

CHILE

Center for Climate Studies

Student Field Preparation Guide

Semester Programs

The School for Field Studies (SFS)

**PLEASE READ THIS MATERIAL CAREFULLY BEFORE LEAVING
FOR THE PROGRAM. BRING IT WITH YOU TO THE FIELD AS IT
CONTAINS IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

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Introduction

This Student Field Preparation Guide is an important tool to help you prepare for your SFS experience! Use it to prepare for your phone interview, after you are accepted to the program, as you prepare to depart, while you are in the field and even after you return home.

We begin with a reminder list and timeline of the vital tasks you need to accomplish, including what you need to send to SFS prior to departure. There is information about traveling to and from the program, visa instructions, and arrival at the airport on the first day. There is a description of what life is like at your Center on a day-to-day basis and what to expect as far as living conditions. We have included a packing list and some financial suggestions to help guide you. Finally, we have included some resources on safety and traveling abroad. Please be sure to read through the entire guide and don't hesitate to contact your Admissions Counselor with any questions.

Terms and Regulations Contract

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 Contract.

Preparing for Departure

Preparation Checklist

Please see the SFS website for PDFs of forms and access to your online account & checklist. Most forms can be submitted online through the account that you created when you applied to your SFS program, but any other forms/information can be submitted by mail, email, or fax:

The School for Field Studies
100 Cummings Center, Suite 534-G
Beverly, MA 01915
Email: admissions@fieldstudies.org / safety@fieldstudies.org
Fax: 978.922.3835 (general) / 978.232.1254 (safety)

To be submitted by the deadline that applies to your session:

SFS Fall Programs: June 15th

SFS Spring Programs: November 15th

- **SFS Terms and Regulations Contract.** Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **Acknowledgement and Assumption of Risks Form.** Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **FERPA Notice and Consent.** Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **Passport number and expiration date** (passport must be valid for at least six months after the last day of the program). Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
- **SFS Medical Forms:**
 - **SFS Online Medical Review Form.** Self-disclosure form that you complete online. Submitted electronically through your SFS online account.
 - **SFS Physical Examination & Authorization Form.** To be completed by a physician and submitted to the SFS Safety Department via fax, scan and email, or regular mail.
 - **Psychotropic Medication Form** and/or **Counseling Questionnaire**, if applicable, to be completed by your prescribing physician and/or counselor, therapist, psychiatrist, or psychologist and submitted to the SFS Safety Department via fax, scan and email, or regular mail.

Please note: No student may enter the field until Final Medical Approval is granted by SFS personnel. This includes receipt and review of the SFS Online Medical Review Form and Physical Exam and Authorization Form. The Counseling Questionnaire, Psychotropic Medication Form, and supplemental documentation from a medical specialist may also be necessary. Inaccurate or incomplete information on any of the SFS medical forms may be grounds for rescinding an offer of admission, recalling a student from the program, or restricting student participation in certain activities. In addition, students are responsible for informing SFS of any changes to their health status that occur after submission of SFS medical forms.

Other Preparation To Do's

- Make sure you've paid your tuition, room & board in full! Work closely with the SFS Admissions & Finance Departments to be certain everything is in order.
- Contact SFS alumni on campus or as provided by SFS to learn more about what to expect.
- Obtain passport/check to make sure your passport is valid for six months from your planned return to the US.

- Make sure your bank/credit card companies know you will be using your cards abroad. In order to receive medical attention, a credit card with a limit of at least \$1,000 is required.
- If you are a permanent resident of the U.S. (NOT a U.S. citizen) or an international student returning to school in the U.S after the program, please be sure to have the necessary documentation for re-entry into the United States.
- Make travel arrangements that meet the schedule outlined by SFS. If you do not book using Advantage Travel, you must submit your itinerary to your Admissions Counselor and have it approved prior to purchase.
- Schedule a consultation with a travel doctor or your physician *at least 60 days* prior to departing for the program. Be sure to review:
 - Your vaccination history and requirements for every region in which you plan to travel.
 - Your prescription and over-the-counter medications. Prescription medications should be in their original, labeled containers, packed in your carry-on luggage. Work with your physician and insurance to ensure you have enough prescription medication to last the full duration of the program, as it is rare you will be able to find the medicine you need in-country.
 - Review and understand what the specific risks are for each region and country you will be visiting during the program and any pre- or post-program travel.
 - The Program Information for Participants and Medical Professionals, listed on your Physical Exam and Authorization Form. Consider your level of fitness as well as any medical or physical accommodations that may be needed.
- Make sure you have **comprehensive international health insurance** (*required*). Documentation of your insurance is necessary on the SFS Medical Review Form. Check with your provider to make certain that your policy offers coverage outside of the United States and in the country/countries where you are going.
- Configure your laptop to access your home school's online libraries and e-journals before you arrive in the field (see *Library and Computers* section for further details).
- Take care of any obligations or arrangements you might have at your home institution for the semester following your time abroad. This includes student housing, course registration, campus employment, etc. Opportunities to do this while on program may be limited.
- Make two clear copies of your flight itinerary and your passport. Take one copy of each with you and leave one copy with a friend or family member and save copies in your email inbox.
- Do some research on Chile! Set up google alerts for news articles, read about Chilean history and current events, research Chilean culture (the **Culture Smart** series of books is a good place to start)

Travel Arrangements

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements and for paying your travel to and from the program. You have a few choices. You may wish to book your ticket:

- Independently online,
- with a local travel agency, or
- with Advantage Travel Agency, which is the SFS travel agency of choice.

You will receive your specific travel instructions and contact information for Advantage Travel about 3-4 months prior to the start of your SFS program – do not try to book your flights before receiving these instructions.

Advantage Travel

SFS does not offer a group flight but we encourage you to book your flights through Advantage Travel. You are not required to book with Advantage, nor is it guaranteed to be the cheapest offering available. However, there are several benefits to booking with Advantage, including:

- Your itinerary is guaranteed to meet the group pickup/drop off program schedule.
- Advantage Travel has some influence with airlines to make ticket adjustments in the event of last-minute program date changes or cancellation, lost tickets, or other unforeseen circumstances.
- This travel agent is familiar with SFS programs.
- This will be one-stop shopping for your travel plans, both to and from the program and for other trips if you plan to travel during a break or pre/post-program.
- It will be fun to begin your travels with your fellow SFS students!

Making Your Travel Arrangements

If you book your flights with Advantage, they will get you set up correctly! If you **do not** book using Advantage, all travel plans must be reviewed and approved by your SFS Admissions Counselor prior to purchase. **SFS will designate a group meeting time at and departure time from the Presidente Carlos Ibáñez del Campo International Airport (PUQ) in Punta Arenas, Chile.** SFS staff members will meet the group at the airport in Punta Arenas at the designated meeting time and coordinate transportation to the Center.

Regardless of whether the ticket is purchased through Advantage Travel or another agent, SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs cancelled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, acts of God, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power or communications.

If you opt to travel before or after your program, be sure to check with immigration officials regarding your visa status. It's a great idea to arrange all your travel before you leave because it is logistically challenging to make flight changes once in the field.

TRAVEL TIP: Join a frequent flyer program! Also, check with your agent about multiple stops or stopovers; long trips are an excellent opportunity to see other countries or regions for a small fee or at no extra cost, but this usually needs to be arranged at the time of ticket purchase.

CARBON OFFSET: In an effort to make your semester with The School for Field Studies more sustainable, we ask you to consider a carbon offset for your flights to and from Chile. Ask the airline or travel agent.

Passport and Visa

Make sure that your passport is valid until six months after your intended return to the US.

Upon arriving in Chile, you will process a tourist visa. This initial visa can be issued for up to 90 days – be sure to request the full 90-day allotment! You do **not** need to apply for a student visa for this program as you will not be enrolled in a Chilean university. You are a tourist participating in a study abroad program.

You will be issued a Tourist Card upon arrival that will have the details of your tourist visa. The card is a thin slip of a paper that resembles a receipt and could be easily lost. You need to keep this card safe as you'll be asked to show this card often! We recommend keeping it with your passport.

This tourist visa will reset every time you cross the border and leave Chile, which will happen twice during the semester. Each tourist can stay up to 180 days total in Chile, so that should suffice for the 100-day SFS program as well as any post-program travel you may have planned in Chile. However, please be aware that each time you cross the border, it is up to the discretion of the immigration officer how many days they allot you. If you plan to travel in Chile after the program, it would be helpful to have a copy of your return flight (your flight leaving Chile) with you when crossing the border so that you can request the specific number of days that you need based on any post-program travel you have planned.

NOTE: if you do not have a US passport, please contact your Admissions Counselor as the visa process may differ for you!

Arrival at the Airport in Chile

1. **Immigration:** When you arrive to the airport in **Santiago, Chile** you will need to present your passport at immigration and a complete immigration form (this is provided by the airline during your flight). If the form requires a location for your stay in Chile, you can list the Laguna Azul Hostel in Puerto Natales.
2. **Baggage claim and customs:** **You will need to pick up your bags to go through customs and check them again for your flight to Punta Arenas.** At customs, you will present your completed Customs Declaration Form (be sure to pick one up from your flight attendant during the flight!). Because you will not be leaving anything valuable behind in Chile, and because SFS prohibits alcohol on site (!!), you should have nothing to declare (unless you are bringing in tobacco).
3. **Check into your flight to Punta Arenas:** proceed to the domestic terminal to check in for your flight to Punta Arenas. Check-in for Punta Arenas flights typically starts 2 – 3 hours before departure.
4. **Arrival in Punta Arenas:** the SFS staff will meet the group just outside of the baggage claim area. SFS staff cannot enter the baggage area so you will have to exit the building to meet them. Just look for the SFS sign – it is a very small airport!

If your bags do not arrive, complete a lost baggage form at the airline desk after clearing customs. It is not unusual for bags to get delayed in transit; they usually show up within two days. For this reason, it is a good idea to carry some items in your carry-on luggage in case bags get delayed. For example, pack a toothbrush, contacts, change of clothes, all necessary medications, etc.

About SFS Chile

Program Schedule, in Brief

PLEASE NOTE: SFS programs usually operate 6 days a week, with one day as a free day. Please be prepared for limited down time!

Our weekly schedule in Chile will vary over the course of the program. After a day of orientation, we jump right into classes. The days are filled by lectures, both in the classroom and the field, and field trips. You may have class in the morning, a field exercise in the afternoon, then some homework or a full day of classes, mixing lecture, discussion, and workshops. You may also have full days of class at the Center, or full days of field work. **Academic scheduling is on a six day/week schedule.** One day is generally reserved for studying, relaxing, or exploring in town.

The three main disciplinary courses and the 2-credit language and culture course are concentrated during the first part of the program. These courses wind down in the second half of the semester, when the work on Directed Research (DR) ramps up. Mid-semester, the DR groups will be assembled according to project needs and student interests. The DR groups of approximately five to ten students will meet frequently with the professor to develop project proposals, design the research, and plan the field work. During the first two months of the semester, you will attend classes on research ethics, science communication, data management and analysis, and other key elements for research. The DR groups will be trained in field skills, and then set out for 1 – 2 weeks of data collection. The final weeks of the program back on site are dedicated to data analysis, paper writing, presentation preparations, and then delivery!

Here is a very general sense of the weekly schedule during the program – this is subject to change! The blue text represents time spent away from our primary field station in Puerto Natales. As you can see, this is a travel-intensive program with a fast-paced schedule. Our goal is to introduce students to as many ecosystems and regions within Patagonia as possible, but it is a vast region and travel to these locations can take some time. There will be many long drives and at least one regional flight required as part of these excursions. Be prepared for lots of travel. Some of the expeditions will take place in the opposite order during the fall vs. spring semester due to weather conditions.

EXAMPLE SEMESTER SCHEDULE – this is subject to change!

- **Week 1:** Students arrive into Punta Arenas & to the Center in Puerto Natales, orientation & classes begin
- **Week 2:** Classes and field lectures around Puerto Natales
- **Week 3:** Australis boat expedition, Ushuaia/Tierra del Fuego
- **Week 4:** Back to Puerto Natales, classes and field lectures
- **Week 5:** Hiking and field lectures in Torres del Paine National Park
- **Week 6:** Expedition to El Calafate, Argentina to Perito Moreno Glacier in Parque Los Glaciares, Mid-semester break
- **Week 7:** Classes and field lectures around Puerto Natales
- **Week 8:** Classes and field lectures around Puerto Natales
- **Week 9:** Trip to northern Patagonia Lakes Region (Chiloe Island, Puerto Varas)
- **Week 10:** Wrap up classes and field lectures around Puerto Natales
- **Week 11:** Directed Research field work begins
- **Week 12:** Directed Research data collection
- **Week 13:** Analysis and write-up of research, presentation preparation
- **Week 14:** Individual and community research presentations
- **Week 15:** Closing activities & program ends

What to Expect

Center and Puerto Natales

Our field station is in Puerto Natales, so students will have the opportunity to take advantage of all that the small city has to offer! Our Center is on a street near cafes, shops, and the main grocery store in town. We are about a 5-minute walk from a large square, library, and athletic complex with a running track and soccer field.

Our facility is a former hostel. The first floor has some staff and faculty housing and offices, a classroom, kitchen and dining area, and student lounge. Students do not have access to the kitchen, but the student lounge will have a microwave, toaster, fridge, tea kettle, and coffee maker so that you can keep some of our own food and prepare snacks.

The second story is all housing with rooms containing twin sized bunk beds, storage cabinets, desks, and bathrooms. The rooms vary in size and house up to 4 students. The laundry room is on the second floor with two washers and two dryers. Laundry detergent is provided. There is no outdoor space on campus as Puerto Natales is a densely packed small city, but you will be able to walk to nearby cafes and parks during your free time.

While you travel away from the Center in Puerto Natales for your excursions, you will stay at a variety of hotels and field stations. These accommodations are all coordinated by and paid for by SFS. **There may be some camping during the program, but we are still sorting out those logistics!**

Weather and Climate

Average temperatures will range from 30 – 70 degrees Fahrenheit. The summer months in Patagonia are December through February, and winter months are June through August. The fall semester will begin cold and get warmer over time, while the spring semester will begin warm and get colder as winter approaches. Patagonia also has a wind season – November, December, and January are the windiest months, with average winds around 20 – 30 miles per hour. The region is prone to sudden and drastic weather shifts, many times in one day. You should prepare for unpredictable, variable weather conditions during the program. Layers and synthetic fabrics are essential to stay comfortable (see packing list for details)!

This website has helpful weather data: <https://championtraveler.com/dates/best-time-to-visit-patagonia-ar/>.

Library and Computers

Students need to bring their own laptop computers with them for use during the program. A tablet alone is not sufficient. As a general recommendation, this should be a PC compatible laptop less than 4 years old, containing Microsoft Office 2007 or later software, or office software that can export Microsoft Office compatible documents. It is **NOT** recommended to bring Chromebooks or any other devices that are reliant on the internet for many of their functions as internet is not always reliable and can therefore greatly inhibit your ability to complete assignments (**please see Internet section below for more details**).

If you are bringing a Mac computer, please also pack an adapter so that you can connect your Mac to a VGA projector to display PowerPoint presentations.

You should plan to rely on the databases and online library from your home institution during your SFS program. SFS does not provide additional access to any e-library resources from our Centers. Before arriving in-country for your SFS program, you should **make sure you know your remote library log-in and password, understand your home school's policy on accessing library materials remotely, and configure your laptop to access your school's online libraries and e-journals before you arrive in the field.**

Note that SFS cannot accept responsibility for ensuring the safety of students' personal computers, either onsite or in the field. Personal laptop insurance coverage can often be obtained through the credit card used to buy the equipment (check with your credit card company), or through homeowners' insurance.

You will be responsible for backing up and managing files saved on your personal laptop or in any other location outside of your network storage folder. **Be sure to take your project data with you upon completion of the program, as it will not be available from SFS later.**

Communications

Internet

Wireless internet access is available for students to support research and educational work, and to contact home during the program. You may use the internet to communicate with friends and family at home via email, and you may use the wifi on your personal cell phone from home to text using iMessage or WhatsApp. **It is important to keep in mind that the internet can be slow and requires a good deal of patience, so don't expect to use the internet the same way you do at home.**

In order to maintain the stability of the network, the following actions are prohibited:

- Downloading any non-research related files
- Downloading large files, especially audio/video files (including iTunes and streaming videos from YouTube, Megavideo, Netflix, etc.)
- Downloading any software application
- Gaining unauthorized access to remote Internet systems or abusing Internet systems or Internet users.
- Taking actions that compromise the security of the center network.
- Representing The School for Field Studies in any manner.
- Distributing SFS-owned knowledge or propagating falsified information about SFS.
- Spamming, hacking, virus distribution, etc.
- Illegally copying or redistributing copyrighted material.
- Viewing pornographic or illegal content.

In the event of any violation of this policy, SFS reserves the right to suspend or terminate any or all internet access. These rules can be adapted and changed at any time. We must emphasize the fact that the internet is a resource and not a luxury; therefore, **personal use for things like social media, etc. should be kept to a minimum.** Sending and receiving emails is acceptable, but the internet is not strong enough to use for Skype or streaming any kind of video.

NOTE: There is internet access at the Center in Puerto Natales and at most hotels, but there is **no** internet access on the boat expedition (about 5 days), and internet/data could be limited during other expeditions and travel periods during the semester. Be prepared to be out of touch for periods of time during the semester, and please share this information with friends and family!

Telephone

Students will be issued a local cell phone by SFS to use for the duration of the semester, and cell phone service is reliable around town. You will be responsible for keeping your phone with you at all times, having it charged and purchasing phone credit. This phone will allow you to contact SFS staff and your fellow students while you are out in town. You can also share the cell phone number with family and friends so that they can contact you. Receiving calls on these phones is free for you, yet might cost money to your loved ones calling you from the States.

You may also choose to get an international calling/data plan for your personal phone from home – it is up to you whether you want to invest in that!

NOTE: There will be **no** cell phone service during the boat expedition (5 days). SFS staff will have a satellite phone to use in case of emergencies, but you will be out of touch for friends and family during this time!

Mail

Here is the mailing and physical address of the Center:

{Student Name}
SFS Center for Climate Studies
Laguna Azul Hostel
Baquedano 380
Puerto Natales, Chile

Please tell friends and family to avoid sending packages to the Center, as processing time is slow, packages may be held in Santiago, and you often will have to pay a very steep tax on the value of your package.

If you have prescription medicines, make sure to bring enough for the entire session, as you will not be able to receive this through the mail. You should plan to pack and carry with you everything you will need for the duration of the program.

Food

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be served at the Center 7 days a week. On the occasional free days, lunch and/or dinner may be cancelled based on the number of students who plan to eat out in town. On those days, leftovers and snacks would be available at the Center if you do not choose to eat out in town, and you would be notified of this meal change ahead of time.

Breakfast usually includes eggs, toast, oatmeal, cereal, and fruit. Bread, peanut butter, jelly, and butter are always available. Lunch and dinner at the Center are usually similar fare and generally include a protein option, potatoes, vegetables, and pastas.

Students will not have access to the kitchen to prepare their own meals, but there is a student fridge for food storage, so you can keep some of your own groceries at the Center.

When we are traveling, we'll be relying on restaurants for most meals. Local cuisine is very meat-heavy, mostly beef and lamb. Fresh vegetables and salads are hard to come by. Students will need to be flexible with their diets while traveling away from the Center as we have less control over the food options and ingredients.

Special Dietary Requirements

Student Dietary Needs are defined as documented by a medical professional (such as food allergies) or required because of religious observance. These dietary needs must be listed on the student's Online Medical Review Form and the student must notify their Admissions Counselor and the SFS Safety & Student Life Department of this need prior to travel to the Center. It may be difficult to accommodate some dietary requirements due to lack of resources/ingredients that can be sourced locally.

Student Dietary Preferences, such as a vegan or vegetarian diet may be accommodated, but the variety of food may be limited due to the location of the program, travel schedules, etc. Due to buffet-style serving and the logistics of purchasing food for a large group, options for dietary preferences can be repetitive and limited. Similarly, specialty items, such as gluten-free pasta, tofu, almond milk, and other similar items, are often not available locally. Be prepared to supplement your diet by bringing protein powder, granola bars, nut butter, etc. from the US. In some countries where

we operate, specialty items and snacks may be available in town for you to purchase, but please be aware these are often quite expensive.

Exercise during the program

You will have several options for exercise while in Puerto Natales! Students can run through town and along the water. The athletic complex near the Center has a running track and soccer field. There are gyms in town, a community pool, and yoga and Zumba classes just a few minutes from our Center, as well. You will need to be flexible while traveling – bringing workout DVDs and planning to do yoga and other bodyweight exercises are a great idea while staying in hotels on the road.

Cleaning

The Center relies on a group living model, where everyone on campus does their part. Students and staff alike are expected to do their own dishes and to engage in keeping our home clean and organized. Groups of students/staff will rotate to help with dining area set up and cleaning up after dinner. We also have a general cleaning rotation, with tasks such as sweeping the classroom and setting out snacks.

Language

You will take a course entitled “Language, Culture and Society of Chile.” Speaking some Spanish will greatly facilitate all interactions with community members, and participation in field exercise. Although the program is taught in English, we highly encourage you to practice Spanish with our local staff members and community. The amount of Spanish you learn during the program depends on you and how much effort you put into practicing!

Mid-Semester Break

The program includes a five-day break during which time the Center is closed and students have the opportunity to travel on their own. This is a wonderful opportunity (and the only one during the program!) to do some independent travel in the region with your friends from the program. You may also have friends/family come to visit you during the break. **The exact dates of this break are not determined until just a few months before the semester starts. We will share the break dates as soon as we are able – we promise! Please do not ask for these early.**

During the break, students are on non-program time and SFS will not provide housing, meals, or transportation. SFS also cannot make specific recommendations for activities during this time. You will, however, have emergency contact information for staff and you will need to share your break plans with SFS prior to traveling so that our staff are aware of your location and planned activities.

Transportation, activities, and accommodations around Chile can be expensive, so we recommend that you start to plan financially for this break time early. We recommend a budget of about \$1000 total for the break. This can be a wonderful time for friends and family to visit as there are no visitor days during the rest of the semester.

Policies: During Non-Program time (mid-semester break), certain SFS Policies are not in effect. While not under the full set of SFS policies, students are expected to observe the SFS Operational Objectives at all times. SFS does not provide students with recommendations for activities during Non-Program Time but informs students about the inherent risks associated with travel and certain activities. Please note that students are responsible for their actions, judgement, safety and well-being during this time.

Prior to travel, students are expected to submit itineraries, including emergency contact information, mode of transportation, and accommodations. Travel to countries currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Warning Level Three are prohibited during the full duration of the program. Additionally, the SFS Safety and Student Life Department may prohibit travel to regions with known or foreseeable political unrest, credible threat of terrorism, unstable weather patterns, or other factors of high risk upon review of student itineraries.

Non-Program Time dates are clearly established by SFS staff and travel must be done within this established time frame. **Individual early departures or late returns will not be permissible.**

Storing Personal Items after the Program Ends

Due to space limitation, and insurance and liability issues, students are not permitted to store personal belongings at the Center after the semester program ends. Students must make appropriate arrangements for their belongings.

Packing List

Make sure all equipment is in good shape before leaving – check for leaks, broken straps, jamming zippers, etc. You can usually find some good deals on gear on **Amazon, Sierra Trading Post, and at REI Garage Sales which happen periodically if you have an REI nearby.** Please reach out with any questions about gear/supplies!

Please contact your specific airline for more detailed requirements on number, size, weight and additional fees for checked luggage. Be sure to put the Center address provided earlier on your luggage tags. Traveling light is recommended.

SFS strongly advises packing your carry-on bag with the following items: a change of clothes, basic toiletries, one warm garment, rain coat, your binoculars and camera, laptop, prescription medications, and any other essential items to be comfortable for three days after arrival; luggage is sometimes delayed while in transit to the program.

There will be some opportunities to buy items in Puerto Natales during the program, so if you run out of space or forget something, it will not be a disaster. But the local stores may have fewer brands to choose from and prices may be high because they are catering to tourists, so we recommend bringing as much as you can with you from home.

Please keep in mind that this packing list (for the most part) does not have very specific suggested amounts of clothing – that is totally up to you!

Required Clothing, Equipment, and Personal Items

Required Clothing and Footwear

- **Pants:**
 - At least two rugged pairs for trek and field work. Synthetic fabrics are best as they dry quickly.
 - At least two pairs of normal pants like jeans
 - Comfortable pants for relaxing around Center
 - Waterproof/rain pants
- **Shorts:** for sports only. Must be mid-thigh length or longer.
- **Shirts:**
 - T-Shirts. Synthetic shirts are great for chilly nights, wet weather, and field days. Cotton shirts are nice for non-fieldwork days, but please keep them loose-fitting with no midriff exposed.
 - Long-sleeved shirts. You'll want a few with light fabric for working in the field and in the sun, and heavier ones for warmth and protection. Capilene or wool are great fabric options.
- **Outerwear:**
 - Winter coat (down or synthetic) – at least 600ml down fill recommended
 - Light wool or fleece sweaters
 - Heavy wool or fleece sweaters

- Breathable shell jacket (may be same as your raincoat)
- Waterproof (NOT just water resistant) hooded rain jacket – test this out on a rainy day or in the shower!
- **Underwear and socks** including at least three pairs of wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks. Past students have also recommended a pair of synthetic underwear for hiking.
- **Pajamas**
- **Footwear:**
 - Hiking boots that go over your ankle and have a hard sole. Waterproof boots are highly recommended as some field work will be done in wet environments. Be sure to break in your boots in before the program.
 - Lightweight trail or hiking shoe for day hikes
 - Sneakers for running, walking, soccer, etc.
 - Casual shoes to wear around the Center and in town as a break for your hiking boots!
 - Sandals or flip flops for around the Center and in town
- **Sun hat** (baseball or wide-brimmed)
- **Sunglasses**
- **Wool or fleece hat, scarf, and gloves**

Required Personal Items and Toiletries

- **Toiletries.** Due to luggage weight limits, we recommend that you purchase basic items such as toothpaste, soap and shampoo in Chile. Do bring special items if you need them.
- **Feminine Hygiene Products.** You can purchase basic feminine hygiene items (pads) in Chile, but if you prefer a certain brand, please bring along. Tampons may be difficult to find, so if you prefer this product, please bring enough to last the duration of the program. You might also consider using a menstrual cup as an alternative to reduce plastic waste.
- **Personal First Aid Kit** with plenty of anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Tylenol, ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, Band-Aids, tape, tweezers, anti-histamines, etc.
- **Sunscreen and insect repellent**
- **Any necessary over-the-counter medications or prescriptions** in enough supply for full duration of program and any additional personal travel. These medications will not be available at the field station and are difficult to find locally. SFS cannot provide these medications; you must bring enough Tylenol, Benadryl, motion sickness meds (and ginger candies), cold and cough medicine and anything for flu. It is also recommended to bring a course of antibiotics (like Cipro and/or a Z-Pak) to treat sickness in the field (under the advice of a doctor). Probiotics and vitamin C are helpful as well. Please also note that there will be some long, windy drives in Patagonia and potentially rough seas on the boat expedition, so it is recommended to bring motion sickness medications even if you normally do not experience motion sickness.

Required Items for the Dormitory

NOTE: In the dorms and at hotels, sheets, blanket, and a pillow be provided. You are, of course, welcome to bring your own if you'd prefer!

- **Sleeping bag** (at least 20°F rating) for the possible camping trip and to supplement bedding provided if you tend to get cold.
- **Sleeping pad** for the possible camping trip
- **Towels.** You should bring at least one shower towel and one face towel/wash cloth. Quick dry is best – cotton Turkish towels also work well!
- **Type C outlet adapters** (see image below). Bring several as these are easy to lose! Electricity in Chile is 220 V. Check your devices to see if they can convert this voltage. If not, you will need to bring a **power converter**.



Required Items for the Field and Classroom

- **Day pack** for field work and hiking with waterproof pack cover
- **Binoculars**— preferably 8 x 40, but anything in the 6 x 30 to 10 x 40 range is fine. Make sure they are properly aligned before you leave.
- **Headlamp**
- **Waterproof stuff sacks or sturdy plastic bags.** Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well!
- **Notebooks, pens and pencils**
- **Tupperware/Rubbermaid container for packed lunches**
- **2 Water bottles** with 1-liter capacity each
- **USB memory stick.** Recommend at least 1 GB. You will use this to share work and to take your work and photos home with you at the end of the program (there tend to be a lot of pictures to take home).
- **Laptop computer with case and charger.** Students are required to bring their own personal laptops (contact Admissions if this will present a challenge for you). As a general recommendation, this should be less than 4 years old, containing Microsoft Office 2007 or later software, or office software that can export Microsoft Office compatible documents. A tablet cannot replace a laptop, but you may want to bring a tablet in addition to your laptop. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure non-Microsoft Office products provide Microsoft Office compatible documents to faculty.

Optional Clothing and Equipment

This list is not exhaustive – just a few different items to consider packing based on your needs and interests!

- **Water-resistant watch**
- **Yoga mat**
- **Swimsuit** if you plan to use the community pool in town
- **Reusable shopping tote, metal straw, cloth napkins,** and other items to keep your single-use plastic/paper consumption to a minimum!
- **Camera**
- **Umbrella** (can be purchased locally)
- **Small bag/purse** for around town
- **Small repair kit** with a needle, thread, safety pins, etc.
- **Pocketknife** – make sure this is packed in your checked luggage!
- **Journal**
- **Clipboard** for taking notes in the field
- **Entertainment for nights at the Center.** Card games, board games, books, movies, music, watercolor paints, musical instruments, knitting...things to pass the time!
- **Any special snack foods/candy bars** 😊
- **Protein bars and/or powder** if you plan to keep a vegetarian or vegan diet during the program
- **Baby wipes** and a travel bottle of **hand sanitizer**
- **Vitamin C Supplements or power** to mix into your water

- **Probiotics.** You might experience some stomach upset while in Chile due to the different food, water, and bacteria. Bringing probiotic supplements (beneficial bacteria that can help prevent stomach upset and diarrhea) can help with this
- **Trekking poles** – we highly recommend at least one!
- **Buff** for hiking in windy conditions

Finances

NOTE: Chile’s currency is the *Chilean Peso*.

CASH:

- You will want to order Chilean pesos from your bank prior to traveling, change money at an airport exchange kiosk while traveling, or withdraw it from an ATM after landing in Chile.
- You will have access to ATMs periodically during the semester, but it is good to have some cash with you at the start of the program. **You should bring at least US \$300 in cash or available funds on debit with you to start.**
- Bills and coins are not exchanged by the banks if they are damaged in any way (marks, rips, wrinkles, etc).
- Ask for **smaller bills** in *pesos*, if possible, as it can be difficult to pay with large bills at small, local shops and markets. Banks, large stores, or exchange kiosks can help you with this.
- You will need your passport with you to change money.

DEBIT/CREDIT:

- Almost all of the restaurants and grocery stores in Puerto Natales accept credit cards. You should have at least one credit card with you in case of emergency (clinic trip) or unexpected expenses.
- Visa is by far the most widely-accepted credit card. It is more difficult to find outlets that accept American Express and Discover.
- Check with your bank to make sure your debit and/or credit cards will work internationally. Inform your bank and your credit card company that you will be traveling to Chile and that you will be making transactions from this destination. Otherwise, they may block transactions for security purposes.
- There is a service charge for withdrawing cash at ATMs and you should check with your bank to find out what the fee will be. The bank machine will charge an additional fee separate from the fee your bank charges

Estimated Costs (US Dollars)

<i>Expenditure</i>	<i>Estimated Cost (US\$)</i>
General spending money for souvenirs, snacks, drinks, and activities	\$900
Estimate for mid-semester break travel and accommodations	\$1000
Estimated cash needed for medical expenses	\$100
Total	\$2000

Tips for Living and Studying Abroad

Introduction

Upon arrival to your SFS campus, all students participate in an orientation that provides information specific to the Center and country, including local community and culture, daily Center operations, and relevant risks and hazards. Prior to arrival on program, SFS recommends that students take time to understand the risks associated with travel in a foreign country as well as ways to increase their own personal safety. The following is a useful guide that provides information on best practices when traveling abroad.

Country Information

Visit government websites to learn country-specific information about your destination:

- Bureau of Consular Affairs: www.travel.state.gov
- Overseas Security Advisory Council: www.osac.gov
- CIA World Fact Book: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html

Personal Safety

Understand the potential health and safety hazards you could encounter while traveling. Consider that most incidents resulting in injury or death of students while participating in study abroad involve:

- Transportation and traffic accidents
- Use and abuse of drugs or alcohol
- Sexual harassment and assault
- Crime or theft
- Mental health issues
- Region-specific illnesses

Situational Awareness

Be aware that travelers, especially those who have just arrived abroad, are often a likely target for petty theft or crime. Take steps to protect yourself by being aware of your surroundings.

- Travel in pairs or groups.
 - Avoid traveling alone or being out past local curfew.
 - In the event of confrontation, remain calm and focus on de-escalation and removing yourself from the situation.
- Keep belongings close to your body.
 - Consider leaving valuables or “flashy” jewelry at home or on campus.
 - If carrying valuables, make sure they are not visible or easily accessible in outer pockets of backpacks or purses.
- Be wary of undue attention or affection.
 - Be cautious about accepting food or drink from strangers. Where alcohol is served, keep an eye on your drink at all times and do not accept drinks that you did not see being opened in front of you.
 - Understand that the idea of consent varies between different countries and cultures. The current dialogue and understanding of the concept of consent in the US often does not apply in other cultures. Situational awareness and understanding of local cultures is an important factor in reducing risk in certain situations.

- Protect yourself from sexually-transmitted diseases by using protection (e.g. condoms) or practicing abstinence. While it may be intriguing to start a relationship in a new country, consider the ramifications that a fleeting or short-term relationship may have within the local community.
- Avoid events that might be prone to civil disturbances, including protests, demonstrations, elections, and anniversaries of difficult events. If you see a protest forming, leave the scene. Even demonstrations meant to be peaceful can turn violent with little or no warning.
- Trust your instincts; if a place does not feel right, move to an alternative location as quickly and safely as possible. If that is not an option, find a secure area and shelter in place.

Local Laws and Cultural Norms

Know the local laws to avoid putting yourself in a situation that could have been easily prevented. Behave maturely and in a way that is respectful of local cultural norms.

- Be aware that there might be country- or region-specific laws on alcohol consumption, smoking, behavior in public (e.g. public displays of affection, public intoxication, behavior at cultural sites, photography, etc.), carrying prescription medications, and many others.
- Wear clothing that is consistent with, and respectful of, local dress.
- Be aware that non-verbal communication (such as body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in the United States may be inappropriate or culturally insensitive to people in other countries.
- Be aware of local events or holidays where you are traveling, as some religious events or holidays require a heightened sense of cultural awareness or specific behaviors.

Food Safety

Water used for consumption and food preparation at SFS centers is filtered or boiled. Students are able to access potable drinking water at all times while on campus or on field trips. When off campus, students are encouraged to carry potable water from campus and consider safe drinking and eating practices. Remember:

- Water in many regions is often not potable, including ice, juices, and water for brushing teeth or showering. Be aware of how cups, plates, and utensils are cleaned or rinsed, as food or drink can be contaminated by utensils rinsed in non-potable water.
- If sampling street food, consider how it was prepared. Avoid raw or undercooked meat, fish, and shellfish or cooked food that has been allowed to stand for several hours at ambient temperature. Instead, eat food that has been cooked through and is still steaming hot.
- If consuming fruits or vegetables, select options that can be peeled or appropriately washed.
- Avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, including cheeses.

Policies

By signing the SFS Terms and Regulations Contract, students agree that they have read, understand, and will abide by all SFS policies. Violation of any policy may result in disciplinary action.

SFS Policies are in effect at all times throughout the full duration of Program Time, including downtime, rest days, and field trips. The SFS Policies function under a set of Operational Objectives, which are common sense principles designed to support SFS centers and their students in functioning safely and successfully. The Operational Objectives include:

- Ensuring the well-being, health, and security of students and staff
- Providing high-quality academic programming
- Maintaining positive and cohesive local community relations
- Maintaining local and international standards necessary to successfully operate all Centers and SFS Headquarters

Students should consider the Operational Objectives at all times in order to prevent circumstances that may prevent them from successfully completing the program, disrupting the program experience of other students, or compromising the ability of SFS to operate. Such circumstances can include injury, preventable illness, reckless behavior, poor judgement, or acting in a way that harms community relations. Through pre-departure literature and program orientation, SFS works to empower students and requires them to manage their behavior in order to achieve the following objectives and aims:

- Taking responsibility for their own behavior
- Being aware of health, safety, and security risks present in the local area or specific to an activity
- Having good situational awareness
- Behaving maturely and in a way that is respectful of local cultural norms
- Knowing the country or region-specific laws
- Maintaining good individual and SFS relationships with the local community and other communities you may encounter

During Non-Program Time, which on certain programs may include designated breaks such as Weekends Away or Mid-Semester Break, certain SFS Policies are not in effect. While not under the full set of SFS policies, students are expected to observe the SFS Operational Objectives at all times.

SFS-Wide Policies

Alcohol Policy

No possession or consumption of alcohol is permitted on SFS property including any SFS vehicles, common areas, student quarters, Center grounds, field trip sites, or during any program activities. Any use of alcohol that in any way compromises the Operational Objectives will be addressed and may include disciplinary action. The permissible drinking age is defined by the laws of the country that the Center is located in. Centers may have additional restrictions. Please check with the Student Affairs Manager or Center Director regarding pertinent local laws.

Drug Policy

Use or possession of any drugs, chemical or medications that are illegal or interfere with the Operational Objectives of any SFS program or site, is prohibited. Illegal drugs are defined by United States and host-country laws. SFS reserves the right to interview, investigate, search for and confiscate any substances or paraphernalia in violation of this policy. SFS has a zero tolerance illegal drug policy – violation of this policy will result in expulsion. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Violence Policy

There is no place for violence of any kind at SFS. Violence can be verbal as well as physical. Some examples include making threats, verbal intimidation, bullying, aggressive physical contact or behavior otherwise designed to frighten or intimidate. This list is not intended to be comprehensive. Violence of any sort will not be tolerated by SFS and may be grounds for immediate expulsion from the program. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Sign-Out Policy

All students must sign themselves in and out of the Center so that they can be located in case of an emergency.

Visitor Policy

Aside from visiting professionals and guest lecturers, SFS does not allow visitors on site during the program because it is disruptive to the program schedule and the dynamics of the group. For security reasons, no local visitors are allowed on the Center property without prior consent from the Center Director. This policy increases students' and staff's safety, security, and sense of privacy.

Local Laws Policy

SFS supports and complies with all local laws. Students will be briefed on local laws and expectations soon after arriving at the Center. Any violation of a local law will result in SFS disciplinary procedures and in addition, may subject you to local penalties such as fines, arrest, or deportation. This policy is in force from the beginning to the end of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Non-Program Time Policy

During designated Non-Program Time, Mid-Semester Break, students may have the opportunity to travel to other regions of the host country or neighboring countries. During this time, while not under the full set of SFS policies, students are expected to observe the SFS Operational Objectives at all times.

SFS does not provide students with recommendations for activities during Non-Program Time, but informs students about the inherent risks associated with travel and certain activities. Please note that students are responsible for their actions, judgement, safety and well-being during this time.

Prior to travel, students are expected to submit itineraries, including emergency contact information, mode of transportation, and accommodations. Travel to countries currently under a U.S. Department of State Travel Warning or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Warning Level Three are prohibited during the full duration of the program. Additionally, the SFS Safety and Student Life Department may prohibit travel to regions with known or foreseeable political unrest, credible threat of terrorism, unstable weather patterns, or other factors of high risk upon review of student itineraries.

Non-Program Time dates are clearly established by SFS staff and travel must be done within this established time frame. **Individual early departures or late returns will not be permissible.**

Swimming Policy

Swimming is always at your own risk. Where SFS maintains swimming pools or conducts recreational swimming during program time or on SFS property, protocols and guidelines will be presented. Recreational swimming is always optional and may be prohibited on certain programs or in certain regions due to local hazards or cultural practice.

Motor Vehicle/Boating Policy

SFS students may not operate SFS motor vehicles or motor boats. SFS students may not ride in an SFS motor vehicle or motor boat without an SFS-approved operator. Students may not ride in non-SFS motor vehicles or motor boats without prior Center Director approval. Operating a motor vehicle, or operating or riding on a motorbike, motorcycle, moped, ATV, or motorized recreational watercraft, is prohibited for the full duration of the program, including Non-Program Time.

Seatbelts must be worn in all motor vehicles, where available. SFS Centers that utilize motor boats have additional Center-specific protocols including maximum occupancy, approved seating, personal flotation devices, radio protocols, rescue and first aid equipment in compliance with all local regulations.

Sexual Harassment Policy

It is the policy of SFS to respect the rights of students to work and study in an environment free from any type of sexual harassment and to investigate and resolve any reported cases of sexual harassment. Each administrator, faculty member and student is responsible for ensuring a work and learning environment free from sexual harassment. SFS policy specifically prohibits any faculty or staff member from having a sexual relationship with a student at any time while the student is enrolled in an SFS program. In addition, no SFS employee shall threaten, promise, or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that any student's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect the student's status with SFS, including but not limited to influence on grades or recommendations.

Moreover as a part of its overall nondiscrimination policy, SFS prohibits all forms of harassment of others because of race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual preference, national origin, physical or mental disability, or veteran status. In particular, an atmosphere of tension created by disparaging racial, ethnic, sexual, or religious remarks does not belong in the SFS workplace or learning environment and will not be tolerated.

Campus-Specific Policies

The SFS Center in Chile has policies that are unique to the program, taking into consideration local environmental hazards and the local community and culture. Campus-specific policies may change at the discretion of SFS staff. Upon arrival to campus, students will be presented with a complete list of campus-specific policies; the following list is not exhaustive.

Curfew

The current plan for curfew is 10:00 pm Sunday through Friday and 11:00 pm on Saturday. Quiet hours will begin at 10:00 pm every night. These parameters are subject to change at the discretion of our field staff and may differ while students are traveling away from our primary campus in Puerto Natales.

Buddy System

Students are required to travel in groups of two or more whenever traveling outside of the Center. While hiking, students must travel in groups of three or more.

Disciplinary Procedures

Violations of any SFS-wide policies, Center-specific rules and protocols and Operational Objectives may result in one or more of the following disciplinary actions:

- Verbal warnings
- Written warnings
- Probation
- Expulsion

All staff and students are expected to understand and to actively support the standards of behavior as presented in our written materials and in our on-site orientations. While all staff are responsible for understanding and enforcing our standards for behavior, all formal disciplinary measures for students are at the discretion of the Center Director in consultation with his or her staff and Headquarters, where appropriate. Generally speaking, behavioral issues arising out of misunderstandings or that are not overly compromising to SFS Operational Objectives will be addressed with education, clarification and intermediate disciplinary measures (warnings/probation). However, any behavior that significantly compromises the Operational Objectives or any violation of SFS policy may be cause for immediate expulsion. In the event of an offense at the level of Written Warning or above, SFS will contact the student's home institution. SFS also reserves the right to contact parents/guardians in the event of any behavior that potentially compromises the student's ability to participate in our program. In the event that a student is asked to leave the

program, SFS will return the student to the point of program departure at his or her own expense. At this time, any and all responsibility on the part of The School for Field Studies will cease. Students who are expelled or who depart early from the program will be withdrawn from all courses and receive no credit. All outstanding financial obligations to SFS remain in full effect.

Insurance

Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

All SFS students are automatically enrolled in the SFS Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG). This insurance is effective for the duration of the program and does not cover personal travel before or after the program.

Benefits of the SFS Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance plan include:

- \$350,000 for emergency medical evacuation
- \$100,000 for emergency security evacuation
- \$20,000 for repatriation of remains

The coverage provided by the SFS Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation insurance plan is **NOT** the same as health, medical, or dental insurance. The plan covers the cost of transportation, accommodations, and medical care associated with an evacuation (e.g. life-saving support during transport in an air evacuation), in cases where the evacuation is deemed medically necessary. This insurance plan does not cover urgent or emergency medical care, basic medical care, laboratory tests, or pharmacy needs. **Therefore, students on SFS programs are required to supply their own health insurance, valid in the country or countries in which the program operates, for the full duration of their SFS program.**

Health Insurance

Students on SFS programs are required to supply their own health insurance, valid in the country or countries in which the program operates, for the full duration of their SFS program. Students are not allowed to join an SFS program without identifying such coverage.

Students looking to obtain health insurance should keep in mind the following:

- Most domestic health insurance plans do not cover out-of-country medical expenses. Students should check with their policy provider on what services are available out-of-country.
- Students should check to see if their home institution provides or offers international health insurance.
- Most insurance companies provide international coverage on a reimbursable basis, as most foreign public or private medical care facilities do not accept insurance for payment. Therefore, **students need to carry cash and/or a high-limit credit card to pay for medical expenses up front**, and then request reimbursement when they return home.

In the event that a student requires medical attention during a program, a staff member will accompany him or her on the visit(s) to a medical care facility. Students are liable for all incidental expenses, including medical costs, transportation, accommodations, etc., incurred by all parties involved during these visits. Students must pay in full for these expenses prior to departure from the program.

Personal Property Insurance

SFS does not provide insurance for personal property of students, staff, and visitors.

Travel Insurance

SFS does not provide travel insurance or reimbursement for trip cancellation. Students can look into options for travel insurance through their personal travel agent or through Advantage Travel.

Health and Safety

Introduction

Every region has its own unique health challenges. Statistically, the most common injuries sustained by students on SFS programs are recreational in nature and the most common medical problem is traveler's diarrhea. However, international traveling and living presents potentially significant health and safety risks and challenges.

24-Hour Emergency Hotline

If a parent or guardian needs to urgently contact a student in the field, an emergency call can be made to the **SFS 24-hour Emergency Hotline: 978-741-3544**. After dialing, press "2" when prompted to leave an emergency message and to receive a call back from the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. For non-emergency inquiries while a student is in the field, a message can be sent to safety@fieldstudies.org.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications

Students should bring enough prescription and/or over-the-counter (OTC) medication to last the entire duration of the program. This also applies to any personal travel that may be done before or after the program. If you are having difficulty procuring the full amount of medication, please alert the SFS Safety and Student Life Department immediately, as most medications cannot be replaced or refilled once in country, including common OTC medications. It is important to note that it is illegal to send medications through the mail and this will result in confiscation, criminal charges, or deportation.

While traveling, keep all medications in their original container to avoid issues through border control and customs. Note all medication on the SFS Online Medical Review Form and please alert the Safety and Student Life Department to any changes, including dosage. It is highly recommended that students do not discontinue or alter the dose of certain prescription medications before or during the program. Please consult with your prescribing physician and the Safety and Student Life Department with any questions.

Dietary Requirements

If you have a medically necessary dietary requirement, you must contact the SFS Safety and Student Life Department within one week of acceptance. All dietary restrictions or preferences (e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, etc.) should be noted on the SFS Online Medical Review Form and discussed with either your Admissions Counselor or the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. SFS is able to accommodate most dietary needs, but variety of food may be limited due to local availability, cultural practice, and cost.

Accommodating Students with 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 the programs, there are varying levels of accessibility, services, and accommodations at each SFS center.

Physical Conditioning

Field work by its very nature is physically arduous: the days are long, the traveling seldom comfortable, and creature comforts generally lacking. The program involves some strenuous hikes as part of the academic program, so physical conditioning is strongly advised. In order to withstand the pace and rigors of the program as well as any “foreign” health risks of the country, it is strongly advised that you be in good physical health. You should discuss such conditions seriously with your physician and SFS Admissions or the SFS Safety and Student Life Department to see if this SFS program will be right for you.

Existing Medical Conditions

Students must note any current or past medical conditions on the SFS Online Medical Review Form. If you have any medical conditions that could lead to sudden illness, such as allergies to foods or insect stings, asthma, chronic heart conditions, diabetes, epilepsy, or others, you must inform the SFS Safety and Student Life Department.

If you carry any critical medications (e.g. Epi-Pens, inhalers, glucagon, etc.), you must carry them with you at all times while on program.

If you have asthma, even if you have not had any issues in recent years, it is strongly recommended to bring an inhaler on program. Past students have found that their asthma can be triggered by environmental conditions (e.g. humidity, heat, dust, elevation, allergies, etc.) of certain program locations. Keep in mind, you may be exposed to allergens or environmental conditions you have not been exposed to in the past.

If you have a severe allergy or a family history of severe allergies, even if the reaction has been minor in the past, it is strongly recommended to bring two or more Epi-Pens with you on program. Due to the remote nature of the program, access to medical care can be delayed. In addition, you may be exposed to allergens that you have not been exposed to in the past, as well as the possibility of repeat exposures. Please contact the Safety and Student Life Department with any questions or concerns.

Be certain to take care of any existing medical issues before arriving in country. Due to the remote nature of the program, medical care is not always easily accessible. You may be responsible for all costs acquired to reach advanced medical care for treatment of pre-existing or non-emergency issues, including transportation and accommodations for yourself and an accompanying staff member.

Medical Care in Chile

Each SFS Center has a Student Affairs Manager (SAM) who is responsible for risk management, health, and safety on program. SAMs are certified Wilderness First Responders (WFR) and can provide initial first aid in the event of an illness or injury. If further medical care is needed, SFS staff will accompany the student(s) to the nearest and best available medical care facility. In the event of an emergency or hospitalization, SFS will contact appropriate emergency contacts as necessary.

The town of Puerto Natales has health clinics, pharmacies, and a private hospital. However, illness or injuries requiring advanced or specialty medical care would necessitate travel to Punta Arenas or Santiago. During expeditions to remote regions, access to medical care may be significantly delayed.

Students are required to cover all expenses associated with medical care which can include transportation, clinic and hospital fees, medication, of campus meals, and accommodations if necessary. Keep in mind that most insurance

companies provide international coverage on a reimbursable basis, as most foreign public or private medical care facilities do not accept insurance for payment. Therefore, **students need to carry cash and/or a high-limit credit card to pay for medical expenses up front**, and then request reimbursement when they return home.

There are some medical emergencies or conditions that may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program, including injuries and illnesses such as infectious mononucleosis, malaria, or orthopedic injuries that result in reduced mobility. Final decisions on medical withdrawal are made by SFS in conjunction with the treating physician.

Disease in Chile

SFS requires that all students consult with a travel medicine clinic or physician who can look at the personal travel itinerary and medical history to develop a health strategy for travel, including appropriate vaccinations, medications, etc.

To locate a nearby travel medicine clinic, ask the Study Abroad Office at your university for recommendations. Your university may provide these services on campus. Alternatively, you can look up nearby travel medicine clinics on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: www.cdc.gov/travel.

CDC-Recommended Vaccinations for Travelers to Chile

For a list of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommended vaccinations, visit the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/travel. **Be sure to schedule your appointment at least six weeks prior to departure, as some vaccinations require a series of doses over a specific time frame.**

Hepatitis A is a viral infection of the liver that results in jaundice and severe malaise. It is rarely fatal, but disease can be protracted, and infected persons can be ill for six weeks or more. The disease is transmitted through ingestion of food or water that is contaminated by infected fecal matter, even in microscopic amounts. Symptoms occur two to six weeks after first exposure to the virus. There are now two vaccines licensed in the United States that are extremely effective in preventing hepatitis A infection, and that are quite safe to administer. Both vaccines require two doses (the booster dose is given six to nine months after the initial dose). The initial dose, however, is effective in providing protection. The CDC recommends that all travelers to Chile receive this vaccine.

Hepatitis B is a contagious virus that is transmitted through blood, blood products, and other body fluids (such as semen). Symptoms include a sudden fever, tiredness, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, stomach pain, dark urine, joint pain, and yellowing of the skin and eyes (jaundice). Symptoms may last from several weeks to several months, or can develop into chronic hepatitis B with increased chance of liver disease and liver cancer. Travelers can become infected through unprotected sex with an infected person, injection drug use, transfusions with unscreened blood, and contaminated needles, so the CDC recommends this vaccine for travelers who might have sex with a new partner, get a tattoo or piercing, or have any medical procedures. Please keep in mind, medical procedures could be necessary due to unforeseen accidents or illness.

Rabies is a fatal viral infection that is transmitted from animals to humans through bites or scratches. The disease causes neurological symptoms that rapidly progress after a one- to three-month incubation period. In Chile, rabies is present in bats populations, which are found in high numbers throughout the region. Prevention can include choosing to receive the pre-exposure rabies vaccination prior to departing for Chile. This vaccination series consists of three vaccinations administered over 21 to 28 days, so plan ahead accordingly. The vaccination does not eliminate the need for getting a post-exposure vaccination if you are subject to a possible rabies exposure (i.e. bite or scratch from a bat). It does, however, reduce the number of post-exposure injections that are required, and eliminates the need to administer rabies immune globulin, which may not be available in the region (thus necessitating travel back to the United States). You should discuss with your doctor the advisability of receiving the pre-exposure rabies vaccination.

Typhoid fever is a serious disease caused by bacteria in contaminated food and water. Symptoms of typhoid include lasting high fevers, weakness, stomach pains, headache, and loss of appetite. Some patients have constipation, and some have a rash. Internal bleeding and death can occur but are rare. The CDC recommends that all travelers to Chile get this vaccination.

The recommendations enumerated above are specific for Chile. If you are planning to travel outside these countries, the vaccination recommendations may be different, and you should consult with your travel medicine specialist as to what additional measures may be required.

Non-Vaccine Preventable Disease in Chile

There are a number of non-vaccine preventable insect-borne diseases found in Chile and protective measures are recommended.

Diarrhea is the most common ailment that students encounter. Diarrhea can be caused by a number of different factors, including 1) the process of acclimating to a new environment or new foods, 2) stress or other emotional challenges, 3) use of certain medications, and 4) infections caused by bacteria, viruses, or parasites. Shortly after arriving in country, students participate in an orientation that explains the importance of diligent hand washing, personal hygiene, kitchen hygiene, careful food handling, and water purification. These are important preventative measures that all students are expected to closely follow throughout the full duration of the program. Students who do experience diarrhea are encouraged to inform the Student Affairs Manager or other SFS staff member so that they may receive the proper treatment, which may include oral rehydration, a bland diet, and potentially a visit to the local medical clinic for diagnostics and medication, if necessary. Prior to coming on program, some students are prescribed an antibiotic for “traveler’s diarrhea” by a home physician or travel clinic. If this is the case, it is highly recommended to consult with the Student Affairs Manager at the onset of diarrhea, prior to starting this medication. Overuse or improper dosage, attempting treatment for a non-bacterial or non-parasitic cause of diarrhea, or failure to properly complete treatment could result in a persistent or worsening condition.

Chagas is a parasitic infection that is transmitted through the feces of Triatomine bugs (aka “kissing bugs”). Symptoms can be mild or asymptomatic when first infected. However, the parasite causes long term damage to the heart muscle. Up to 30 percent of infected persons develop chronic infections that lead to serious cardiac or gastrointestinal diseases. Prevention includes keeping hygienic housing conditions (i.e., your room and working area organized and clean –Chagas bugs like dusty, dry areas), checking your mattress and bedding and washing your bed sheets on a frequent basis.

Hantavirus is a virus spread mainly via airborne transmission of rodent urine, feces, and saliva. Exposure to hantavirus can cause respiratory disease including Hantavirus Pulmonary Syndrome (HPS). Early symptoms can include fatigue, fever and muscle aches, headaches, dizziness, chills, gastrointestinal distress. Late-onset symptoms, which occur four to ten days after the initial phase of illness, can include coughing and shortness of breath. Prevention includes minimizing contact with rodents through proper sanitation.

Other Hazards in Chile

Some of the hazards associated with this SFS program and doing field work and living in Chile are described below. While SFS has tried to anticipate as many risks as possible, you may nonetheless encounter risks that are not described here.

Swimming: Recreational swimming is always optional and may be prohibited on certain programs or in certain regions due to local hazards or cultural practice. (Please see Swimming Policy).

Dogs: There is a large stray and domestic dog population in Puerto Natales. There is always potential for dogs to be aggressive and territorial. Avoid approaching stray or domestic dogs.

Motor Vehicle Accidents: Driving on roads in Chile is more hazardous than driving in the US, especially at night or during periods of heavy rains. It is also important as a pedestrian to have a heightened awareness of traffic. Do not assume pedestrians have the right-of-way. It is important to utilize only reputable and verified modes of transportation. At no time are students allowed to operate an automobile, boat, motorcycle, scooter, or other motorized vehicle. Students are not permitted to ride on motorcycles, motorbikes, or scooters at any time during the program, including Mid-Semester Break.

Please note this list is not exhaustive or complete. If you plan to travel to other areas, either inside or outside of the country, the health and safety risks may be different, and you should educate yourself and consult with your travel medicine specialist as to what additional measures may be required.

Cultural Adjustment

Defining Cultural Adjustment

Think about how you are feeling now as you prepare to go abroad with an SFS program. Are you feeling excited? Anxious? Overwhelmed? Content? Afraid?

Now, think about how you might feel when you first arrive at your host country. Will you feel high on life? Bombarded by the newness of it all? Jet-lagged? Irritated or humbled by the reality that you are unable to communicate as well as you are used to being able to?

How will your emotions and thoughts change with time after the initial high of arrival? Will you be amazed and/or frustrated by the differences between how things are done at home and how things are done at your temporary home abroad? Confronted with these differences, will you question values you held and always thought were in the “right”? Will you grow in depth of thought and sense of self? Will you be unbearably homesick and seek out a friend to talk with?

It may seem like a very long time from now, but imagine returning home after study abroad. How do you hope you have changed as a result of your time abroad? How will others see your new personal, cultural, social, and academic developments? Will it be easy to reconnect with family, friends, and your community? Will it take effort? How will you communicate your experiences and developments and help loved ones take part in an important period of your life?

The flow of emotions and experiences above describes the cultural adjustment process that many students move through before, during, and after their study abroad terms.

So, what *is* cultural adjustment? Most simply put, cultural adjustment is the process of adjusting to a different cultural context. It is the process of filtering through initially identifiable differences in eating style, language, customs, and more to discover the underlying values and assumptions that are the foundation of a certain way of life. Whether you are from the United States or from another country, encountering another way of life may entail questioning your own basic values and beliefs. Cultural adjustment may beg of you to ask the question, “Who am I?” By asking such a fundamental question and working through the answers, you can build a strong sense of self, gain more confidence in who you are, learn to identify at a basic level with people from any background, and become more accepting of others. At this point, you will have begun to develop a sense of global citizenship, a crucial key to developing a peaceful global society.

Signs of Culture Shock

Experiencing some difficulty adjusting to your new environment is normal and even important for personal development. Some students experience:

- Homesickness
- Physical symptoms such as mild colds and headaches

- Anxiety, depression, disappointment, and/or frustration
- Defensiveness toward home culture(s)
- Tendency to put the host or home culture(s) and way(s) of life on a pedestal
- Criticism toward home or host countries
- Gratitude for the chance to rethink world views and customs

Cycling through Cultural Adjustment: The “W” Curve



Based on Oberg (1960) and Gallahorn & Gallahorn (1963)

The model above puts into visual format the process of cultural adjustment previously described.

Arrival: Upon arrival, many students are exhilarated by the myriad of new sights, sounds, and smells of their host country. You may feel physically exhausted from the travel, and you may need to give your body time and care to help it adjust to the different weather, geographic conditions, food, and time schedule. During this initial period, you may experience a variety of heightened emotions.

Culture Shock: After the initial high period, you may begin to notice the many differences between your home and your temporary home abroad. Processing these differences may be difficult, and many students report emotions of anxiety, stress, confusion, homesickness, discouragement, hostility toward the local culture and customs, and even depression. You may experience physical symptoms such as colds, headaches, or stomach upsets. On the other hand, some students experience very little culture shock.

Recovery: Fear not! With effort and time, you will get your legs back under you again. You may wish to employ some of the coping strategies listed in the next section, or find your own way to regain and rethink equilibrium.

Adaptation: At this stage, students have renegotiated belief systems and “the way things are done.” You may feel at home in your residence abroad.

Returning Home: Some students find that just when they have become comfortable with their surroundings abroad, it is time to return home! Because you are traveling back to a familiar place, you may not expect to experience reverse culture shock, which mirrors the culture shock process. Many students experience re-entry culture shock more severely than they do culture shock. The best way to smooth the reverse culture shock process is to prepare for it before, during, and after your time abroad. Make sure to share your experiences and personal development with important family and friends so that they can take part in your growth! Continuous communication in a spirit of sharing (rather than expecting or needing others to understand) will greatly smooth the reentry process.

What Does It Mean To Be From Another Place?

Perhaps this is your first time visiting a foreign country for an extended period. By removing yourself from the USA or your country of origin and being confronted with difference, you may gain a greater awareness of what it means to be American, Chinese, Mexican, or whatever your nationality.

In part because of the USA's prominent media and political and economic presence, you may find that people around the world have formed viewpoints, even stereotypes about Americans.

Below are some examples of stereotypes of Americans that you might encounter in-country. Keep in mind that there are many different points of view on Americans.

- Wealthy and wasteful
- Caring about the environment
- Heavy drinkers
- Careless
- Want to help others
- Loud and dumb
- Openly friendly and kind
- The youth like to party
- Academically-oriented

As you can see, stereotypes are not always accurate, and they do not apply to every person within a culture. Making generalizations about a culture or people is normal and even useful in learning about them. However, be aware of the possible negative impact of stereotyping. Be open to and appreciative of the great differences between individuals within a population.

A Note to Women and Students from Diverse Backgrounds

What it means to identify as LGBTQIA+, a woman, a person of color, a member of a certain religious group, a participant with a disability, etc. may be very different in your host country than at home. For example, a gay student may find that the host community is much less accepting of homosexuality than his university community. Students who are accustomed to being part of the majority group at home (e.g. Caucasian students) may need to readjust to living as a minority abroad. The change may be for better or for worse, but you might not be treated or viewed in the way that you are accustomed to at home.

Please use the resources available on the Diversity & Inclusion page of our website (www.fieldstudies.org/about/diversity-inclusion) to inform yourself as you prepare for your abroad experience.

Coping with Cultural Adjustment

What are some tricks for coping with and growing through the cultural adjustment process?

- Keep a journal. Be your own best counselor and write about the experiences, emotions, and thoughts that you have.
- Take care of your physical body. Be sure to get sufficient exercise and take care of your body's nutritional needs. Get enough rest and sleep.
- Communicate. If you are feeling particularly down, approach a friend, staff member, or mentor. Sometimes just talking about difficulties you are facing makes the burden seem lighter. Many of the people surrounding you at the Center have experienced or are experiencing the same cultural adjustment process as you. There is strength and comfort in sharing!
- Step out of your comfort zone. When everything around us is new, we sometimes just want to withdraw. Although some level of withdrawal can be helpful, in the end, there is more joy in living fully than hiding from fear. Do not do anything unreasonably risky or foolish, but practice your language skills with community members. Try delicious foods you had never heard of before. Take advantage of your abroad experience, because you will not have the same exact opportunity again!
- Breathe! The simple act of inhaling and exhaling a few times will help clear your mind.

- Keep in touch with family and friends at home. Regularly sharing your experiences will help ease the reentry process. However, be aware of spending too much time on the phone or Internet to the detriment of your abroad experience.
- Remember to be grateful for what you have. A sense of gratitude makes cultural adjustment easier because of a positive outlook. You will see things in a more positive light, and those you meet will respond to you more positively because they can sense your humility and good feelings.

The above are just examples of strategies for facing cultural adjustment. There are a multitude of ways that people cope, and you may discover other strategies that work particularly well for you.