

Graduate Program in Homeland Security (HSEC): The SDSU International Experience Process and Checklist



DEADLINE: Start planning your international experience at least a semester (6-9 months) ahead of the date you plan to travel. Don't wait, it will affect your options.

An international experience is required for students in the Graduate Program in Homeland Security. The recommended pathways as a graduate student at San Diego State University are outlined in this document in sections 1-3 below. These include **(1) participation in a short winter or summer faculty-led Global Seminar**, or **(2) enrollment in a minimum of 3-units on another approved SDSU program during the summer or winter**, or an **(3) independent study abroad that you organize and register for approval with SDSU**. The [“Program Categories”](#) page of the SDSU Global Education Portal (Aztecs Abroad) contains a summary of the various types of programs available.

Regardless of the option you choose, study abroad for HSEC requires enrollment in a graduate-level course numbered 500 and above, a minimum of 45 academic contact hours in another country, immersion in another culture (through activities and experiences), and several other processes and procedural requirements which are listed below. The path to study abroad involves working with the Global Education Office and your Graduate Advisor. Homeland Security students are encouraged to attend their study abroad experience with a group of student peers – the experience is usually more rewarding.

Pre-Experience Checklist for All Programs

- **Obtain a passport** (*View processing times at travel.state.gov*). If you already have one, check that the expiration date is at least 6 months after you plan to return. Rationale: Countries' border officials note your passport's expiration date and your anticipated return date to the USA. Travelers are often required to have a passport that allows six months between return to the USA and expiration of passport. If not, you may be turned away, and required to return to the USA.
 - a. Students may visit the SDSU Passport office. Great service & convenience, plus no appointment needed! www.sdsu.edu/passportoffice/
 - b. Be aware that some countries require a visa (special passport endorsement) in addition to a passport. If you need an entry visa for any countries in which you will be traveling, obtain an entry visa according to the instructions for your destinations on this [“US Students Abroad” section of the Department of State website](#).
- **Explore Scholarships/Financial aid Information:**
 - a. Visit the [“Financial Aid”](#) the [“Scholarships”](#) sections of the Global Education Portal (Aztecs Abroad) for more information:

- b. Apply for the SDSU Associated Students Global Education Scholarship and indicate your plans to study abroad on the Aztec Scholarships Portal. Information about both of these on the "[Scholarships](#)" sections of the Global Education Portal
- c. Consider applying for a Boren Award (<https://www.borenawards.org/apply-now>) - these are targeted at national security and public service interest, and [HSEC students have been awarded in the past](#).

Recommended Programs

1. SDSU Global Seminars (Led by SDSU Faculty)

- If you choose to experience a pre-selected faculty-led program, review the current [list of all SDSU faculty-led programs abroad](#) and consult your Graduate Adviser. *If you are interested in one of these programs, visit their respective web pages (link below), select "APPLY NOW" and complete an application, or put your name on the "inquiry" list if applications are not yet open.*
- If you select a pre-approved faculty-led program listed at the link above, there is no need to search any further for a study abroad program. Faculty will help you with registration and preparing to travel. PAAR Process and Travel Registry are not required to participate.

2. Study Abroad Partner Programs and ISEP Programs

- Visit the SDSU Global Education Portal (Aztecs Abroad) at https://globaleducation.sdsu.edu/_portal/ and complete the online Advising Questionnaire to begin learning about the programs available and identifying your goals for the experience. Then you are ready to meet with a Global Education Advisor.
- Use "Advanced Search" to search by term (e.g. Summer, Winter) or filter by Program Category
- **Follow the instructions** to apply to your selected program before the deadline. Follow any additional instructions given to you by the SDSU Global Education Office. **Pre-approval of your coursework via the PAAR process** must be initiated by meeting with your graduate advisor to discuss the proposed coursework and the degree requirements you hope to satisfy while abroad.
- **The following partner programs are recommended for their focus on topics related to or relevant to Homeland Security. Note that those with asterisk (*) offer compelling content, but credit will be at the undergraduate level:**
 - [University of Amsterdam](#) summer & winter schools (variety of topics)
 - [Berlin School of Economics and Law summer & winter schools](#) (variety of topics)
 - [SIT Study Abroad](#) (programs focused on Climate & Environment, Development & Inequality, Education & Social Change, or Geopolitics & Power)
 - [GREEN Program](#) (focused on Sustainability)
 - [ISEP Study Abroad](#) (examples with relevant coursework: "ISEP Direct Summer in London: Journalism, Business and Political Science"; "ISEP Direct Summer in Germany", "ISEP Direct Summer in Greece")*
 - [DIS Summer in Scandinavia](#) (variety of topics)*

3. Independent Study Abroad via SDSU Travel Registry: "Student – Other SDSU International Travel (Research, Conferences, Grant-funded Travel)"

- **Research the travel advisories** for the international locations to which they plan to travel, via a variety of open sources, such as the US Department of State and On Call International. They can learn about such resources by visiting this International Safety Unit page ([LINK](#)).

- **Make an appointment with your graduate adviser (Dr. Larson or Professor Harkins)** to discuss approval via <http://hsecsdsu.appointy.com/> and selecting “Study Abroad Questions/Approval Meeting”. Phone appointments are perfectly fine, or in-person.
- **Enroll in course HSEC 797 – Study Abroad/Research in the Fall or Spring semester** to complete the independent study abroad assignment and discussions in the HSEC 797 CANVAS course.
 - **See your HSEC advisor for "Permission to enroll" prior to course start. A "registration add code" will be required after the course has begun.**
 - If you are completing your experience over Summer or Winter, you will need to enroll in HSEC 797 in Fall or Spring (we are not allowed to run HSEC courses during Summer or Winter sessions).
 - NOTE: For all independent study abroad experiences (i.e. **NOT faculty-led, NOT a course at another University accepted for SDSU credit, NOT a partner University**), we require HSEC students to enroll in HSEC 797 - Study Abroad/Research.
- **Obtain Approval via the SDSU Travel Registry:** Please register no later than **45 days** prior to travel. Do NOT make any flight, lodging or other trip expenditures until your Travel Registry is first approved by the SDSU International Safety Unit (ISU).
 - **If your Travel Registry itinerary is denied** because of the associated high risks and/or potential liability to SDSU (e.g. potential for airport closure abroad, visa prohibition unknown at the time of departure, students traveling with prohibited items, potential disenrollment due to delayed return to SDSU), you will need to select another international location with lower itinerary risk. You still need to submit another Travel Registry for the alternate location for approval. Please refer to the Department of State (DOS) website ([LINK](#)) listing their current country travel advisories; DOS level 3 and 4 countries are considered high-risk / very high-risk.
- **Notes about Completing the Travel Registry:**
 - **Before you begin, please note:** You will need a copy of your passport and about 15 minutes to complete the Travel Registry.
 - All HSEC 797 students should select the Travel Registry option for **“Student – Other SDSU International Travel (Research, Conferences, Grant-funded Travel)”**
 - Sign in using your SDSU email address (single sign-on)
 - Once logged in, submit a new Trip for Approval:
 - Click the "+ADD NEW TRIP" button to initiate a new trip.
 - You will be prompted to enter details about the trip in the following order (Please complete all sections marked with a red exclamation mark, outlined in red, or otherwise showing incomplete):
 - Trip name, destination, and reason for travel
 - Transportation & Lodging (Itinerary Tab). You may put 'TBD' or 'NA' etc. as placeholders in the itinerary section of TR, as we do not expect you to have made lodging / flight arrangements at the time you submit your TR requesting permission to travel to the foreign location; if this TR is approved, please go back and update your itinerary with the most updated information. If you have a flight layover at an airport(s) for which you are not physically leaving the airport, do not put that layover airport location in your TR itinerary.
 - Questions about your travel (Forms Tab)
 - Signature document(s) & important country information (Essential Content Tab)

- Once all tabs are complete, you can then submit your travel for approval.
- Under Upcoming Trips, the status of your trip submission should now be listed as "Awaiting Approval."
- Once your travel is approved, you will be prompted to complete the final steps, including purchasing your insurance
- Familiarize yourself with the SDSU International Safety and Security website ([link](#)) for important resources available to you.

SDSU Travel Abroad Insurance through Gallagher / OnCall

As part of the online application, students will be directed to enroll in SDSU's required insurance plan. The insurance card will be accessible in your Global Education Portal (Aztecs Abroad) once coverage is confirmed. The cost of the plan is based on the length of time abroad. In general, coverage is approximately \$15-20 per week. If your travel dates change, it is your responsibility to contact Gallagher. Note that canceled insurance results in a \$35 administration fee.

Contact Information

Help is available! If at any point you get lost in the process, contact the Global Education Office at 619-594-2475 or consult the website: <https://www.sdsu.edu/global-education>

Kelsey Toyoda, M.A., is the Global Education Advisor for the College of Sciences and College of Engineering in the Global Education Office, who specializes in support for SDSU graduate students in the HSEC program. She is happy to assist you in selecting a program: ktoyoda@sdsu.edu