must complete and submit one application form for each program/university to which they intend to apply.
• Students are encouraged to submit no more than 1-3 applications since the likelihood of students being admitted to their first choice is high as long as they are qualified for the program and do not apply late.
• The petition statement is incorporated within each application form.

Application forms require:
• Academic Advisor(s) approval (& statement of support for student petition, if appropriate)
• Foreign language evaluation for Colby language program
• Course approvals for major/minor/distribution credits
Advising and Responding To Student Applications

Each department or faculty member may wish to manage this process according to their preference. Some departments require a face-to-face meeting with the student as part of this process.

- **Your comments are extremely important, especially in the case of a petition** for a non-approved program, a full year off-campus, or a low GPA. The Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study relies on your comments and statement of support in evaluating a student’s petition.

- Each application is program-specific so please approve and/or comment on EACH application your advisee has submitted even if it is not relevant to your major.

- If you are not comfortable "approving" the plans of a student whom you do not know or a double major whose program choice is not relevant to your discipline, you may indicate that in the comment section but please “approve” since it will otherwise be “held up” as unapproved (the application cannot be transmitted to another person for their approval).

- You may “return to student” with comments if you would like the student to make changes and resubmit it to you.

- You may write a comment in the comment box but please understand that the student may not see it unless they are specifically instructed to do so. It may be best to email the student directly.

If you have any questions or problems please contact Juliette at jmonet@colby.edu or 859-4505.
Student Petitions

Petition Criteria & Procedures

The following is a list of situations which require a student to petition the Off-Campus Study Office and Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study, and the materials that must be submitted as part of the petition. The student can only petition one time; no petition can be reconsidered at a later date with new material, including additional faculty recommendations. Specific details of petition criteria are available on the Off-Campus Study web site.

- Students are required to meet with an OCS staff member well before the deadline, to discuss their petition and review the guidelines. They are encouraged to contact faculty members for support immediately.
- They will be notified by mid-January whether they will need to petition, based on their preliminary applications.
- All petition items must be received by OCS by February 20.

A petition is required in the following circumstances:

A. Off-Campus Study By Any Student Whose G.P.A. is Below 2.7 After Jan Plan.
   This petition must include:
   1. An online Colby application for approval for a specific program. The petition must be made for one program, not general permission to go abroad.
   2. A statement of petition from the student within the online application form addressing all issues/questions listed in the petition guidelines.
   3. A G.P.A. Petition Faculty Recommendation form in which a faculty member chosen by the student indicates his/her recommendations about the student’s abilities. (You will receive this evaluation form via email or on paper from the student). This faculty member may or may not be the student’s advisor, but the advisor must also sign the application form as per the usual process, and must
indicate his or her recommendations in a brief statement within the form or in an e-mail to OCS.

B. Off-Campus Study For More Than One Semester (unless the student is exempt from petitioning according to the policies outlined in the OCS handbook). This includes off-campus study for a full year in one location or in two different locations for a semester each. This petition must include:
   1. An online Colby Application for Approval for a specific program(s).
   2. A statement of petition from the student within the online application form addressing all issues/questions listed in the petition guidelines.
   3. A statement of support for the petition from the student's academic advisor within the comment section of the student's online application form or in an email to OCS.

C. Off-Campus Study On An Program, Either Abroad or Domestic, Not On Colby’s Current "Approved List". This petition must include:
   1. An online Colby Application for Approval for a specific program
   2. A statement of petition from the student within the online form addressing all issues/questions listed in the petition guidelines.
   3. A statement of support for the petition from the student's academic advisor within the comment section of the student's online application form or in an email to OCS.
   4. Additional program information such as academic calendar, course descriptions, etc..

D. Modification/Exception Of Colby’s Language Policy For Study In Italy.
   This petition must include:
   1. An online Colby Application for Approval for a specific program
   2. A statement of petition from the student within the online form addressing all issues/questions listed in the petition
guidelines.
3. A **statement of support for the petition** from the student's academic advisor within the comment section of the student's online application form or in an email to OCS.

E. **Off-Campus Study In A Country Currently Under U.S. State Department Travel Warning.**

This petition must include:
1. A student **statement to the Travel Warning Review committee** providing a complete description of and justification for their study/travel at a Travel Warning site addressing all issues/questions listed in the petition guidelines.
2. When appropriate (for JanPlan off-campus) students must also provide the name of the faculty sponsor(s) for this study/travel.
3. If approved by the committee, the student and parents will be required to sign a **second waiver**.

Please note: Students can only petition the OCS Advisory Committee **one time** and all materials must be submitted **by February 20**.

All petitions will be approved at the discretion of the Off-Campus Study Advisory Committee and within the space constraints of the enrollment goals of the College.
Faculty Support For Student Petitions

Your comments are extremely important, especially in the case of a petition for a non-approved program, a full year off-campus, or a low GPA. Faculty are asked to provide a brief statement of support to indicate their awareness of and support (or lack thereof) for the student’s plan. This is not a letter of reference. The Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study relies on your comments and statement of support in evaluating a student’s petition.

The faculty member is usually the student’s advisor but the student may also seek support from another faculty member. This statement may be included at the time of approval of the student’s OCS application or via email to OCS.

• Please approve and/or comment on EACH application your advisee has submitted even if it is not relevant to your major.
• This faculty member approving a student’s petition may or may not be the student’s advisor, but the advisor must sign the approval form as per the usual process, and must indicate his or her support in a brief statement on the form or in an e-mail.
• You may wish to include a statement about your reservations to OCS and/or the student and/or email such a statement to the student.

If you have any questions or problems please let us know at jmonet@colby.edu or 859-4505.
Accessing Your Students’ OCS Applications in mycolby

Once an application is submitted by a student, you will be notified via an email leading you to the spot in mycolby/Academics where applications are awaiting your approval (see below).

You will see two lists,
1. OCS Preliminary application(s) awaiting your approval (November)
2. OCS application(s) awaiting your approval (February 20)
   Subdivided into:
   • Colby Program Applications
   • Non-Colby Program Applications

You may also access your students’ OCS applications on your Academics page in mycolby (see below).
Only academic advisors will be able to comment on or approve an application but OCS Liaisons and Chairs should be able to view all the applications submitted by majors in their department in Off-Campus Study Advisees on the myColby/Academics page.

**Accessing Your Students’ Current OCS Status in Mycolby**

You may access the status of your **OCS Advisees (majors in your department)** on your Academics page in mycolby (see below).

“**My Advisees**” shows the "full time," "leave of absence," "withdrawn," or "Study Abroad" status of your advisees.

“**Off-Campus Study Advisees**” shows the list of all your department’s majors who are on the OCS list for that year.

Feel free to contact OCS to request a list of your current students who are, have or will study off-campus.
Off-Campus Program or University Application(s)

With the exception of students applying to a Colby off-campus study program (Salamanca, Dijon, St Petersburg or Bigelow) students applying to a non-Colby program must also apply directly to the program or university for which they have gotten Colby approval.

Starting in late November (but mostly in February-March and September-October), students will begin applying directly to their chosen program(s) or universities off-campus. Students are encouraged to complete no more than 1-3 applications since the likelihood of admission is high, in most cases, as long as:

1. Student meets the eligibility guidelines of the program (GPA, language, prerequisites).
2. Student applies early enough

Early application is recommend since many programs tend to fill up well before their deadline! In cases where certain programs are more competitive or certain students’ prospects may be uncertain, OCS can advise the student accordingly.

Applications usually require:

- Student essay
- Faculty letters of recommendation
- Study Abroad advisor/Home School Nomination approval
- Transcript
- Application Fee

Students alone are responsible for applying to the program approved by the OCS office within the provider’s stated deadlines.

Faculty Letters of Recommendations

One or more letters of recommendation are usually required. There may or may not be a specific paper or online form. Students are encouraged to give faculty members at least 2 weeks advance notice to write the recommendation.
Home School Nomination / Study Abroad Advisor Approval Form

Many off-campus study programs require a “home school nomination” or “study abroad advisor approval” form as part of their application on which they ask about any disciplinary or academic probation in the student’s history, among other things. OCS is responsible for completing this form.

Application Deadlines

Program and university deadlines vary and some have deadlines that are earlier than the Colby deadline. Most programs have rolling admissions and may fill up before the deadline, so we recommend students apply early to avoid disappointment. This is especially true for small or popular programs such as SIT, SFS, and DIS, among others. Incomplete and late applications are not usually considered by most providers.
Approval Of Off-Campus Study Courses

Responsibility for approval of OCS credits is as follows:

a) **General credit** courses taken off-campus are approved by OCS
b) **Major & minor credit** from off-campus is approved by the academic department’s designee
c) **Distribution requirements** credit is approved by the relevant department’s designee
d) **Diversity credit** (“U” or “I”) is approved by the Associate Dean of the Faculty

Facilitation of course approvals is department specific:

- Each academic department may determine how best to facilitate its OCS course approvals.
- A course approval contact person and department policy information list is updated each September and shared with students.
- Courses taken abroad must usually be pre-approved in advance, if possible.
- Students are encouraged to seek course approval in advance:
  a. during the application or prior to departure
  b. from abroad, in cases where course information is not available in advance or changes upon arrival on site

Notification of course approvals:

Because it is the responsibility of the Off-Campus Study office (not Registrar) to oversee and track OCS courses and course approvals, we ask that you please share approvals with OCS

a. Using the printed course approval form
   or
b. In an email to the student &/or cc OCS

Please be as specific as possible about which class you are approving and which Colby equivalent it replaces, if appropriate or indicate if the course is simply approved as BI2XX or FR3XX for example.
Faculty Support For Students’ Off-Campus Study

Throughout the study abroad application process, students are reminded of the importance of discussing their study abroad goals and interests with their academic advisers.

Tips on Advising OCS Applicants:

Students should be reminded:

• To start planning early for OCS. Students can begin researching programs and developing a plan of study that will complement their major or field of interest.
• To "map" out their requirements to determine which semester is best for OCS and which courses are absolutely necessary to take at Colby and which courses might be taken off-campus.
• Of Colby’s language requirements for study in non-English speaking countries
• That it can be possible to fulfill major/minor/distribution requirements abroad
• Of your departmental policy on transfer credit from abroad and courses appropriate for the major.
• Of the benefits of in-depth research into their OCS destination such as attending information sessions
• To think in terms of outcomes and goals as well as the destination
• To consider the type of program most appropriate for them and their goals

In evaluating the appropriateness of an OCS program for your advisee, please consider the following:

• Do the course descriptions seem suitable for Colby's liberal arts curriculum? Do they seem appropriate for the student? (Many programs have course descriptions online or available by request.)
• Who are the teaching faculty? (Most programs offer credentials of the faculty online.)
• Does the student have particular academic or personal needs while abroad (e.g. specific course requirements, disability
accommodation)? (Please refer students to the OCS office with specific questions.)
• Has the student met with the OCS office to discuss their program choices?

Encourage the student to access the many sources of program information on OCS programs available to them.

**Timeline of Approvals:**

As described above there are several steps in a student’s application process requiring your approval. Students are reminded to give faculty plenty of advanced notice.
• Application approval (by November 15)
• Application approval & petition support (by February 20)
• Course approval (all year long)
• Faculty letters of recommendations (mostly in Feb & March and Sept & Oct)

**Communicating With A Student While Student Is Off-Campus**

Students may contact Faculty from abroad for a variety of reasons:
• Course approval
• Dropping a class
• Leaving the program early

Since it is the OCS office (not Registrar) which tracks and records OCS course approvals, we ask that you please cc or inform OCS when approving a course.

If you sense that your advisee is struggling while abroad for whatever reason, please encourage them to reach out to OCS but especially to their program staff on site to access services available. Students may also contact Colby’s Counseling Center or Health Center from abroad if they have an ongoing relationship with them.
Faculty Responsibilities & Opportunities With OCS

In addition to the above-mentioned of approvals of applications and courses, please share with OCS any updates or changes relating to:

- Your department’s liaison for OCS matters
- Your department’s OCS policies and preferences
- A department event that you would like advertised on our website
- Any new developments, good news or concerns you may have regarding off-campus study

Department OCS Liaisons

Each academic department and program designates a faculty member to serve as a liaison with the OCS office and/or to oversee OCS issues for its majors. Each department may devise its own OCS policies and procedures and communicate them to OCS.

Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study

The Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study is composed of faculty, staff, and students assigned on a yearly basis. The Committee usually meets 2-3 times per year, most often during the spring semester. Its activities may include:

- Reviewing and voting on student petitions for GPA minimum waivers, non-approved programs, and full year study off-campus
- Adding or removing programs on the approved program list
- Advising OCS on new and/or changes to OCS policies, guidelines, and procedures for OCS
- Consulting with faculty/departments regarding programs appropriate for majors
- Making recommendations to OCS, as appropriate
What OCS Can Do For You

- Provide recommendations on see OCS opportunities appropriate for your majors
- Research and provide feedback on OCS opportunities appropriate for your students
- Provide a list of your students and their OCS plans
- Emergency Assistance: When travelling abroad on college business, OCS provides emergency assistance coverage through Worldwide Assistance, Inc. Please contact OCS to get the card and policy number you need to access this coverage.

Other Opportunities For Involvement With OCS

There are many ways to be involved in off-campus study:

- **Participate in OCS events on campus** organized for/with students throughout the year such as the Welcome Back Dinner in September and the Off-campus Study Fair in October.

- **Visit a program/university site abroad**: Faculty members may have the opportunity to visit a program/university abroad to investigate its suitability for its majors. Such trips may be organized in conjunction with other planned personal or professional travel, as a stand-alone trip or as a “familiarization visit” or workshop organized by a study abroad program provider.

- **Jan Plan Course Off-Campus**: Jan plan courses are proposed by faculty and approved by the Dean of the Faculty’s office. OCS may be able to assist with advice on program development, contacts abroad, or logistics. OCS is also responsible for collecting the risk assessment and student information and risk forms prior to departure. Contact the OCS Director and the Associate Dean of the Faculty for more information.

- Participate in OCS-related activities for/by students before and after OCS
• Collaborate with OCS staff members to address an issue, policy, or procedure you feel could be improved

• **Faculty Exchange:** In certain cases, there may be opportunities for faculty to teach on one of our partner study abroad programs for a semester. The DIS program, for example, offers visiting faculty opportunities [http://www.disabroad.org/faculty-advisors/development/](http://www.disabroad.org/faculty-advisors/development/)

• **Faculty Development Seminars:** Several study abroad programs organize summer seminars/workshops at their study abroad sites to study a topic, on location, with colleagues from the United States and/or review the program and site as a study abroad location. The cost of the seminars is generally reasonable since “student” accommodations and the program’s existing facilities are used.

  Seminar providers include:
  - CIEE International Faculty Development Seminars
  - IES Faculty Development Seminars
  - DIS International Educators Conference
    [http://www.disabroad.org/faculty-advisors/international-educators-conference/](http://www.disabroad.org/faculty-advisors/international-educators-conference/)
  - DIS International Educators Workshop

• **First Semester Abroad (FSA) Students:**
  - Accompany First Semester Abroad student group to Salamanca or Dijon in late August/early September
  - Travel to Salamanca in October to provide academic advising to First Semester Abroad students regarding January and spring registration

• **Nominate a Student for an Award:** There are several study abroad-related awards or opportunities for which you can nominate a student in conjunction with the OCS office.
The Undergraduate Research Award from the Forum on Education Abroad
NOTE: This award is an opportunity to highlight undergraduate student research done as part of a study abroad program. http://www.forumea.org/research-awards.cfm. Deadline for nomination June 20. Please contact OCS for more information on nominating and submitting.

The DAAD Young Ambassador program from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). This award is for students who recently studied abroad in Germany to promote study in Germany at their home universities with help from the DAAD. https://www.daad.org/ambassadors?cm_c=4807641 Deadline for nomination May 18. Please contact OCS for more information on nominating and submitting.

Let us know if you know of other such awards available in your field.

Contact us with feedback! OCS is always open to faculty input and suggestions on how we can make the OCS process work better for all.
Opportunities For Student Support After OCS

As you know, off-campus study can be a life changing experience for many students and many often struggle with reverse culture shock and readjustment to life on campus. As part of the student-initiated “Welcome Back to Colby” program, OCS and students organize various reentry activities and resources for student support throughout the year. Your participation is much appreciated.

• Join us at the “Welcome Back” dinner in September or the ice cream social in February
• Join the Faculty & Staff Contact list for returning students indicating your willingness to be contacted by students. Simply being an active listener can be incredibly beneficial. Having a list of “receptive” individuals throughout the campus community, in addition to the support Counseling Services provides, helps students feel more comfortable approaching.
• Let us know if your department sponsors its own event for returnees
• Participate in other events or let us know if you have ideas for ways we can help students re-adjust to Colby after OCS.
Some Tips On What Faculty Can Do
To Support Students Returning From OCS
by Kelsey Park ’14

As you may be are aware, many students face serious challenges when returning to Colby after studying abroad, especially when they have studied in very culturally different locations or were away for the whole year. Often this transition can be even more difficult than their initial culture shock at their site of study.

Perhaps you have encountered students who are struggling to complete work on time, seem less motivated in their studies, or are more withdrawn than usual. Other challenges may be more internal, involving the student's sense of identity, relationship to Colby, and altered views of society in general. Many students crave an opportunity to talk about their experience, how it has changed them and continues to influence their lives.

They may also be struggling with the transition back into the classroom (especially after doing an experiential program) and are looking for guidance on how to integrate and build upon their experience into their college studies and future goals.

Some challenges students may face:

- One of the major challenges upon returning to Colby is the transition back into the classroom: This can be especially difficult after doing an experiential learning program or if students had a university experience in a very different culture.
- They may feel like their abroad experience was overlooked and that they are expected to jump right back into things as if they never left.
- They may feel they no longer have a space to continue exploring interesting subjects that they learned about when abroad.
- Differences in schedule and/or style of class.
- Difference in emphasis on grades and the pressure to perform a certain way academically.
- Not seeing an overall meaning in the style of learning that
Colby offers: Feeling like they have seen the bigger picture that goes beyond the "Colby bubble"

- They may have experienced a period of growth and a change in identity: This might cause students to view academics differently and cause them to view Colby differently.

**What Faculty Can Do To Help Returned Students:**

1. Recognize that students who are struggling with this transition might be hesitant to initiate a conversation about their struggles with faculty and staff members. In such cases, it might be beneficial if faculty/staff are proactive about initiating the conversation.

2. A few ways to do this might be to:
   - Reach out to the students who went abroad at the beginning of the semester either in class or via email. Be sure to welcome them back and offer to meet with students if they would like to discuss concerns and potential ways to accommodate those struggles.
   - Also suggest that you simply would like to hear about the students' experiences.
   - The department or faculty liaisons could reach out to students who went abroad within their department and offer to meet with students for coffee – even a welcome back email would be good.

3. Recognize and validate the struggles the students might be facing. Rather than trying to get the students to return to how they used to be, help them find ways to integrate their changed views, habits, and interests into their remaining time at Colby. Listen to their concerns and help them come up with ways to still find meaning in the style of learning that is offered at Colby.

4. Consider reaching out to students who show a difference in performance/engagement in class compared to before going abroad. Similarly, reach out to students who appear to be struggling even if you haven't had them in class before.

5. Periodically check in with students who have expressed concerns.

6. If possible, offer ways for students to continue exploring and sharing their lessons and experience (e.g. presentations,
papers, applied work, or research).

7. In general: be patient and sympathetic if they appear to be having trouble with certain things that used to come easily to them or come easily to many other students (e.g. participating in class or showing up on time). Students might display seemingly uncharacteristic habits or have a different mindset towards the classroom. There are reasons for this! Try to listen and facilitate the continued growth process.

Thank you!
Thank You!