



S F S THE SCHOOL
FOR FIELD STUDIES

COSTA RICA

Program Manual

Updated August 2018

The School for Field Studies (SFS)

Center for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS)

Atenas, Costa Rica

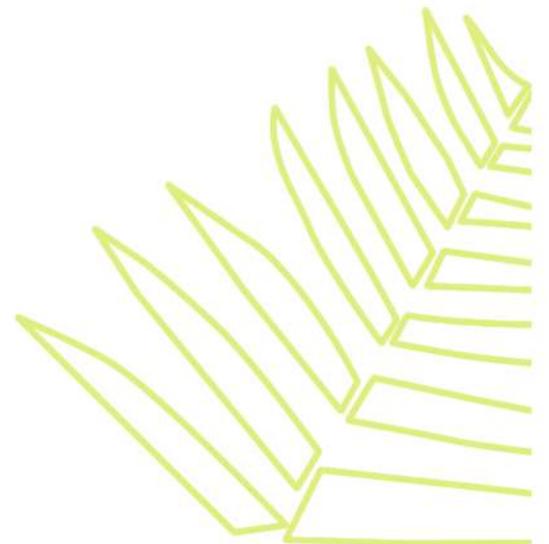


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Overview of SFS Programs

Note that as a condition for participation in an SFS program, you are required to document that you have read, understood, and accepted all academic, safety, administrative, and operational policies, rules, and requirements by reading and signing the SFS Terms and Regulations Statement.

SFS Mission Statement: SFS creates transformative study abroad experiences through field-based learning and research. Our educational programs explore the human and ecological dimensions of the complex environmental problems faced by our local partners, contributing to sustainable solutions in the places where we live and work. The SFS community is part of a growing network of individuals and institutions committed to environmental stewardship.

The School for Field Studies offers semester and summer programs at our field stations around the world. The academically rigorous and interdisciplinary curriculum of each program is designed to allow students to actively discover and understand the complexities of local environmental, social, and economic issues. Through teaching and research, center faculty and staff introduce students to field research methods, data collection, and analysis, and they promote student interactions and reciprocity with local communities. The curriculum and research projects are driven by local needs and interests. SFS programs integrate academic, research, social, and community activities in a holistic education model.

Unique Elements of SFS Programs:

The Strategic Research Plan (SRP): The SRP at each SFS field station is the overarching research directive that addresses critical local environmental challenges and explores local solutions working within the community. The SRP is generated by our faculty, local stakeholders and actors, and external research advisors. The SRP also provides the community and students with a framework for the program curriculum and influences how SFS courses, research, and outreach activities fit into the bigger picture of environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Courses: Semester programs include three, four credit disciplinary courses and a capstone Directed Research course. Some semester programs may also include a two credit Language and Culture course. Each of our summer programs consist of a single four credit course (six credits in Bhutan). The cours(es) may combine major themes of a semester program into an intense four-week session or may be a special topics course that focuses on a single theme or issue. Many centers offer two sessions each summer, and some summer sessions can be taken back-to-back, offering eight credits in eight weeks.

Core Disciplinary Courses: In semester programs, three core disciplinary courses provide the background information and skills needed to understand and address complex environmental issues. Each course is designed to provide students with transferable academic credit according

to the U.S. University and College system. Courses are participatory in nature and are designed to stimulate inquiry and active learning. Faculty members provide students with an interdisciplinary and holistic framework for their process of inquiry into environmental and socioeconomic issues. Problem-based inquiry guides students through an analysis of actual local environmental situations or dilemmas. Throughout the integrated curriculum, students strive to understand the background, context, and relevance of local issues well enough to enable them to explore potential solutions and alternatives through research and critical thinking. Each course combines lectures, field exercises, assignments, tests, and research.

Directed Research (DR): The Directed Research course is the capstone of the semester program. Students conduct research that addresses key research questions defined in the SRP, and supports the community with environmental planning and action. Each student will join a faculty-led team that will carry out field research, data analysis and communication of results in one or more disciplines including: ecology, natural resource management, conservation science, environmental ethics, and socioeconomics. DR data is often collected as a team. Students, either individually or in small collaborative groups, will develop findings and incorporate those into their papers (see Directed Research course description for more details). The core skills students will learn through the DR experience are field skills, analytical skills, communication skills and critical thinking, as well as team work and time management. Students present their findings from their Directed Research to classmates, key stakeholders, and other community members.

Field Experience: An important component of the SFS learning model is hands-on field experience. Field lectures, exercises and research help students to connect the conceptual material presented in the course to local realities, learn field research techniques, collect and analyze field data, and develop holistic and critical thinking skills.

Group Living: At SFS field stations, students live and work with other students and SFS staff. Residential life provides opportunities for students to develop and demonstrate leadership, good communication, teamwork, and other group-dynamics skills.

Connecting with the Local Community: Students engage in a variety of community service projects that are facilitated by the Student Affairs Manager (SAM) and / or other Community Liaison staff. The SAM works closely with the Center Director, faculty, community groups, and students to identify and select projects that will help students become grounded in the local context of the issues they are researching, and give back to the community.

The SFS Center for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS)

In 1991, CSDS became the fifth permanent SFS Center, first stationed in Las Cruces, and eventually in 1993 located within the fertile Central Valley region in the town of Atenas. The SFS-CSDS program is a field-based, interdisciplinary program focused on the complex issues of sustainable development, with special emphasis on finding balance among biodiversity protection, the sustainable use of natural resources, and fulfilling the economic development needs of local communities. In the semester programs we take a weeklong excursion to another country (in the past this has been either to Nicaragua or Panama) to have the opportunity to compare and contrast the ecological and socioeconomic systems between the two countries. In both the semester and summer programs, multiple day and overnight trips to a variety of field sites are made.

Environmental Issues of the Region

The Central Valley region and Pacific coast is developing rapidly to accommodate booming tourism and real estate development industries. It is also becoming apparent that current land use practices and land protection strategies may not be effectively balancing and promoting economic, socio-cultural, and ecological benefits—and are therefore not sustainable. Historically the dominant land use and one of the largest sources of revenue and employment was large-scale conventional agriculture. However, over the past decade, both the tourism and service industries have become increasingly important for local and national revenue and employment opportunities. The demand on land for real estate expansion and tourism infrastructure increases pressure on water resources, further fragments the tropical forests, and leads to conflict over land use and land tenure. Redefining rural and urban development toward economic, social, and environmental sustainability is a priority in the coming years.

While Costa Rica and its citizens have declared 26% of its territory as formally protected areas, research suggests that conservation within these areas is insufficient to secure healthy and functioning ecosystems for future generations. Protected areas are highly influenced by land use practices occurring outside their borders, as well as activities occurring within them. Ecotourism operations, deforestation for agriculture, visitors and services, as well as increased development all impact the species and ecosystems within protected areas.

SFS-CSDS Strategic Research Plan

Currently the curriculum and research at SFS-CSDS will focus on answering the question: **How can Costa Rica respond to local and global challenges while securing the functionality of its natural and human systems?**

In the classroom and field we focus on questions related to the ecological and socioeconomic impacts of tourism, problems and opportunities of natural ecosystem fragmentation, conflicts

and synergies between parks and people, and the science of ecosystem function and connectivity.

The central and western areas of Costa Rica are undergoing rapid and largely unplanned development in the agriculture, tourism, and real estate sectors. These areas, encompassing mountains, valleys and plains, host major watersheds of critical importance to the integrity of natural ecosystems and the health and well-being of residents. Forests have become highly fragmented by urban expansion, rural development, and aggregation of agricultural farms. The result is loss of habitat and other environmental services and the destabilization of hillsides, while competition among stakeholder groups for land and natural resources continues to increase.

The research plan will focus on understanding the natural environment and socioeconomic conditions in which these rapid environmental and demographic changes are occurring. We will focus on the question of how the development policies and practices in Costa Rica in the areas of conservation and tourism are affecting natural ecosystems and local communities. We will examine the theoretical and practical approaches to sustainable development, the conditions for success and obstacles to success, and the current development trajectory. This plan builds on the extensive research carried out by the SFS-CSDS team following the direction of the previous research plan, which was largely focused on agriculture.

Research will be conducted in three thematic areas: ecological and socioeconomic impacts of tourism, effective management of protected areas, and ecosystem connectivity and function.

Tourism: We will investigate questions such as how do people's perception of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources change as a result of increased visitation? What is the level of preparedness needed to receive and benefit from tourism, while mitigating negative impacts? What is the carrying capacity of visitors in parks with relation to ecological integrity and wildlife disturbance?

Protected Areas: Costa Rica protects 26% of its territory as public and private reserves. Restrictions of land use have led to conflictive interactions between people and protected areas reflected in the extraction of timber, non-timber forest products, hunting, and habitat loss. This component will analyze the social and ecological impacts of conflict, the effectiveness of the legislation and current management practices to protect biological resources, and the design of policies to balance cultural traditions involving the use of natural resources with the conservation needs of protected areas.

Ecosystems: The fragmentation of natural habitats leads to severe deterioration, sometimes irreversible, of ecosystem function. This in turn affects the long-term viability of many populations of flora and fauna. The immediate issue is the relative rapid and disproportioned change that is taking place in the proximity of many protected areas in the sectors of agriculture and rural development. Research will involve land cover survey of the central-north Pacific region, species inventories, habitat assessments and land use type verifications to

generate specific hypotheses on the ecological impacts of land use change near protected areas.

Semester Course Descriptions

<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Contact Hours</i>	<i>Course Number</i>
Environmental Ethics and Development	4	60	SFS 3820
Tropical Ecology and Sustainable Development	4	60	SFS 3770
Principles of Resource Management	4	60	SFS 3740
Directed Research	4	180	SFS 4910
Language, Culture, and Society of Costa Rica	2	40	SFS 2050

Grades in SFS-CSDS courses are determined via various assessments, such as exams, quizzes, practical examinations, field exercises, presentations, homework and final papers. The specific grading guidelines for each course will be presented in the course syllabus upon arrival to the Center.

SFS 3820 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS AND DEVELOPMENT addresses the intersection of the human and environmental sides of sustainable development in Costa Rica. Linking human rights to sustainability is an emerging field that combines the important dimensions of economic and social rights with the environmental underpinnings of sustainability. We use a multidisciplinary methodology to cover themes of local and global social and environmental policies, valuing of and access to ecosystem services, development aid, agrarian reform, indigenous rights and local livelihoods, and climate change. Students examine the roles of local people, government, and local and international non-governmental actors in the implementation of sustainable development models. Students also review specific local case studies to explore the empowerment of local people and their reaction to local and non-local proposals for sustainable development.

SFS 3770 TROPICAL ECOLOGY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT examines the ecological impact of human activity, especially agriculture, in a tropical country. Students study the agro-ecology of important crops, with emphasis on biodiversity as the source of production means and materials. Students identify renewable and nonrenewable resources and examine their historical use. We study the long-term and large-scale impact of local agricultural and other practices on the national and global environment (e.g., water pollution, waste management, climate change). Students examine options for alternative resources use, land restoration, and preservation from ecological, sociopolitical, and economic viewpoints, and use basic field techniques and measurements to examine the efficacy of different options.

SFS 3740 PRINCIPLES OF RESOURCE MANAGEMENT is designed to examine the connection between society and natural resources, and how application of management tools can lead to biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods. This course introduces

underlying concepts and practical tools used in addressing complex environmental problems, including protected area planning and management, guidelines for ecologically sustainable development, and environmental impact assessment. Students examine local case studies using the theory and practice learned in this course.

SFS 4910 DIRECTED RESEARCH prepares students to distinguish hidden assumptions in scientific approaches and separate fact from interpretation, cause from correlation, and advocacy from objectivity. Students learn specific tools including: experimental design; field techniques; basic descriptive statistics; and parametric and non-parametric quantitative analysis. Emphasis is placed on succinct scientific writing, graphic and tabular presentation of results, and effective delivery of oral presentations.

SFS 2050 LANGUAGE, CULTURE, AND SOCIETY OF COSTA RICA contains two distinct but integrated modules. The Spanish language module offers listening, oral, and written practice of the Spanish language at beginner, intermediate, and advanced levels of proficiency. Students engage in oral and written grammar and vocabulary exercises, and develop Spanish language skills and tools required for their research projects. The sociocultural module helps students to develop a more refined understanding of Costa Rican culture and the various communities with which we work. Students participate in lectures, field exercises, and other activities including a homestay—all of which teach them strategies and skills for working with people in a community-based research context and help them to assist with community extension projects.

Summer Course Descriptions 2019

<i>Course Title</i>	<i>Credits</i>	<i>Contact Hours</i>	<i>Course Number</i>
Session I: Coffee, Chocolate and Sustainable Development in Costa Rica	4	60	SFS 3141
Session II: Applied Research Techniques and Strategies Toward Sustainability	4	60	SFS 4930

Students may take one or both summer courses. Students that take both courses (sequential students) will receive eight total credits for the combined summer sessions. Grades in SFS-CSDS courses are determined via various assessments, such as exams, quizzes, practical examinations, field exercises, presentations, homework, and final papers. The specific grading guideline for the summer courses will be presented in the course syllabus upon arrival to the Center.

SFS 3141 COFFEE, CHOCOLATE, AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN COSTA RICA (SESSION I) This is an interdisciplinary program aiming to explore the deeper social and ecological components that intertwine these crops to our lives and the natural and political

history of Costa Rica. We will conduct site visits to a variety of coffee and cacao farms and producers to learn how various production methods and policies impact the local flora, fauna and society. Through field research in small groups, we will focus on data collection to conduct in-depth exploration of the relations between cacao & coffee production and climate change, social justice movements, and species conservation.

SFS 4930 APPLIED RESEARCH TECHNIQUES AND STRATEGIES TOWARD

SUSTAINABILITY IN COSTA RICA (SESSION II) provides students the opportunity to apply the scientific process in a field research project that addresses a local environmental issue. Students' exposure to several parks and protected areas helps them design a field research project related to sustainable development and tourism that contributes to the strategic research plan of the Center. Participants collect, manage, and analyze data, and communicate research results to our local stakeholders.

PLEASE NOTE

Semester students will be presented with course syllabi and Directed Research project options once they arrive at the center. Summer students will receive their single course syllabus upon arrival as well. Students are also encouraged to check the website for updated materials as well as peruse past syllabi and projects.

Outcomes and Program Details of SFS-CSDS Programs*

In addition to learning various advanced ecological field skills, you will learn about many different aspects of sustainable development and natural resource management. Below is a list of field skills, field exercises, and topics from past semester and summer programs that are often included (however, some topics may be added or removed depending on the needs of each individual program):

- Designing and implementing ecological research (including: testing hypotheses; gathering data; analyzing results; and writing up and presenting findings to local constituents)
- Comparing and contrasting biodiversity protection in private and national reserves
- Determining the effects of fragmentation on tropical flora and fauna
- Studying tropical ecology and assessing the costs and benefits of ecotourism on protecting biodiversity
- Learning about Costa Rican culture and Spanish language
- Mentorship by faculty and other local experts, resulting in work that contributes to the SRP
- Learning data analysis and statistical techniques
- Completing applied GIS for spatial landscape data analyses
- Identifying plant and animal groups, and completing species counts and biodiversity assessments
- Learning and practicing vegetation sampling techniques and land use classifications
- Designing and implementing social surveys

*Note: Because summer programs are limited in scope due to the short duration, not all

semester objectives may be obtained in the summer.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Q: How much time do we spend learning outside?

A: Many of our academic activities are field based. The actual amount will vary depending on the weather and other factors but you will spend time in the field during field lectures, field exercises, trekking, and botanical walks.

Q: What is the structure of the program and how much free time will I have?

A: Program activities, including classroom lectures, field lectures, discussions, field research, and community activities will occur six days a week. Students will have very few days off during the programs. The program is intensive and highly structured. On occasion we organize recreational and cultural activities for students. Students will not have the opportunity during the program to spend nights away from the program; although, in some programs, designated weekends off may be planned.

Q: What is the basis for grading the course?

A: Your grade will be assessed through a mix of written exams, quizzes, readings, papers, and other assignments; the specifics are described in the course syllabus (which you receive at the start of the program).

Q: Can I choose my own research project?

A: No. Students will work on projects identified, developed and led by SFS Center faculty. Faculty and staff use student input to divide the student cohort into different DR project groups, but placement into specific projects is not guaranteed. It is important to note that all projects, regardless of focus, teach students valuable skills in the process of research and communication that can be applied to diverse research topics post-program.

Q: Is the research a group effort or individual work?

A: Students collaborate for field data collection and analysis. Final papers may be written individually or in small groups, depending on the structure and dynamic of particular projects. Some semester DR projects may only have a collaborative (co-author) option.

Q: Do we go on overnight field trips?

A: Yes, there are several overnight and two-night field trips during the semester program. We visit national parks and other areas related to our themes. In addition, we have a weeklong field trip to another country (in the past it has been either Nicaragua or Panama). Summer programs will visit many sites as well and may or may not overnight at one of them.

Q: How much will we interact with the local community?

A: Community activities and hands-on work will occur and is associated with our academic learning. Exact content and amount are dependent on community group schedules during the semester and summer.

Q: What recreational activities are available during the program?

A: During Sundays and the five-day break (for semester students only) students are welcome to pursue recreational activities such as cultural events in San Jose and surrounding towns, and recreational options in parks and at Costa Rica’s world class beaches. Many students enjoy walking or jogging through town. Dancing classes, sports activities, and cooking workshops are also provided following the particular interest of the student group.

Academic Affairs

Academic Expectations

Our goal at SFS is to create an academic atmosphere that encourages learning and involvement in and out of the classroom. All students are expected to actively participate in the courses, field research, residential life, and community service. Students come from a wide range of colleges and universities, as well as from a variety of academic backgrounds. There are English majors, ecology majors, pre-med students, economics majors, and many others. We view this diversity of backgrounds as a strength of our programs and a learning opportunity for our students. At SFS you will be intellectually challenged by faculty, your classmates, the community, and in areas unfamiliar to you. You will have the opportunity to take a leadership role in those subjects in which you have expertise. Students are expected to critically analyze the drivers of local environmental, social, and economic problems. Students also participate in field research and communicate their findings with the goal of providing information to decision-makers who can address those problems.

Because SFS is a residential study abroad experience, we give credit for program completion, not just course completion. Attendance from the start of the program to the last day of the program is necessary for students to earn credit.

Student Participation

All students must participate fully in all Center program activities (academic and non-academic). Repeated voluntary lack of participation (missing class, refusal to perform activities or exercises) or repeated involuntary lack of participation (being physically unable to perform activities or exercises due to illness or injury) may result in student removal from program. SFS gives credit for program completion and completion means more than just “presence on a program”. It means fully engaged learning, participation in academic and non-academic activities and exercises, and completion of academic tasks and assignments – in the field and in the classroom. Our constituents (sending schools) and our School of Record expect that the credit a student earns while at SFS is a result of full participation and successful completion of demanding field-based academic work.

Academic Credit

SFS courses are accredited through the University of Minnesota: Twin Cities (U of M). Students in SFS programs are automatically registered at U of M, unless they come from SFS affiliated universities that grant direct credit (see below). Students registered through U of M receive their grades, credit, and transcripts from U of M.

U of M operates on a semester calendar, and all SFS courses are accredited accordingly. An SFS semester consists of four courses carrying four credits each, for a total of 16 credits. Students in Tanzania, Costa Rica, Panama, Peru, Cambodia, Kenya, Chile, and Bhutan are enrolled in a fifth course, *Culture and Language*, for an additional two credits, bringing the semester total to 18 credits. At the conclusion of the program, U of M, or SFS for direct credit students, will send one official transcript to the home school of each student. Transcripts are not available until two to four weeks after the close of the SFS program. Summer students participating in one of the summer sessions will receive credit for a single four credit course. Sequential summer students participating in both summer sessions will receive credit for both summer session courses, for a total of eight credits. Transcripts for summer courses are available two to four weeks after the end of Summer Session 2.

Students from SFS-Affiliate Universities: Students from schools that have affiliate status with SFS typically receive academic credit for their SFS participation directly through their home institution. Applicants should check with their home school study abroad advisor or registrar to determine if they attend an affiliate school (you may also check our website). At the end of each program, SFS reports grades directly to the student's affiliated home institution. Each SFS course taken and grade received will appear on the student's regular transcript, which can be obtained through normal home institution procedures. Questions regarding these procedures or requests for information for acquiring course approval at home institutions should be directed to the SFS Admissions Office.

Credit Transfer: The amount and type (major, minor, elective) of credit students receive for coursework done on an SFS program is determined by their home institution.

SFS cannot guarantee that students will receive credit for their SFS participation from their home institutions. Students should not assume that a prior student's success with credit transfer is a guarantee that their credits will transfer as well. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange credit transfer with their home school *prior* to SFS participation. Students intending to receive academic credit at their home institution should speak with their academic advisor about how to best proceed. Students should allow time to have their SFS program approved by their advisor and other appropriate personnel before the start of the program.

Why SFS Grades Matter!

Students who do not receive academic credit at their home institution (or only receive Pass/Fail credit) are encouraged to perform at their highest capacity while at SFS. Future graduate or other academic programs, as well as certain employers, may request your SFS transcript. Your SFS transcript will have your actual SFS grade (A, B, C, ...), and if you do not perform well at SFS, your poor grade may affect your future admissions or job applications.

Obtaining an Official Transcript

As part of the application process, students submit the Transcript Request Form (TRF). The information provided on this form is used when mailing transcripts at the end of the program.

Students who Receive SFS Transcripts: If you are a student from an Affiliate Institution that provides direct credit, you will receive your transcript directly from the SFS Registrar.

You can find out if your home school is a direct-credit SFS Affiliate here:
www.fieldstudies.org/advisors/partners

Your official grade report will automatically be mailed to your home school within 4 weeks of the completion of the semester program, or 4 weeks after completion of session 2 for summer programs. An unofficial student copy will also be mailed to your permanent address.

Additional Transcript requests should always be made directly through SFS as you will not have been registered for credit through our School of Record, the University of Minnesota. Please wait until your initial transcript has been received before requesting additional copies.

Students who Receive University of Minnesota Transcripts: If you are a student at a Non-Affiliate Institution or an Affiliate Institution that does not provide direct credit, you will have been registered for credits at our School of Record and will receive your transcript directly from University of Minnesota (U of M) Registrar.

Your grades will be reviewed by the SFS Dean after the end of the session and then sent to the U of M. At that point, it generally takes the U of M about 4-6 weeks after the end of the program (after the Summer 2 session for summer programs) to process the grades into transcripts.

Once they are processed, they will be sent to the address you indicated in your Transcript Request Form (TRF).

If you provided a personal address, instead of the address of your home school on the TRF, **please do not open the sealed transcript** envelope as you will need to deliver it intact to the appropriate office at your home school.

Additional Transcript requests should always be made directly through the University of Minnesota. You can find instructions here: http://onestop.umn.edu/grades_and_transcripts/official_transcripts/. Please wait until your initial transcript has been received before requesting additional copies.

Policies on Grading, Incompletes, and Withdrawal from Courses

SFS courses are rigorous, challenging, and the field based approach mandates that students demonstrate their knowledge of theory and practice by applying such theory and practice to actual problems. Because SFS exams are based on the application of knowledge and the synthesis of concepts and observations, the courses are generally thought of as difficult. Also, don't expect grading to be exactly the same as at your home institution—many students are surprised that different faculty often have different grading strategies. Be sure to engage with your SFS faculty at the beginning of the semester if you are unsure of the grading system.

Courses may not be taken on a pass/fail or audit basis. Letter grades will be reported to U of M and to SFS affiliate schools for every student. SFS does not "round-up" numerical grades (e.g., a final grade of 89.99% receives a letter grade of B+ and is not rounded up to 90.00, or A-). Letter grades, as determined by the SFS letter grade scale (below), are reported to U of M and SFS affiliate schools.

Letter Grade Scale:

A	95.00-100.00%	B+	86.00 – 89.99%	C+	76.00 – 79.99%	D	60.00 – 69.99%
A-	90.00 – 94.99%	B	83.00 – 85.99%	C	73.00 – 75.99%	F	0.00 – 59.99%
		B-	80.00 – 82.99%	C-	70.00 – 72.99%		

Incompletes: In general, an incomplete is a temporary status for students who have temporarily left an academic program with the intent of completing outstanding coursework by a predetermined date. SFS programs are internationally-based, field-orientated, and require fulltime on-site participation in all program activities; therefore, SFS does not grant incompletes.

Early Departure: In the case of a student making a permanent departure from an SFS program without completing outstanding coursework, the following will apply:

- **Credit Policy:** SFS does not grant partial or incomplete credit. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of our programs, students must be present from the first day of orientation to the last day of wrap-up and presentations in order to receive credit for all courses. Any student who departs the program prior to completion will receive a "W" ("Withdrawn") for the course. If the student must leave due to medical reasons and receives a medical withdrawal, some credit may be awarded at the discretion of the

Requesting Review of Final Grades

It is the responsibility of the faculty to articulate how grades are determined. It is the responsibility of students to consider these explanations and, if there is a lack of clarity, to request clarification immediately, rather than after U or M grades are received.

Students who feel that there are grade inconsistencies should explain their concerns first to the relevant faculty in writing. Their explanation must be in writing and include both their reasons for requesting a grade review and their specific request. Faculty members have the obligation to respond fully, clearly, and promptly to any student grade inquiries. Students must raise their concerns directly with faculty while at the field site. If a satisfactory solution cannot be arranged between a student and her/his faculty, students may make a written request for an explanation of the faculty member's decision for presentation to the Center Director for further consideration. The Center Director will review the case with the faculty member, and if a resolution cannot be made, the petition for a grade change will be forwarded to the SFS Dean of Academic Programs for review. The Dean's review will generally be limited to determining whether fair standards were set and followed. After a student departs a program (i.e., when the student physically leaves the Center), the only grade changes SFS will consider are those which involve mathematical or transcription errors.

Requesting Accommodations for Learning and Physical Disabilities

Students requesting physical and health accommodations should contact the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. **Students requesting learning accommodations should contact the SFS Office of Academic Affairs.** SFS will work with students, home institutions, and physicians to determine the required level of accommodation and whether or not it can be safely and reasonably maintained on program. While SFS strives to make accommodations for most disabilities, due to the remote nature of our programs, there are varying levels of accessibility, services, and accommodations at each SFS center.

Send physical disability accommodations requests to:

safety@fieldstudies.org

Or call: 800-989-4418

Send learning accommodations requests to:

SFS Dean of Academic Programs
The School for Field Studies
100 Cummings Center, Suite 534-G
Beverly, MA 01915

Or by email to:

academics@fieldstudies.org

Please be aware that the level of academic support services to which you may have access at your home campus may not be available with SFS. If you have used general academic services on your campus, such as a writing center, math/technology center, or tutoring center and anticipate continued access while on an SFS program, please inform us. We can describe the level of academic support at our centers and advise you on managing the rigors of the SFS experience.

Academic and Research Honesty Policy

SFS has adopted a zero-tolerance policy towards student cheating, plagiarism, data falsification, and any other form of dishonest academic and/or research practice or behavior (including but not limited to, standards set by any college or institution with which the student is associated). As a result, any SFS student found by SFS to have engaged in or to have facilitated academic and/or research dishonesty will receive no credit (0%) for that particular activity. The faculty make their best efforts to clearly state whenever collaboration between students in the preparation of work is deemed acceptable and the extent of collaboration that is permissible.

In addition to the zero percent (0%) mark for the particular activity, SFS reserves the right, using its sole and unfettered judgment about the severity or recurrence of the transgression, to expel a student from any program in which the student is participating. A student who is expelled from a program may receive a grade of “Withdrawn” (W) or “Failure” (F) for each of the courses of the program. The expelled student will not be entitled to any financial refund from the program.

SFS considers it appropriate to report to a student’s principal academic organization any behavior that reflects on the character, integrity and/or academic ability of a student. Therefore, when a finding of academic dishonesty has been made, SFS will report the decision, as well as the sanction imposed, to any college or institution with which the student is associated, as well as to U of M, the school of record. Through participation in an SFS program, each student shall be deemed to have expressly waived any right to prevent such disclosure that might otherwise exist in law or by contract.

Nothing in this policy shall prevent any college or institution with which the student is associated from reviewing the violation and taking actions pursuant to its own policies on academic misconduct, including its policies on sanctions or the recording of an offense on a student’s record.

SFS Intellectual Property, Data and Acknowledgement Policies

SFS strongly recommends that students keep copies of written papers, homework assignments, research reports, and other handouts from the faculty. The SFS office does not keep copies of these materials and cannot reconstruct paperwork after students return from the field.

In recognition of this institution’s obligation to transfer technology and useful discoveries to local communities, fellow researchers, and society, SFS encourages the creation of scholarly works by SFS faculty, staff, and students as an integral part of its mission. This section should clarify the rules for ownership and use of data generated during the SFS program, and it presents guidelines for the production of scholarly works.

Data and Educational Materials Ownership: SFS is the owner of all academic products developed and research data collected by students while participating in an SFS program or through the use of facilities or funds provided by or through SFS. No student may utilize these data for any purpose other than scholarly works. This includes, but is not limited to, the

production of i) required coursework outputs, ii) reports to approved SFS clients such as Directed Research papers and related products, iii) conference presentations, and sometimes iv) publications, and v) senior theses. The use of these data by students for undisclosed and unapproved personal benefit or commercial application, financially or professionally or in any other way, is not permitted.

Because the research projects conducted at the Center are linked to the Strategic Research Plan, and projects are defined and prioritized by Center faculty, the SFS faculty advisor is considered the principal investigator of the project. As a member of the research team, students who have collected data during their program period will have access to these specific data from their SFS program. Students should discuss their intent to use these data for the explicit purposes of developing senior theses or other scholarly works outside of SFS with their DR advisor, prior to use. In some instances, collected data may not be suitable for these purposes. Please see the next two sections for more specifics on using SFS data for scholarly works and theses.

Using SFS Data Outside of SFS

To avoid unauthorized use of SFS data beyond SFS, we require a formal process of requesting permission from the project's principal investigator to use data collected while at SFS to produce scholarly work or use in a thesis. Please submit a written request to the principal investigator, specifying the data to be used and what will be produced with the data. In most cases, the use of such data is not an issue at all, but in certain circumstances it may not be possible.

Scholarly Works: Students may pursue the production of scholarly works using SFS research *only under consultation with and approval by the project's principal investigator* (i.e. the faculty supervising the DR project) or if the principal investigator is no longer with SFS, then approval may be granted by the Center Director or the Dean of Academic Programs. SFS does require students to take the following steps in the development of scholarly works, including a senior thesis, conference presentation, or manuscript for publication:

1. Discuss proposed plans with SFS faculty or Center Director, preferably while still at SFS;
2. Formally request permission from the SFS faculty to use the data for scholarly work outside of SFS;
3. Develop an authorship plan and work plan with SFS faculty, and, in the case of a senior thesis, with their home institution advisor;
4. All authors prepare the scholarly work;
5. Acknowledgements (see below for example) and institutional affiliation details are determined in discussion with SFS and the student's home institution.

In all scholarly works submitted for publication and based upon SFS data, the authors, whether currently or previously students at SFS, are required to acknowledge SFS, the Center, and all SFS employees and students who were involved in the project. In addition, publications or presentations by SFS employees that are based on data obtained by students during the conduct of SFS program coursework will, at a minimum, give acknowledgement to SFS classes who contributed to the research and full acknowledgement to the students who made a significant contribution to the research. The inclusion of students as co-authors by faculty is optional and will be based on merit, contribution, and relevance.

Use of Data for Thesis: Students may have the opportunity to develop some aspect of their SFS Directed Research or summer research work into a thesis at their home institution after the program. They may use the data for that purpose after consulting with their SFS faculty advisor but will not necessarily have access to additional data once they have completed their SFS program. Students should discuss this option with the SFS Admissions Counselor prior to starting the program and with the Center Director and the DR advisor once they start the program. It is also critical that the student discusses this option with their faculty advisor at their home institution before, during, and after their participation in the program. The responsibility for seeking clarity on research requirements from both institutions lies solely with the student.

The purpose of the Directed Research project and summer session research is to contribute to a broad and ongoing research agenda that has been defined by local stakeholders and SFS staff. Therefore, we cannot cater the DR projects to independent student interests or academic requirements at a student's home institution. Similarly, since the DR paper and other research assignments are works produced for an SFS course, students must hand in original work, therefore we generally cannot accommodate using data from research conducted at the home institution. Students and home advisors should bear in mind that students will not have the opportunity to pursue independent research or research on a topic unrelated to the DR. Also, data collection is usually completed as part of a team effort. We have had students discover when returning to their home institutions that their efforts when broken down as part of a team were not sufficient to fulfill a research requirement beyond that for which they were credited through SFS.

The SFS faculty advisor is solely responsible for assessing the content and quality of student work for the DR. Likewise, the student's thesis advisor at their home institution will be responsible for assessing subsequent work. It may be appropriate for students to invite their SFS advisor to serve on their thesis committee.

Research Ethics: The research our faculty and students conduct complies with the research ethics rules and guidelines in the country in which they are working, and when applicable, permissions are obtained for research on human subjects, animal subjects, and for the extraction of biological samples. Additional vetting for human subjects research is made by the SFS Office of Academic Affairs to ensure standards of ethical practice and protection of subjects are met.

Photography: Students are encouraged to bring cameras to the field. Still photography and video photography are allowed during many academic program activities, but may be restricted based on location, social cultural context, and/or the disposition of a speaker or lecturer. Students should understand that US laws do not apply while abroad. Photography in some public spaces may not be allowed by non-citizens and equipment may have to be surrendered to authorities upon request. Students should always check with local staff on standards of use of photography while in the field. Students should not bring to the field camera equipment that is intended to be operated remotely from the user. This means **DO NOT** bring: camera traps, drones, balloons, or other photographic equipment that is not intended to be held by the operator. Remote operated cameras may be seen by international authorities as surveillance equipment – and in many contexts be illegal. SFS faculty often have permissions/permits to use remote photography for research. These uses are permissible and will be performed with SFS approved equipment.

SFS Acknowledgement Policy

The appropriate acknowledgement of SFS is as follows:

“The Author gratefully acknowledge(s) the key [financial and/or field and/or logistical and/or other] support provided by The School for Field Studies (SFS) Center for [name and location of Center, e.g.: Center for Rainforest Studies, Australia]”

NOTE: In the case of both author address and acknowledgement, “The School for Field Studies (SFS)” is always identified and always placed before the name of the Center.

Requesting References from SFS Faculty

Some students request references from their SFS professors for graduate study or fellowship applications. Faculty are not obligated to write a student a letter of recommendation, and the decision to write the letter will be based on the professor’s workload and student’s SFS performance. Students are responsible for maintaining the contact information of their faculty and Center Directors. Since SFS instructors are frequently off in the field engaged in teaching or research, it may be difficult to contact them—expect a slow turnaround time and plan accordingly.

Representing SFS Experience on Your Résumé

Upon completing the SFS program you will have a number of skills and experiences that should serve you in your future studies and professional endeavors. SFS will have given you specific skills in intercultural competence, foreign language, field research, and data analysis that will make your résumé stand out. Thus, SFS encourages you to take full advantage of the SFS experience by representing your participation in the program on your résumé or curriculum vitae. See the box below for preliminary ideas, and study the materials provided in your closure packet upon your return stateside.

SFS on Your Résumé

Education

Study abroad: The School for Field Studies (SFS), [Name of course], [Name of SFS Center], [Location] (# credits, University of Minnesota: Twin Cities), [Program date].

E.g. The School for Field Studies (SFS), Tropical Rainforest Studies, Centre for Rainforest Studies, Queensland, Australia (16 credits, University of Minnesota: Twin Cities), Fall 2008.

Field Experience

[Year of experience] “[Title of your DR project]”, [brief description of the skills you developed; e.g., field survey of birds in forests and roadsides, scientific presentation]. [Location], [Time span; e.g., July-Aug].

E.g. 2008 “Growth rate of *Calycophyllum spruceanum* in fields and forests,” experimental design, field data collection, scientific writing and oral communication. Peru, Sep-Dec.

Communications & Information Systems Policy

The School for Field Studies is continually developing its technology infrastructure, providing exciting new possibilities for school-wide connectivity, research, and information sharing. The SFS IT Director is responsible for the development and management of these systems. In order to maintain the integrity, reliability, and performance of this foundation, all students must follow the policies and procedures shown below.

General Equipment Use

- Always check with an SFS faculty member before attaching any personal (non SFS-owned) computers, laptops, printers, or other network devices to the network.
- Borrowed equipment, on and off premises, is the borrower's responsibility until returned.
- Students are expected to uphold the condition of any SFS IT equipment that he/she uses. Be careful not to expose equipment to food, liquids, excessive sunlight, heat, cold, humidity, or magnetic fields.
- Due to the varying weather conditions at our field stations, computers are subjected to a much harsher environment than they normally operate in. Data should be backed up regularly onto USB thumb drives in the event your computer fails during your program. SFS is not responsible for personal computers or providing a “loaner” to use but every effort will be made to accommodate your need on a case by case basis.

Abuse of Systems

Abuse of systems is defined as an intentional action that threatens the stability, functionality, or performance of any SFS or non-SFS system. These prohibited actions include, but are not limited to:

1. Downloading or storing music, video, or large quantities of pictures/photographs for personal use.
2. Installing or running any software applications or executable files that are not provided by SFS.
3. Moving, reconfiguring, disabling, or removing SFS-owned equipment or software.
4. Gaining unauthorized access to or abusing SFS systems or any remote Internet systems. This includes spamming, hacking, virus distribution, or taking actions that compromise the security of any network system.
5. Using SFS systems to perform any activities that are illegal in the country where the employee is located. This may include gambling, making illegal purchases, or copying/distributing copyrighted material,
6. Accessing, downloading, uploading, saving, receiving, or sending material that includes sexually explicit content or other material containing vulgar, sexist, racist, threatening, violent, or defamatory language.
7. Deleting or changing digital documents without the consent of the document creator or owner. If the document creator or owner is not known or is not available, obtain a faculty member's approval before proceeding.

Password Policies & Guidelines

Passwords are the keys to SFS resources and private student information.

Do not disclose any passwords to other individuals.

Do not e-mail passwords or record passwords where they may be easily obtained by others.

When you are finished using a computer, always log out before leaving.

Student Rights and Responsibilities

SFS Rights Policy

All members of The School for Field Studies community are entitled to certain basic rights. These rights include, but are not limited to, the right to live in an environment free from harassment based on race, religion, gender, handicap, ethnicity, sexual orientation, economic status, or national origin.

Learning and Physical Accommodations

SFS is prohibited by law from making any inquiries about learning and/or physical accommodations prior to an admissions decision. If a potential student voluntarily provides this information during the admissions process, it will be kept in strict confidence and will not

affect admissions decisions. If you require learning and/or physical accommodations, please indicate that information during the medical review process. If you wish to request academic accommodation, documentation must be submitted in writing by a qualified professional prior to the start of the program.

Confidentiality of Student Records

Student Right of Access: The School for Field Studies maintains confidential files on all SFS students. These files contain material submitted as admissions requirements, financial aid application material, all contracts, medical records, and academic grades.

SFS reserves the right to request updated transcripts from accepted students at any time. Unless otherwise detailed in the terms of your acceptance, you are expected to maintain the academic standing achieved at your home institution (as evidenced by enrollment status and GPA) at the time of acceptance. SFS may rescind offers of acceptance made to students whose academic standing changes.

You are free to take reasoned exception to data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. You are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which you are enrolled. You have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, you are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which you are enrolled, and for full participation in all aspects of the program.

Directory Information: Certain information, known as "directory information," may be released by SFS. This information includes your name, address, phone number, place and date of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and teams, dates of attendance, awards received, and other similar information. If you do not wish this information released to others, you must make written notification of this to the SFS Admissions Manager.

The Admissions Office will prepare a list of students on each program. This list, containing names, home towns, email addresses, and home institutions, will be sent to each student approximately one month prior to the start of the program. If you do not wish to have your address or email included on this list, you must contact the SFS Admissions Office no later than two months prior to program departure.

Third Party Access: Based on education privacy laws, parents have no right of access to the records of students in post-secondary institutions.

Beyond the directory information mentioned above, only those faculty and employees of the educational institution who have a legitimate educational interest in your record may be permitted access to it. Information will not be released to any other parties without your written permission. In an emergency, information may be released if your health and safety is at stake, and if the person receiving the information is in a position to act on it.

If you wish to review your file, you must either make an appointment to do so with the Admissions Manager, or make a written request for a copy of specific information.

Evaluations: The faculty will complete written evaluations of each student at the end of each program. These evaluations are used in evaluating candidates for SFS internships, and are not made accessible to students or outside parties.

Questions regarding the above information should be directed to the Admissions Manager.