



The Office of Study Away Guide and Handbook

Part I: Pre-Decision

Study Away at Connecticut College

The Office of Study Away works to enhance the College's mission through promoting carefully selected study away programs that encourage an understanding of international peoples, groups, cultures, languages, and global issues.

This guide will walk you through the pre-decision steps of deciding on and applying for a program. See Part II for more information on post-decision by Connecticut College.

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THINKING ABOUT STUDY AWAY

Study Away Programs

Study away can be one of the more enriching and academically rewarding experiences that students can have during their college years. Not only does this experience expand a student's worldview, it also provides them with an opportunity to discover new strengths and abilities, conquer new challenges, and solve new problems.

Connecticut College recognizes two types of study away programs:

Traditional study away programs:

The Office of Study Away, in consultation with the Faculty Study Away Committee, maintains a wide selection of reputable "affiliated" programs that are designed to meet the majority of our students' academic, linguistic and cultural needs. These programs have a long-standing institutional relationship with the College and the Office of Study Away. They are carefully selected because of their academic standards, compatibility with the Connecticut College curriculum, opportunities for linguistic and cultural immersion, and the overall quality of the student services that are offered. There are currently over 100 approved programs in approximately 40 different countries. Programs may be added/deleted with consideration taken from student surveys, feedback from colleagues, and Conn faculty members.

Conn Study Away/Teach Away (SATA) programs:

SATA programs provide a unique opportunity for small groups of Conn students to study away at a host institution with our own Conn faculty. SATA programs are open to all majors on campus, regardless of the academic discipline of the faculty director.

Students can come to the Office of Study Away with any questions about these programs. In addition, the Study Away staff is experienced in providing guidance to help students select programs that support their majors, minors, and language needs.

For an up-to-date list of Connecticut College Affiliated Programs, consult the Study Away website at studyaway.conncoll.edu.

Non-affiliated/unapproved programs:

Students may elect to petition for approval to apply to a program that Conn does not have an established affiliation or association. Students interested in petitioning a program should consider the following factors and criteria:

- Is the program a well-established program accredited by a US institution that incorporates cultural integration into its academic programming? Is it a traditional university-based program where students can take university coursework alongside local degree-seeking peers?
- Does the program accept semester-long study away students without Connecticut College being a member of their consortium or as part of a preexisting student exchange agreement?
- Does it offer a stronger level of language and/or cultural immersion not offered by Conn approved programs within the same country/region?

- What are the eligibility requirements and how do they align with the Conn curriculum?
- What does the program offer that makes it uniquely different from affiliated options already available in that country/region of the world?

Students who choose to pursue approval for a non-affiliated/unapproved program must make an appointment with the Director of the Office of Study Away, to discuss the details of the program **at least two weeks** before the application deadline. Students must present detailed information about the program's admission requirements, grading system, academic offerings, arrangements for housing, and student support services.

Factors to consider when choosing a program

There is a wide range of study away programs available to students of any major. Sometimes narrowing down the program choices can feel overwhelming. To help avoid this, students are encouraged to consider the following questions when beginning their program search:

- How would the program complement or supplement my major, minor, center, or pathway?
- How would the program improve or enhance my language skills?
- Has my Conn coursework prepared me for a particular region of the world or a specific thematic study abroad program?
- Would the program help prepare me for a future internship or career experience?
- Will I have the necessary prerequisites for the coursework that I am interested in taking?
- Are there personal factors that I should consider when selecting a program such as health, safety, program dates, travel costs, distance, weather, and 'comfort zone'?

Program Providers & Study Away Models

Students will find different program models and providers on our website. Program providers are well-established, reputable organizations that develop and facilitate study away programs. They often manage student enrollment and offer a range of on-site student services. Learning more about program providers and understanding the different program models will help students determine which program may best meet their academic, cultural, and personal needs. Below are brief descriptions of the different models available to students:

Integrated, Direct Enrollment Programs

These programs allow students to study directly at a local university and take courses with degree-seeking and other international students. An advantage to this type of program is that it maximizes cultural immersion and integration into a country. This type of program may appeal to students looking for a more independent study abroad experience. The college generally works with program providers to assist students with this process.

Field-based, Experiential Learning Programs

These programs typically center on educational themes. They feature hands-on, field-based learning, which may incorporate community-oriented internships and service learning. Students complete guided self-designed research opportunities related to their class seminars. These programs are small and are often located in areas of the world where more traditional study is not easy to arrange. Students looking for a more non-traditional, out of classroom, yet rigorous learning experience will find these types of programs very appealing.

Study Center Programs

These types of programs allow students to study with other students from American colleges in a foreign country. They offer a specialized curriculum that may focus on a particular discipline, culture, or theme to study away students. Classes may be taught in English and/or the language of the host country. Students typically find that these types of programs allow them the support and flexibility to immerse themselves into a host country at their own pace.

Study Away, Teach Away (SATA)

Connecticut College's own SATA programs offer a balance of academics, adventure, community and independence. Every year, Conn Faculty and small groups of Conn students travel abroad for a semester of hands-on learning and cultural immersion. Students take a combination of courses taught by both Conn faculty and faculty at host institutions. This type of program is open to students from all majors regardless of the academic discipline of the Conn Faculty Director.

Exchange Programs

Currently, Conn has two exchange programs; the German BW program and Ashesi University in Ghana. These types of programs allow a student to “exchange” places with a student from Germany or Ghana to attend Conn for a semester. They are basically the same as direct enrollment programs.

THE APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process should be taken very seriously. Students must receive approval from Conn in order to participate in a study away program during the fall or spring semester of the junior year. Students apply for approval by completing the online application that can be found on the Study Away website at studyaway.conncoll.edu. Students use the online platform to browse the program list and apply. Students seeking approval for a non-affiliated program will fill out a *petition* application. Applications will open in August to apply for Spring study away and applications will open in January for fall study away.

It is expected that every student who initiates an application will have met and discussed their plans with their adviser. Students are encouraged to meet with study away staff if they have any questions about the application process. Students should closely follow the required materials on their online application portal.

The Faculty Study Away Committee carefully reviews all applications. During the review process, first priority approval is given to qualified applicants based on a combination of the following criteria:

- **Choice of program:** with highest priority given to qualified students applying to the most intensive foreign language, cultural immersion, and SATA programs.
- **Answers to the Academic Rationale:** with highest priority given to students who provide strong and detailed academic, linguistic, and cultural connections in their answers to why they are pursuing a first and/or second choice program.
- **Overall academic record:** with highest priority given to students to study away during their **junior year** with a preferable GPA above **3.2** and meet the required number of Conn credits to support their class year. Meeting a study away program’s minimum GPA requirement does **not** guarantee approval by the committee.
- **Major Advisor/Faculty Recommendation:** with highest priority given to students who have chosen programs and courses that support their major, minor and/or previously pursued language acquisition.

Students are responsible for completing all sections of their online application. The deadline for fall study away applications is mid-February and for spring semester applications is mid-September. An official application deadline will be announced via email. The online application will be closed the deadline day, which will not allow students to submit any missing parts of their application or start a new one. **The Faculty Study Away Committee will not review incomplete applications.**

Any student on academic or disciplinary probation during the semester they propose to study away will not be approved by the Faculty Study Away Committee.

Students will be notified two weeks after the application deadline. Students are then personally responsible for submitting all necessary application materials directly to their approved study abroad program within the stated deadlines. Note that most programs are on “rolling deadlines” so apply early! It is important to note that you must remain in good social and academic standing or your study away privilege will be revoked by the Faculty Study Away committee.

APPLYING FOR STUDY AWAY THROUGH TERRA DOTTA

1. What is Terra Dotta?

Terra Dotta is a study away platform software that allows for a more efficient way to search, compare and apply for study away program approval.

2. How many programs can I apply to?

Students may apply for approval for one or two programs only. Note that a complete separate application has to be submitted if you decide on two programs.

3. How can I narrow down my choices of programs to apply to?

Terra Dotta has an “Advanced Search” feature, by which students can select multiple values at the same time, including Language of Instruction, Area of Study, Program Type, and Global Engagement opportunities (internships, community engagement). This will narrow down applicable programs to explore.

4. What if I don't see a program listed that I am interested in?

There are over 100 affiliated program choices but occasionally there may be a nonaffiliated program that is more suitable for your academic pursuit. Students need to make an appointment with Shirley Parson, Director of the Office of Study Away at least two weeks prior to the application deadline to discuss whether it might be a viable option.

5. How do I start an application through Terra Dotta?

Go to the home page- studyaway.conncoll.edu and follow the directions:

- Use the program search engine to find programs of interest
- Click on a program to read more information
- Once you've chosen a program, click the "Apply Now" button from the program page. This will prompt you to create an account. If you are a Conn student, log in with your Conn credentials
- Complete Application
- Once you've applied to the one or two program(s) of your choice, complete all sections of the application and click 'Submit'
- You may complete the application in part, and return to it later
- To return to an existing application, simply click "Login" in the top-right of the studyaway.conncoll.edu homepage

6. When is the deadline?

There are two separate application cycles; for those students who wish to study away Fall of their junior year, they will apply in early February of the second semester of their sophomore year. Those who wish to study away Spring of their junior year will apply early September of the first semester of their junior year.

7. What do I need to complete by the application deadline?

The entire application needs to be completed to be considered complete and ready to review. The online system is closed on the due date and will not allow any late materials to be submitted.

8. What if my faculty recommendation is not completed by the application deadline?

You should let your faculty member know they will be getting an electronic request to complete an online recommendation for you. You should give the faculty member at least ten days prior to the deadline. The deadline to submit will be included with the email the faculty member receives.

9. When and how will I be notified of the Faculty study away committee's decision(s) on my application?

Students will receive an email through Terra Dotta notifying them of the committee's decision two weeks after the application deadline.

10. What do I do after I have been approved by the college to apply to a program?

Apply to the program(s) you have been approved for directly through their website **asap!** Even though there might be stated deadlines, most programs accept students on a rolling basis. You also have a better chance at getting preferred courses and/or housing.

COURSE, CREDITS, AND ACADEMICS: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Students studying away are required to carry the equivalent of a full-time course load to ensure the required amount of credits to graduate on time. Students should not assume that a full course load will mean only taking four courses. For many programs, the host institution will award only three credits per course. This means that in order to ensure that you earn a full semester's worth of transfer credit; you **must** register for a minimum of 15 credits for the semester.

In addition, all students going on study away must declare their major before leaving Conn. Prior to leaving campus, you should meet with your faculty advisor to confirm your study abroad course selections. In addition, if you should change your course selections after arriving at your program, be sure to contact your advisor for a review of your changes. If you plan to enroll in a course that you would like to count toward a major, minor or pathway requirement, **the appropriate Conn academic department, pathway, or center coordinator on campus must approve the course.**

To have courses from another institution count toward a requirement or a particular department, the normal Conn petition process must be followed. To use a course from another institution toward a major or minor, a completed *“Variation in Courses Utilized to Satisfy the Major/Minor”* petition form should be signed and submitted to the Office of the Registrar. To use a course toward a mode of inquiry requirement, students should complete and submit a *“Petition to the Committee on Academic Standing”* form. Some departments encourage students to complete these forms prior to leaving campus, while others may want to see completed coursework upon return. It is your responsibility to know what these policies are for your particular circumstances.

Students will not receive credit for study away coursework that duplicates previously completed college-level coursework. In addition, coursework must also be liberal arts in nature, similar to the curriculum offered on campus. If students would like to take a course under the satisfactory/unsatisfactory option, they must follow all existing Connecticut College policies regarding this option and any that the host institution might have. The host institution's policies take precedence over that of the College. A final credit evaluation will be completed by the Office of the Registrar upon receipt of an official transcript from the study away program.

Both credits and grades for all courses that you enroll in while on your approved Study Away/SATA Program will be posted to your Connecticut College transcript. The grades that you earn **WILL** be calculated into your cumulative grade point average at Connecticut College. The College **will not** change the grades or number of credits awarded by another institution, unless a revised transcript is received.

Contact the Office of the Registrar at registrar@conncoll.edu to ask any questions regarding courses, credits, or grades while you are away from campus.

LOOKING AHEAD

After Conn approval, what's next?

There are a number of important steps to complete after receiving approval from Conn.

After Conn has approved a student to study away, the student must then complete and submit a separate application directly to the approved study away program(s). Applications can be found on the specific study away program's website. Do not wait until the posted deadline!

- As part of a program's application process, students will need to request a copy of their official transcript at the Office of the Registrar. It can take up to a week for transcripts to reach their final destinations so do not wait until the last minute to make your transcript request.
- In addition, most programs require that students submit a program approval form. This form is usually found online within the program's application. Upon notification of Conn approval, bring this form to the Office of Study Away to be signed. Be sure to fill out personal information such as your name and the name of your program before handing it in for the official signature. Keep in mind that program approval forms will not be signed until students have been approved.
- Regarding faculty recommendations, students are permitted to re-submit their Conn Faculty Recommendation Forms to their approved program. If the program that you intend to apply to requires a more specific recommendation, be sure to give professors ample time to complete the program's own recommendation.
- Once a student has been officially accepted to a program, they are responsible for making the acceptance and any damage deposits directly to their accepted program. Connecticut College will credit the student's account for the amount of the acceptance deposit the following semester.

Students are responsible for applying for a student visa to the country where their study away program is located. Paperwork, fees, and application procedures differ country to country. All embassies and consulates require that passports are valid for six months after the completion of the study abroad program. **Since obtaining a visa can take up to six weeks, be sure to apply for your visa as soon as your program advises you to do so.** If you need a letter from Conn verifying your study abroad plans and student status, contact the Office of Study Away.

All students **must** attend a Conn pre-departure meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to distribute required Conn related pre-departure materials, discuss health and safety issues, Title IX and study away, academic regulations, financial aid matters, and travel and packing tips.

Students **must** attend a "Re-entry meeting" upon return to the college. At this meeting you will complete an online survey. It is important that you answer the questions as honestly as you can, as this provides important information in reviewing our program offerings.

All students **must** complete the "post-decision" readings, forms, and waivers on their Connecticut College online application.

Part II of this guide will cover international travel logistics, cultural adaptation, safety, and coming home.