



THE SCHOOL FOR FIELD STUDIES



SEMESTER FIELD GUIDE

CHILE

CENTER FOR CLIMATE STUDIES

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**PREPARING FOR
DEPARTURE**

MEET THE SFS ENROLLMENT TEAM

As you prepare for an SFS program, you will work with a few different folks at SFS Headquarters. So, here's a quick guide for getting your questions answered!

General Questions? Our Enrollment Coordinator works with students as they submit materials through the SFS portal. You can contact them with questions about applying for SFS Financial Aid, submitting application materials, inquiries about which program is the best fit for you, or questions about the admissions process in general.

Contact the Enrollment Coordinator at admissions@fieldstudies.org.

Program specific questions or questions about your enrollment in the program? Your SFS Admissions Counselor will be your main point of contact during the admissions and pre-departure process. They will help you through the application steps, conduct your interview for admission, support you through your enrollment steps, and guide you through all travel and visa logistics. You can contact your admissions counselor with any specific questions related to this program.

Contact your admissions counselor at admissions@fieldstudies.org.

Questions about the billing process? Our student billing team works with students, schools, and families to coordinate payments for SFS programs. You can contact them with any questions about deposit payments, invoices, charges to your account, financial aid packages, billing deadlines, or loan paperwork.

Contact the billing department at billing@fieldstudies.org.

Questions about medical approval or health and safety? Our Safety and Student Life team conducts the SFS Medical Approval Process for SFS students. You can get in touch with them to ask questions about immunizations, safety in the field, managing a medical condition during your program, dietary needs and preferences, and your Magnus Health portal.

Contact the Safety and Student Life team at safety@fieldstudies.org.

Questions about learning accommodations? The Office of Academic Affairs coordinates with our staff and faculty in the field to assess options for learning accommodations. Students who have learning accommodations on their home campus should contact the Office of Academic Affairs after accepted to an SFS program, and prior to entering the field. More information can be found in the Academic Handbook for this program.

Contact the Office of Academic Affairs at academics@fieldstudies.org.

Want to learn more about the SFS HQ team? [Find the full list of the SFS team bios here!](#)

Want to learn more about the people you'll work with in the field? [Find their bios here!](#)

SFS ONLINE RESOURCES

We have many helpful resources on our website. Here are a few to save and reference:

[Admissions Overview](#)

[SFS Blog](#)

[Program Costs and Billing](#)

[SFS Financial Aid](#)

[Preparing for Departure](#)

Learn more about the SFS Center for Climate Studies: <https://fieldstudies.org/centers/chile/>

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Booking your flights

Students will work closely with their admissions counselor to arrange their travel and are responsible for the cost of these flights. **Students will receive specific travel instructions about 3-4 months prior to the start of their SFS program** – do not book flights before receiving these instructions.

Arrival to your program

SFS staff will meet students at the airport on the date and at the time specified in the travel instructions and will provide transportation to the Center. If you plan to arrive in country before the set arrival date for personal travel, please contact your admissions counselor.

SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs cancelled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power or communications.

PASSPORT AND VISA

You must have a passport to enter all the countries where you plan to travel. Make certain that your passport is valid until six months after your intended departure. You must have your valid passport in-hand four months prior to the start of the program. If you will not be able to meet this timeline, please contact your admissions counselor.

Students do not need to apply for a visa in advance and will enter the country on a Tourist visa. Your admissions counselor will provide more information about 3-4 months prior to the start of your SFS program. There will not be an additional cost associated with this visa.

Non-US citizens may require a different visa process. Please contact your SFS Admissions Counselor to discuss.

MEDICAL PREPARATION FOR THE FIELD

SFS Medical Approval Process

As part of enrollment in an SFS program, students are required to complete the SFS Medical Approval Process. This review is designed to inform SFS staff of the medical and mental health needs or accommodations that may be required. The review is not meant to exclude, but to inform and allow support systems to be put in place. Should SFS have any concerns about accommodations for a particular physical or mental health condition, the student and the student's physician or mental health provider will be contacted to discuss strategies for successful program participation.

The medical review process will be completed using a HIPAA-compliant online portal. Any forms required will be accessible via this portal and can be submitted electronically. Students will receive instructions for setting up their account after acceptance as part of the enrollment process.

No student may enter the field until final medical approval is granted by SFS personnel. This includes receipt and review of:

- **SFS Vital Health Record:** To be completed by the student through the Magnus Health Portal
- **Physical Exam and Authorization Form:** To be completed by a physician, physician's assistant, or registered nurse practitioner who is not related to the student.
- **Supplemental documentation from a medical specialist** if determined necessary by SFS. This may include information regarding counseling history and documentation of prescription medications.

As part of your medical review, you may be required to complete a phone call with one of our team members to discuss preparation and expectations for the program. The SFS Safety and Student Life team will contact you directly to schedule this call after submission of your **Vital Health Record**.

Be certain to address any existing medical issues before arriving in country. Students are responsible for informing SFS of any changes to their health status that occur after submission of the SFS medical forms. 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.

Accommodating Students with Disabilities

Students requesting physical and mental health accommodations should contact the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. Students requesting learning accommodations should contact the SFS Office of Academic Affairs, as outlined in the **Academic Handbook** for this program. SFS will work with students, home institutions, and physicians to determine the required level of accommodation and whether 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.

Accommodating Dietary Needs and Preferences

If you have a medically necessary dietary requirement, please contact the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. All dietary restrictions or preferences (e.g. gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan, etc.) should be noted on the **SFS Vital Health Record** and discussed with either your admissions counselor or the SFS Safety and Student Life Department. SFS can accommodate most dietary needs, but variety of food may be limited due to local availability, cultural practice, and cost.

Insurance

Health Insurance

Students on SFS programs are required to procure their own comprehensive health insurance, valid in the country (or countries) in which the program operates, for the full duration of their SFS program. SFS does not review individual insurance policies to ensure comprehensive international coverage; it is the students' responsibility to ensure that the insurance coverage meets the following requirements:

- Valid in the program country or countries. Keep in mind trip itineraries for any personal pre- or post-program travel.
- Provides coverage for the full duration of the program, including any personal pre- or post-program travel.

- Covers more than only emergency medical care. Look for a *comprehensive* medical insurance plan that includes coverage for basic medical care, including non-urgent illness or injury (i.e. gastrointestinal distress, ear infections, ankle sprains, etc.), laboratory tests, and pharmaceutical needs.

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

- Most domestic health insurance plans do not provide comprehensive coverage for 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 international health insurance. Please note that home universities may have their own insurance requirements for participation in study abroad.
- 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 should bring sufficient funds (i.e. a credit card with a high limit of at least \$3,000) to pay for medical expenses up front, and then request reimbursement when they return home.

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 comprehensive health insurance, valid in the country or countries in which the program operates, for the full duration of their SFS program as outlined in the previous section.**

Medical Consultation

SFS recommends that students schedule a consultation with a travel doctor or physician at least 60 days prior to program departure to complete the **Physical Examination and Authorization Form** (available through the Magnus Health Portal) and review the following topics:

Physical Conditioning

Field work by its very nature is physically arduous: the days are long, the traveling seldom comfortable, and familiar comforts generally lacking. SFS programs involve some strenuous activities, including hikes over steep and uneven terrain, open-ocean swimming, long days in the rain, hot sun, or wind. All SFS programs involve multiple hours of standing or walking during field exercises as part of the academic program. We don't require students to be Olympic athletes, but consider that these programs require physical stamina, energy, and a positive attitude!

Existing Medical Conditions

Due to the rigorous nature of the program and stress of travel, existing and chronic health issues can be triggered or exacerbated while abroad, even if currently well-managed or in remission in the US. You should discuss all medical conditions with your physician and the SFS Safety and Student Life Department to see if this SFS program will be right for you. Consult with your physician and/or specialists and inform the SFS Safety and Student Life Department of any medical conditions that could lead to sudden illness, such as allergies to foods or insect stings, asthma, chronic heart conditions, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.

- Make sure to bring and carry on your person at all times any critical medications (e.g. Epi-Pens, inhalers, glucagon, etc.).

- If you have asthma, even if you have not had any issues in recent years, it is strongly recommended to bring your inhaler (and a back-up inhaler, as these can generally not be sourced in country) 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.

Prescription and Over-the-Counter Medications

Students should bring enough over-the-counter (OTC) and prescription medication (including any prophylactic medication that may be recommended by your travel doctor or physician for travel to your program country) 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.**

Make sure to consider the following:

- Insurance companies typically do not dispense more than a three-month supply of medication, so you will need to work with both your prescribing physician and insurance provider to request a “Vacation Override” or other means to procure a supply for 100+ days.
- Supply of controlled substances and steroid medications may have additional restrictions, so we recommend starting conversations as early as possible with your prescribing physician and insurance provider.
- In the event of unprotected sexual encounters or activity, please be aware that prophylactic sexually transmitted infection (STI) medication and emergency contraception are often difficult to obtain while abroad due to availability and legal implications. Consult with your physician about options for preparedness.
- Medical marijuana is prohibited on our programs due to host-country laws, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and Transport Security Administration (TSA) restrictions. If you currently use medical marijuana, please discuss alternative options with your physician. Travel with some types of Cannabidiol (CBD) oil is also currently restricted by the FAA and TSA and may be restricted or illegal by host-country law.

While traveling, keep all medications in their original container and in carry-on luggage to avoid issues through border control and customs. List all medications on the **SFS Vital Health Record** and please alert the Safety and Student Life Department to any changes to your medication list, including dosage, as early as possible. 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.

Mental Health

Studying abroad can be an exciting and energizing time for students. It can also present myriad challenges, including adjustment to a new culture and daily routine, unfamiliarity with the local environment, forming of new relationships, and a lack of familiar support systems. In addition, SFS programs operate in remote regions with delayed access to medical care and limited or absent mental health resources.

Students with mental health conditions should discuss any concerns with their physician, mental health provider, and the SFS Safety and Student Life Department prior to participation on an SFS program. Students who undergo regular counseling or therapy should verify that their mental health provider is available via phone, email, or other means of telecommunication while the student is abroad. Keep in mind that some mental health providers have jurisdiction restrictions when it comes to client communication. It is important to check-in with your mental health provider and see what availability they may have during your time abroad. SFS will also work with students to develop a set of coping strategies that can be utilized while studying abroad, in addition to preparing them for what to expect in their individual host countries. To read more about self-care while abroad, please see “Self-Care and Wellbeing.”

Vaccinations and Prophylactic Medication

SFS does not require any specific vaccinations or prophylactic medications for participation on program with respect to logistics or programming. However, SFS strongly recommends that all students consult [the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) and a travel clinic or medical provider to determine recommended vaccinations and prophylactic medication for travel to the program country. This consultation should consider medical history, personal travel itinerary (i.e. pre- or post-program travel, mid-semester break, etc.), and regional risk factors.

SFS strongly recommends that all students are up-to-date with routine vaccinations (i.e. MMR, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, etc.) to protect themselves as well as vulnerable populations in country that may not have access to preventative vaccinations.

In addition, there are a number of non-vaccine preventable insect-borne diseases that are present in country. For up-to-date information on risk-factors, prevention, and treatment, please visit the CDC Travel webpage: <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>

Food and Water Safety

Water used for consumption and food preparation at the SFS Chile Center is safe. 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 thoroughly cooked, 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.

Altitude

If your program includes travel to higher altitudes (generally considered above 8,000 feet in elevation), please discuss preparedness, including the use of prophylactic medication and any implications considering your personal medical history (i.e. asthma, prior altitude-related illness, heart conditions, diabetes, etc.). SFS does not make recommendations on use of prophylactic medication for altitude. Please consult with your physician or travel doctor with any questions.

IDENTITY AND CULTURE IN A NEW CONTEXT

On your SFS program, you will engage with people that come from a variety of cultural contexts. Most SFS students expect to encounter differences between themselves and those from the host country culture, but don't realize that some of the most significant cultural differences they may face will be between themselves and members of their own student group. Reflecting on your own culture and identity before studying abroad with SFS can help you better navigate your experience abroad.

How do we define culture?

Culture is defined as the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors, and values of groups of interacting people. It is also a system for making meaning of things, and, as a result, we all wear cultural lenses or filters when we interpret a situation. Most of us are unaware of our own culture until we experience another.



Cultural Values

Each cultural group has a set of underlying values. These values affect our behavior and the way we perceive the behaviors of others. The table below lists a number of common U.S. values and prompts you to consider how other cultures or people might have values that differ. Of course, not everyone from the same cultural group shares the same set of underlying values in that culture. Therefore, it is helpful to think of cultural values existing along a continuum. By being open to and curious about another set of cultural values, we can connect with others more easily.

U.S. Values	Consider
Change	In the U.S., it is common to value change and novelty over tradition and the ways of the past. Do you tend to embrace change and think towards the future, or hold onto tradition and value the past? How might this impact cultural views surrounding issues like climate change?
Time and Its Control	Punctuality is valued highly in U.S. culture. Many U.S. Americans live very scheduled lives, abiding strictly by time commitments and tardiness is not accepted most U.S. contexts. In other cultures, human interaction is generally valued more than time commitments and timeliness. It may be acceptable to be 30 minutes late to a commitment if it means stopping to talk with an acquaintance on the street, or spending time with family or friends. Do you feel the pull of time in your daily life? What are some ways that a cultural difference in perception of time might impact you while abroad?
Equality	U.S. culture tends to emphasize equality over hierarchy and social status. While inequality in the U.S. certainly exists, there remains a culture of democracy, self-determination, and an expectation for equal treatment. Other cultures place a greater emphasis on hierarchy and social rank. Think of countries where there is not a democratic tradition and where it is expected to respect and honor the government, prevailing religion(s), and certain cultural beliefs. Think of how it may be different to be expected to honor certain members of society, such as a monarch or elders. In some cultures, foreigners, or specifically Westerners, may be regarded highly or given special treatment. Consider how you may need to adapt to your host culture, and how this might be different from what you are used to.
Individualism	There is a common emphasis on the individual in the U.S. There is an idea that if you – personally – work hard, you can determine your future success. There are a lot of expectations put on the self in the U.S. Think about how commonplace it is to set personal goals or focus on enriching your personal knowledge and skills. Being unique and standing out is often desired and valued. In contrast, other cultures place a greater emphasis on a sense of belonging within a group rather than standing out. Instead of self-reliance, it may be more customary to rely on advice or assistance from others. It is often expected to help others and share knowledge and resources more so than in a more individualistic culture. Where does your culture fall into this continuum? How will you navigate being in a culture that might be more collectivistic or more individualistic than you are used to?

Directness, Openness, Honesty	In the U.S., there is a tendency to express opinions, thoughts, and dissent openly and directly. U.S. culture often values openness and candor about beliefs and emotions. Other cultures may have a more indirect communication style where it is not typical to express dissent or emotions directly and confrontation is avoided. In many cultures, it is important to avoid humiliation or embarrassment in what is called “saving face.” In these cultures, people tend to express disagreement or emotion in more subtle, indirect ways. Be cognizant of how you may want to adapt your communication style while abroad. Have you considered this cultural difference before?
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Local Laws and Customs

When studying abroad, it’s important that you be prepared to take responsibility for your actions in a new place, as local laws and customs are likely different than the ones you are used to at home. The field staff will go into more detail about local laws and customs during SFS Orientation, but please consider the following:

- 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.
- Appropriate clothing that is consistent with, and respectful of, local dress may be required. Some monuments and places of worship may require certain parts of the body to be covered.
- Non-verbal communication (such as body language and hand gestures) considered harmless in your home country may be inappropriate or culturally insensitive to people in other countries.
- Local events or holidays may occur where you are traveling, and some religious events or holidays require a heightened sense of cultural awareness or specific behaviors.

You can play an active role in keeping yourself safe and successfully adjusting to a new culture by learning about local laws and culture. It is always important to practice situational awareness and is even more so when in a new place.

Your Role in the Community

During your SFS program, you are a member of several communities.

- The first is the SFS community. We will foster a supportive, stimulating learning community where our actions and behaviors are governed by a set of common values we will define as a group.
- Second, you will be part of an international research and learning community. This comprises a professional staff, local contacts, community partners, elected officials, and SFS support staff.
- Third, you will be a temporary resident to the local community. There are many occasions when you will be expected to interact with the local residents in both academic and informal settings.

Note that it is a great privilege to study in another country and be welcomed into these communities. We want to ensure that we demonstrate an awareness of this privilege and respect for the country and culture. While we will be learning about the country and its people, each of you will be an ambassador of your own culture, country, and school. SFS is a place-based program and our campuses are permanent fixtures in the community. These communities are home to our staff members who live either on-campus or nearby year-round. This is distinct from a tour or casual visit to your host country and it is important to consider how your interactions with the local community can last beyond your time abroad. Behavior that is disrespectful, illegal, or contrary to cultural norms can degrade the relationship with the community and can impede healthy and meaningful interactions for your peers, SFS staff members, and future students. Thoughtful and purposeful interactions with the members of the local community will greatly enhance your study abroad experience!

Identity

As you plan to study abroad with SFS, consider how different aspects of your identity might be perceived in a new cultural context. All countries and communities have cultural values and societal norms that are woven into the fabric of their collective identities. These norms and values are important to these communities whether we agree with them or not. You will be a guest in your host culture(s), and it is not your role to change the culture or its values. Reflecting about your own identity will help you navigate this experience.

All aspects of your identity have the potential to be impacted, challenged, and strengthened while abroad. You may find that a part of your identity that is very important to you on your home campus is not as relevant amongst your peers at SFS. Or you may find that an aspect of your identity that is less significant to you at home is an important part of how people in your host culture perceive you.

Remember that you are part of a cohort and that your identity will vary from that of your peers. Each student's background will inform their understanding of and response to a new situation. An important part of being a member of a team is supporting each other, even when you have differences of opinion or perspective.

The more open you can be to that varied experience, the more you will thrive and the better you will be able to support your peers, as well. We're in this together!

For Your Consideration

No place is 100% free of discrimination and intolerance. Every country is shaped by its respective histories, and therefore attitudes towards gender identity, sexual orientation, racial and ethnic relations, and religious diversity can differ greatly from those in the U.S.

Your identity(ies) may grant and/or deny you power and privilege with local people, as well as your fellow peers.

You may find that people in your host culture are more direct and have less concern with political correctness than in the U.S. Keep in mind that local people may have never encountered a person like you. Therefore, what seems like discrimination may simply be curiosity.

Researching the country that you will be living in can help you prepare yourself for the situations you may encounter abroad. In specific, you may want to research the following topics of the country you will be living in:

- Current political and societal issues
- Minority, majority, and plurality racial and ethnic composition
- History of racial and ethnic relations
- LGBTQIA climate
- Religious breakdown
- Cultural norms

We encourage you to connect with your SFS Admissions Counselor if you would like to talk about your identity abroad. Another great resource is to connect with a student who has participated on the program before through the Alumni Contact list. Students on the Alumni Contact list have shared topics they feel comfortable talking about, which makes connecting with a student who identifies similarly to you very easy. You can find the Alumni Contact list on your "Resources" tab in your SFS portal after you are accepted to the program, or request that your SFS Admissions Counselor email this list while you are still in the application process. We encourage you to use alumni as a resource before departure!



LIFE IN THE FIELD:

WHAT TO EXPECT

ABOUT SFS CHILE

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 few days 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. Program days can be long, and our Center is small, so we encourage you to get outside during your free time! 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, Tierra del Fuego/strait of Magellan
- **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 (Volcano Calbuco, Valdivian rainforest, Chiloe Island)
- **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

A Note on SFS Structure and Self-care

SFS programs are highly structured and we encourage you to reflect on how the SFS program will differ from your daily life on your home campus. The 6-day per week academic model is distinct from a typical college campus, and allows time for fieldwork, travel, and cultural and community activities. SFS program policies additionally make the daily student experience on an SFS program different from most home campuses. The SFS program model and policies are part of what makes the SFS experience unique and are designed to help keep students safe, healthy, and create an environment where students can have a positive experience abroad. It's important to consider how you will adjust to this shift in routine, especially as it relates to

your ability to manage self-care while abroad. You can review “**Self-Care and Wellbeing**” later in this document for a further reflection on managing self-care while on an SFS program.

It’s important to understand that the structure and policies of SFS programs are designed to facilitate student, staff, and local community member safety and well-being, create an environment where students can have a positive experience abroad, and help students manage the rigors of SFS programs. Taking the time to fully consider and understand SFS structure and policies, as well as the reasoning behind it will help you to have a positive experience abroad and promote a healthy and productive environment for all those around you. Please review **SFS Policies and Procedures** to read through the SFS program policies, behavioral expectations, and information about disciplinary action when these expectations and policies are not upheld. We encourage you to discuss any questions or concerns about the structure of your program with your SFS Admissions Counselor or SFS Safety and Student Life.

RAP: Reflection, Announcements, and Presentation

During the program each student will be asked to lead a RAP session at least twice. You may wish to bring from home any items that you’d like to use for the Reflection and Presentation portions of your session(s). The Reflection is generally something creative you’d like to share with the group such as a quote, poem, or song that helps reflect on your experience that day or throughout the program. The Presentation is an opportunity for you to share something about yourself with your fellow students. Whether you choose to teach a song, a dance, a new game, or make a presentation on a fun trip or experience you’ve had before, this is an opportunity to help the other students get to know you better. You can bring materials to help you with this presentation, as most students will make this presentation at least twice.

Community and Language

One of the ways SFS is different from many traditional study abroad options is that our programs do not follow the traditional model of cultural and language immersion.

Think about how you will experience local culture on this program. On an SFS program, you will live at a field station with your team, rather than in a homestay, local apartment, or university dorm. You and your cohort will spend much of your time together – living, working, and studying as a group. This means that you will not necessarily be eating local cuisine, speaking a local language, or navigating the local culture every day. However, we fundamentally believe that meaningful environmental research is only possible with the input of local people and in consideration of cultural history. We develop our research plans in collaboration with our community partners and stakeholders, but we do not consider it our role to make decisions on their behalf or to impose our ideas. An important part of every SFS program is to explore environmental issues within the context of the community and ecosystems we call home.

On this program you might interact with the community by spending time at local shops and cafes and through activities as part of the Language and Culture course. We will always take the lead from our community, so activities may vary term to term to reflect the needs and requests of our partners. Puerto Natales is a very quiet town during off peak tourist season (first half of the fall semester and second half of the spring semester).

Consider your exposure to the local language through this program. The language course is not intended to help you achieve fluency in the local language, but rather to give you a few tools to use to navigate the local culture and to communicate on a basic level with community members. If you have a goal to enhance your language abilities during your SFS program, it is important to take initiative: read a local newspaper, listen to local music, practice your skills when you have free time, and engage with local staff members. English is not commonly spoken in Puerto Natales, so you will have many opportunities to practice your Spanish language skills in the community. But, generally speaking, students on this program are not eating the local cuisine or engaging with the local culture every day.

Center Hours

Due to the residential nature of SFS programs, there is a curfew set for when students are required to return to campus. We will present specific information regarding Center closing hours during Orientation at the beginning of our program.

Special Religious Requirements

If you have questions regarding a religious holiday which falls during program time, please contact your Admissions Counselor immediately upon acceptance. Schedules often involve complex coordination with many parties and reservations are often made months in advance.

Mid-Semester Break

The program includes a six-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.

Mid-Semester Break and Weekends Away are characterized as “Non-Program Time.” You can read more about what this entails in **SFS Policies and Procedures**.

LIFE AT THE CENTER

Setting

Our field station is a former hostel 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, pharmacies, shops, a pizza restaurant, and the main grocery store in town. We are about a 5-minute walk from a large square, library, and a running track and soccer field. The Center is a 20-minute walk from a larger athletic complex with a pool, weight machines, etc.



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/>.

Community Living

On an SFS program you are part of a team, living and working with a small community of your fellow students and staff.

This isn't just having a roommate or a classmate. This experience is intensive and involves many hours spent together in close quarters and out in the elements. It will require patience, open-mindedness, resiliency, and cooperation. The benefit of this cohort experience is that you will have a community to support you when the going gets tough and laugh with you along the way. Center life will be both rewarding and challenging and will require you to take responsibility for being an active participant at the center and a supportive team member to your peers.

Chores

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 beautiful. Specific chore responsibilities and schedules will be shared with students during orientation but may include cleaning up after meals and general upkeep of the Center.

The Field Station

Housing

All student dorm rooms are on the second story of the field station. Each room houses 2-4 students in twin sized bunk beds. There is a closet for students to share and other storage cabinets, desks, and an ensuite bathroom with a sink, toilet, and shower. The rooms are well lit but are small and have limited storage, so be ready to share this space and use your luggage for storage.

Laundry

There are two washing machines and two dryers at the center for students to use. Laundry detergent is provided.

Other Facilities

In addition to student housing, the first floor of the center is home to a kitchen and dining area, classroom, faculty and staff offices, some staff housing, and a student lounge with a library. Please bring books you are willing to donate! The student lounge has board games and a TV for movie nights. Students do not have access to the kitchen, but the student lounge has a microwave, toaster, fridge, tea kettle, and coffee maker so that you can keep some of our own food and prepare snacks.

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.

Food and Cuisine

Breakfast, lunch, and dinner will be served at the center 6 days a week. On your free days (typically Sundays, but not always!), you'll have the option to eat out in town or the staff will leave some basic food in the student fridge (rice, hard boiled eggs, leftovers from meals during the week, soup, etc.) Most students choose to eat out on their free days, so it is good to budget for this.

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 rice, soup, a protein option (meat and non-meat), potatoes, a fresh salad with tomato and cucumber, beans, sautéed vegetables, pastas, and dessert. The food is generally not very spicy – there will be dried chili pepper available if you want to add some spice, but we also recommend bringing some hot sauce from home if that is a staple in your diet!

As mentioned previously, 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.

Specialty Diets

SFS is able to accommodate most dietary needs and preferences, but students will find that the variety of food may be limited due to local availability, cultural practice, and cost. Additionally, when away from the Center, options may be further limited. For example, specialty food products high in protein, such as tofu, quinoa, dark leafy greens, and raw fruits and vegetables may not be readily available on campus. Rice and cooked vegetables comprise many alternative meals for students with specialty diets. Therefore, SFS recommends bringing snacks (i.e. protein powder, protein bars, nut butters, trail mix, etc.) to supplement dietary variety.

For students with a medically necessary dietary requirement, please refer to the "Medical Preparation for the Field" section of this guide.

Exercise and Recreation

You will have several options for exercise while in Puerto Natales! Students can run through town and along the water. There is a running track and soccer field about a 5-minute walk from our Center. The Center has a few yoga mats and hand weights for students to share. If you plan to use a yoga/exercise mat every day, you may wish to bring your own from home or purchase one locally. We also recommend that students bring resistance bands or any other portable exercise equipment they may want.

There is a larger athletic complex about a 20-minute walk away with free stationary bikes and weights. There is a small fee to use the pool at the athletic complex and they require swim caps and goggles, so plan ahead if you'd like to use that. You will need to be flexible while traveling – downloaded apps and planning to do yoga and other bodyweight exercises are a great idea while staying in hotels on the road.

TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATION

Computers

Students need to bring their own laptops with them for use during the program. A tablet alone is not sufficient, and Chromebooks or devices that rely on Internet connectivity are not recommended. Your laptop should contain Microsoft Office or have the ability to export and receive documents that are compatible with Microsoft Office. Your laptop also must have a USB port.

Computer Care

Due to the varying weather conditions at our field stations, electronic devices are subjected to a much harsher environment than they normally operate in. Back up your data regularly onto a USB or external hard drive in the event your computer fails during your program. Internet is not always available, so do not plan to rely on the cloud for storage!

Electrical Appliances

Outlets will require type C outlet adapters (see image below). Bring several as these are easy to lose! These are available for purchase locally, as well. 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.



Internet

Wireless internet is available at the Center. Students are permitted to use the internet for academic and personal use in accordance with the internet policies outlined in the **SFS Policies and Procedures**. The internet has limited bandwidth and is shared amongst students and staff.

Part of living at a field station entails working with limited resources, including the Internet. You should expect internet connection to be slow and intermittent, so you should not expect to use the Internet in the same way you do at home. There may be times during the semester when you do not have access to the Internet. Limited access requires a good deal of patience, and you should get ready to unplug!

Things to think about:

- Set up WhatsApp and/or other messaging apps **before** you leave for your program
- If any of your apps/accounts require two-factor authentication, get that taken care of before you leave home. If you don't have an international plan on your phone, you won't be able to receive a phone call or SMS text to verify your login!
- Download offline playlists, as you won't be able to stream music from Spotify, Apple Music, Pandora, YouTube, etc.
- Bring an external hard drive with your favorite movies and shows, as you won't have access to streaming platforms like Netflix, Hulu, etc.
- Set communication expectations with your family and friends at home – your schedule and access to internet will change often.

Communication with Home

Messaging Apps

The most convenient and affordable way to communicate with your family and friends at home is via WiFi-based messaging such as WhatsApp, iMessage, GroupMe, Facebook Messenger, and email.

Students are welcome to bring their personal smartphones to use on the WiFi at the center. Please remember that many apps require a text or call verification code during the setup process, so we recommend that you install and set up any apps you intend to use prior to departure.

Remember that access to video chat will be limited based on Internet speed and availability!

Phones

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.

In addition to the cell phone that SFS will issue to you, you may purchase a SIM card from a local provider if your cell phone is unlocked. This will allow you to access the Chilean network on your phone from home. SIM cards are usually less than \$10 USD and you can purchase a sufficient amount of data/minutes for about \$10/month.

A third option is to purchase 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 or internet** 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
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. Letters/postcards typically take about 3 weeks to arrive from the US.

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.

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS IN THE FIELD

SFS Staff and Student Affairs Manager

Due to the remote location of many SFS field stations, several SFS field staff are certified in Wilderness First Aid (WFA) and trained on how to respond in the case of an emergency. In addition, each SFS program is staffed with a full-time residential Student Affairs Manager (SAM) who is the primary medical responder and student support personnel on campus. The SAM is certified as a Wilderness First Responder (WFR) and in Mental Health First Aid; they also receive training in sexual assault first response. In addition to their role as a medical responder, the SAM also coordinates program logistics, engages students in community outreach, advises and counsels students on group dynamics and adjusting to life abroad, and conducts in-country risk assessment and management.

Orientation

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. The goal of orientation is to:

- Familiarize students with SFS-wide and campus-specific policies and procedures
- Introduce students to potential risks and hazards inherent in the program and its location
- Introduce students to potential risks and cultural norms of the local community
- Build foundations for good group dynamics and a functional student community
- Introduce a sustainability contract
- Help students understand their role in conservation and community relations on campus
- Foster self-awareness

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 resources may be helpful to you in this research:

- Bureau of Consular Affairs: www.travel.state.gov
- U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>
- CIA World Fact Book: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html
- Diversity Abroad: <https://www.diversitynetwork.org/page/publications>

24-Hour Emergency Hotline

SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency hotline while students are abroad, and during their travels to the program. If a parent or guardian needs to urgently contact a student in the field, an emergency call can be made to this **emergency hotline at 978.219.5113**. When prompted, leave a message including your name and phone number. You can expect to receive a call back from the SFS Safety and Student Life Department within one hour. For non-emergency inquiries while a student is in the field, please e-mail safety@fieldstudies.org.

Medical Care on Program

SFS maintains a detailed Risk Assessment and Management Plan for each Center, which outlines country risks and response protocols, including local, national, and international medical facilities and their treatment capabilities. These plans ensure that SFS staff are always aware of the closest and most capable medical facility in their current vicinity and the protocols outline the best route for medical care access. If a student requires medical attention during a program, the Student Affairs Manager (SAM) on campus will assess the illness or injury and determine next steps (i.e. first aid, monitoring, medical attention, etc.). If a visit to a medical care facility is needed, an SFS staff member will assist in facilitating care and accompany the student to the appointment. Please be aware that there may be times when access to medical care may be delayed or unavailable, such as during travel or on expedition. Students are responsible for all incidental expenses, including medical costs, transportation, accommodations, etc., incurred by all parties involved. Some medical emergencies or conditions, including injuries and illnesses that cannot be supported in the field, may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program. Final decisions on medical withdrawal are made by SFS.

Mental Health Support

SFS is partnered with Morneau Shepell to provide students with My Student Support Program (My SSP). This program provides 24/7 mental health and wellness support in the form of chat, phone, and video that connect students with Student Support Advisors. It also provides wellness tips and reminders that can be a helpful source of support while adjusting to new routines, roles, and responsibilities while abroad. The resource is accessible via the My SSP App, which can be downloaded for free in the App store or by visiting the [My SSP website, https://us.myissp.com/Home/UniversitySearch](https://us.myissp.com/Home/UniversitySearch). Students will have a full introduction to the resource during their in-country program orientation but are encouraged to download and explore the App or website prior to departure. It is helpful to complete the APP profile before departure and accept the push notifications.

This resource can be used for both immediate and ongoing consultations during a student's time abroad. However, MySSP is meant to be a supplemental resource during the program. Students should work with the SFS Safety and Student Life Department and their home mental health provider to make a support plan to manage mental health while abroad.

Sexual Health and Wellness

When it comes to sexual health and wellness or relationships during your SFS program, please consider the following:

- The ramifications that a short-term relationship may have on small residential campus or within the local community. These relationships can have long-term effects on local communities that can last beyond your time abroad.
- The current dialogue about and understanding of consent in the U.S. often does not apply in other cultures.
- If you decide to engage in sexual interactions during your program, use protection (e.g. condoms/dental dams).
- Prophylactic sexually transmitted infection (STI) medication and emergency contraception may not be available in the remote locations in which we operate.
- Students who feel subjected to sexual harassment should walk away from any situation that makes them uncomfortable without concern for being culturally inappropriate. Students should report harassment or assault to any SFS staff member or HQ representative with whom they feel comfortable.
- In the case of a sexual assault, SFS will make every effort to support a student. This includes access to medical care, the option to report to the local law enforcement, and identifying support systems and additional resources. Local laws, definitions, and legal implications often differ from those in the US. Different laws and limited availability of resources such as rape kits can be complicating factors in responding to a report of sexual harassment or sexual assault in foreign countries.

Self-Care and Wellbeing

Study abroad can be an exciting time for personal reflection and growth. However, the adjustment to new routines, relationships, and cultural environments, while away from your usual support systems, can be challenging especially if you do not take time for self-care. Self-care is an essential tool for maintaining good mental, emotional, and physical health and wellbeing during your time abroad. As you prepare for your SFS program, take time to consider how you might react to challenges that you encounter. Do you have self-care practices that you use at home during times of stress or transition? For example, do you journal? Create art? Exercise? Go for a long drive in the car? The ways you manage stress, take care of yourself, or find joy are your coping mechanisms. Consider that some of these outlets may not be available to you while you are abroad on an SFS program. For example:

- **Communication with support systems.** Limited internet connectivity, unexpected power outages, and busy academic and travel schedules can reduce the frequency and ease with which you are able to contact family, friends, pets, mentors, counselors, etc. If you currently talk to a mental health provider, and plan to stay in touch while abroad, this limited connectivity can pose a challenge. Similarly, talk to your family and friends to figure out the best communication plan (i.e. WhatsApp, calling card, etc.) and remember that you may not be able to be in touch as frequently as you are on your home campus
- **Social media.** Limited internet bandwidth can make it difficult to engage with others through pictures and videos over social media platforms. Upload speeds are significantly slower and, at times, not possible. This can be a source of stress for students who are used to constant connections, and can cause frustration, irritability, sadness, and anxiety. What other ways can you communicate with others about your study abroad experience? For example, setting an

expectation with friends and family that you will update a blog might reduce a feeling of stress to provide social media updates in real time.

- **Privacy and time alone.** On campus, it may not be possible to find a private spot to rest and recharge daily. On a residential campus, there will be a lot of interaction with your peer group (i.e. sharing meals, attending classes, studying, recreational time, etc.). Think of ways that you can create some space for yourself when you are unable to physically distance yourself from others. Perhaps using headphones or stringing up a hammock can provide similar space.
- **Off-campus transportation.** Access to transportation may be limited and you will not be permitted to operate vehicles (including cars, motorboats, motorcycles, etc.) at any time while on program. Think about how this limited mobility might impact coping mechanisms that you use at home, such as taking yourself for a long drive.
- **Solo runs or hikes.** While the locations of most SFS campuses allow for regular exercise, it may look different from your normal routines at home. For example, SFS campuses do not have athletic facilities or equipment such as treadmills or weights. You will be required to use the buddy system when exercising off campus. (For more information about the SFS Off-Campus Policies in **SFS Policies and Procedures**). While away from the SFS center, it may not be feasible to find time or space for recreational exercise. SFS encourages students to be flexible with their exercise routines. Students are encouraged to bring compact workout equipment, such as resistance bands, for use during the program. Bringing downloaded exercise videos (i.e. yoga, pilates, etc.), using apps that can be accessed offline, coaching one another through favorite workouts or playing a pick-up game of soccer or frisbee can be creative and fun ways to stay active.

When you do not engage in self-care during times of stress, you may be more apt to turn to unhealthy coping mechanisms, which can include risk-taking behaviors such as increased alcohol consumption, inappropriate or unhealthy relationships, rule-breaking, or resistance to structure.

This phenomenon is articulated by psychologist Dr. William Glasser as “Choice Theory.” Choice Theory holds that behavior is driven by an attempt to fulfill five basic needs: security, love, power, freedom, and fun. If one or more of these behaviors is not being met, then you may be more likely to act out in other aspects of life. For example, if you feel “power” is not met due to a lack of autonomy in a new, unfamiliar environment, you may seek to increase levels of “fun” by drinking to excess when you may otherwise not. It is important to understand that these types of behaviors can have more serious repercussions while abroad, due to unfamiliarity with the local culture, environment, and local laws and customs. Risky student behavior can put you and others in dangerous or unsafe situations disrupt the ability of staff and students to perform research. and/or have adverse impacts on the local community.

Managing Social Drinking

If drinking alcohol is part of how you socialize with friends, this will remain an option to you during your time abroad at local restaurants and bars in your free time. According to the SFS Alcohol Policy, SFS maintains dry campuses, and alcohol consumption is not permitted at the field station. More information about this policy can be found in SFS Policies and Procedures.

If you do choose to consume alcohol, we ask that you do so in moderation. Situational awareness and understanding of local cultures are important factors in reducing risk in certain situations. In some cultures, alcohol abuse is a systemic problem in the community. Therefore, over-indulgence of alcohol by SFS students can be viewed negatively by the community. It is always important to demonstrate respect and gratitude towards the local community by maintaining respectful behavior.

Excessive consumption of alcohol can reduce your vigilance, lessen your awareness or response to cultural nuances or faux pas, and possibly lead to black outs, injury, assault, abuse, reckless behavior, and impaired judgement and decision making. To mitigate these risks, it is important to consume alcohol in moderation, pay attention to how much you consume, hydrate, make sure you do not drink on an empty stomach, keep an eye on your drink at all times, do not accept drinks that you did not see being opened or prepared in front of you, maintain a buddy system, and practice bystander intervention.

This topic will be covered more in SFS Orientation during the first week of the program. Students who anticipate challenges managing alcohol consumption abroad should discuss with the SFS Safety and Student Life department prior to departure and can continue to seek support from their Student Affairs Manager (SAM) during their program.



PACKING GUIDE

PACKING TIPS

How to Read the Packing List

You will see two sections of the packing list. The first section includes required items that are necessary for the program. The second section is comprised of suggestions and recommendations from previous students and staff in the field. Remember that everyone's needs and preferences are different, so some of these items may not be essential for you! You can usually find some good deals on gear from 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!

Luggage

SFS does not have a specific policy regarding how much luggage students should bring for their program and does not have a preference regarding wheeled or non-wheeled luggage. Alumni recommend using packing cubes to save space and keep your belongings organized. Remember that you'll need to navigate one or more airports with your luggage, so make sure you bring only what you can maneuver yourself! There are some notes regarding backpacks in the packing list below, and your longest continuous trip away from the center is about 8 days long, so having a variety of bags and packs is ideal.

Storage Space

Due to space limitation, and insurance and liability issues, students are not permitted to store personal belongings at the center before or after the SFS program dates.

Wear and Tear

Make sure all equipment is in good shape before leaving – check for leaks, broken straps, jamming zippers, etc. Your gear will undergo heavy use, so bring anything you might need to take good care of it like patch/sewing kits, etc.

Culture and Clothing

Modesty while experiencing another culture is always wise and culturally sensitive, however around the field station itself you do not need to be as modest as you do when you interact with the wider community. A minimum of 3-inch seam is required of all shorts worn in town. More conservative dress is required when visiting local schools, churches, and government buildings. Shoulders must be covered when working in the kitchen in accordance with health code regulations.

Consider your impact!

As you pack, please consider the impact of the products that you bring with you to your program. Think about both the ingredients and packaging of what you bring. Plastic waste, for example, is incredibly detrimental to the ecosystem and waste management in remote locations is quite difficult. Consider replacing bottled products with products that come in bars or jars, such as shampoo and deodorant.

We highly encourage/require biodegradable soaps, shampoos and conditioner. Conventional soaps and shampoos can have a significant impact on the environment. As you consider biodegradable options, remember that not all soaps and shampoos labeled "natural" are biodegradable. Brands that are typically biodegradable include Jason's Natural, California Baby, Kiss My Face, Nature Gate-Rainwater, Dr. Bronners, Tom's of Maine, Desert Essence and some Aveda and Garnier products.

To keep your single-use plastic/paper consumption to a minimum, think about bringing a reusable shopping tote, metal straw, cloth napkins and other items.

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! Your longest trip without access to laundry will be 8 days, so plan accordingly.

PACKING LIST: REQUIRED ITEMS

Clothing

- 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 – essential!!
- Leggings are okay to wear! They are useful for layering, exercise, etc.
- Athletic shorts for running, soccer, etc.
- 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. Good to also have a mix of synthetic fabrics and cotton.
- Outerwear:
 - Insulated coat (down or synthetic)
 - Wool or fleece sweaters
 - Waterproof (not just water resistant) rain jacket – test this out on a rainy day or in the shower! This is a super important piece of gear to keep you comfortable in the field.
 - Wool or fleece hat, scarf/neck warmer/buff, and gloves. Past students recommend waterproof gloves!
- Long underwear and/or base layers to wear under your hiking pants and shirts. Winter in Patagonia is cold and windy.
- 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.
- Cozy and comfortable lounge clothes to wear around the Center. Past students recommend cotton sweatshirts, sweatpants, socks, and slippers.
- Normal clothes to wear around town – Puerto Natales is a small city with cute cafes and restaurants, etc. so you will want some regular “street” clothes.
- Pajamas
- Sun hat (baseball or wide-brimmed)
- Sunglasses

Footwear

- Hiking boots that go over your ankle and have a hard sole. Waterproof boots are required as some field work will be done in wet environments. Be sure to break in your boots in before the program.
- Sneakers for running, walking, soccer, trail running etc.
- Casual shoes to wear around the Center, in town, or while camping. You will want a break from your hiking boots!
- Sandals or flip flops for around the Center and in town. You may want flip flops to wear in the shower while traveling, as well.

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. A heads up from past students – Dr. Bronner’s and Vaseline are not available locally.
- It is easy to purchase tampons and pads locally (there is a pharmacy next door to the Center. You might also consider using a menstrual cup as an alternative to reduce plastic waste.
- Sunscreen (can also be purchased locally)
- Any necessary over-the-counter medications or prescriptions in enough supply for full duration of program and any additional personal travel – anything you use regularly like ibuprofen, allergy medication, anti-diarrheals, etc. It is hard to find cold medicine locally, so bring Dayquil, Nyquil, cough drops etc. 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).
- 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 (Dramamine, gin-gin candies) even if you normally do not experience motion sickness.
-

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, the warmer the better!) for the camping trip
- Sleeping pad for the camping trip – highly recommend an insulated pad
- Laundry bag with your name on it!
- 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!

For the Field and Classroom

- Backpacks:
 - Backpack that is large enough to hold 2-3 nights worth of gear (sleeping bag, clothes, toiletries). Students and staff recommend a 35-55L backpacking pack.
 - Smaller day pack for field work and hiking – something around 15-30L is recommended.
 - All packs should have hip and chest straps for more comfortable weight distribution and waterproof pack covers!
- Headlamp
- Binoculars
- Waterproof stuff sacks or sturdy plastic bags. Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well!
- Notebooks, pens and pencils (available locally but with a limited selection)
- There will be many rainy days in the field, so Write-in-the-rain brand notebooks with pencils are highly recommended! You can find these on Amazon.
- Tupperware/Rubbermaid container and reusable zipper pouches for packed lunches and snacks
- 2-3L of water storage (bottles or a bladder, whatever you prefer).
- 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.

PACKING LIST: ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED ITEMS

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

Food & Drink:

- Any special snack foods/candy bars 😊
- Protein bars and/or powder as these are expensive locally
- Vitamin C Supplements or powder 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

Entertainment & Exercise:

- Yoga mat if you are picky, but we have some at the Center and they can be purchased locally!
- Any other sports items you do not want to purchase locally. We have a soccer ball, volleyball, and ball pump at the Center. Cleats/rugby balls/other more specialized items are harder to find in stores.

- Swimsuit, swim cap, and goggles if you plan to use the community pool in town
- Entertainment for nights at the Center. Card games, board games, books, movies, music, watercolor paints, musical instruments, knitting...things to pass the time!

Comfort & self-care:

- Personal First Aid Kit with plenty of anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Band-Aids, tape, tweezers, etc.
- Small repair kit with a needle, thread, safety pins, etc.
- Baby wipes and a travel bottle of hand sanitizer (can be purchased locally)
- Journal
- Pictures/something to remind you of home

Time spent in the field/in town:

- Water-resistant watch
- Reusable shopping tote, metal straw, cloth napkins, and other items to keep your single-use plastic/paper consumption to a minimum!
- Camera
- Small bag/purse for around town
- Pocketknife – make sure this is packed in your checked luggage!
- Trekking poles – we highly recommend at least one!

A NOTE ON FAA AND TSA REQUIREMENTS

When packing, please make sure to check Federal Aviation Association (FAA) and Transport Security Administration (TSA) for the latest prohibited items, which may include electronic cigarettes, vaping devices, medical marijuana, or cannabis-infused products, such as Cannabidiol (CBD) oil. You can find this information at <https://www.faa.gov/>.

Electronic Cigarettes and Vaping Devices

The FAA prohibits these devices in checked bags. Battery-powered E-cigarettes, vaporizers, vape pens, atomizers, and electronic nicotine delivery systems may only be carried in the aircraft cabin (in carry-on baggage or on your person).

Over forty countries have banned or have some restrictions on the use, sales, or importation of vaping devices, including SFS host countries of Australia, Bhutan, Cambodia, Chile, and Panama. It is therefore critical to check your host-country laws before possessing, purchasing, or using electronic cigarettes or vaping devices while in country. Keep in mind that some countries do not have written law or policy regarding vaping devices but may target individuals using these products based on lack of recognition of their use and purpose.

Medical Marijuana

Possession of marijuana and cannabis-infused products, including some Cannabidiol (CBD) oils, is currently illegal under federal law. Federal authorities do not recognize medical marijuana laws or cards from U.S. states where it is legal, so travelers with any amount of medical marijuana can be arrested and detained in U.S. airports. Similarly, marijuana is illegal in most countries. Students with a U.S. state-issued medical prescription can be arrested, prosecuted, and deported if in possession of any illegal substance, including marijuana and cannabis-infused products.

Students should note that products containing or made from hemp with overt labeling may not be permitted on international flights.

SFS does not allow possession of any drugs or medications that are illegal, as defined by U.S. federal and host-country laws. **The SFS Drug Policy prohibits possession or use of marijuana for the full duration of the SFS program, including free time and weekends away.**

We can't wait to meet you and look forward to having you join us in the field!

Stay engaged with SFS while you prepare for your program:

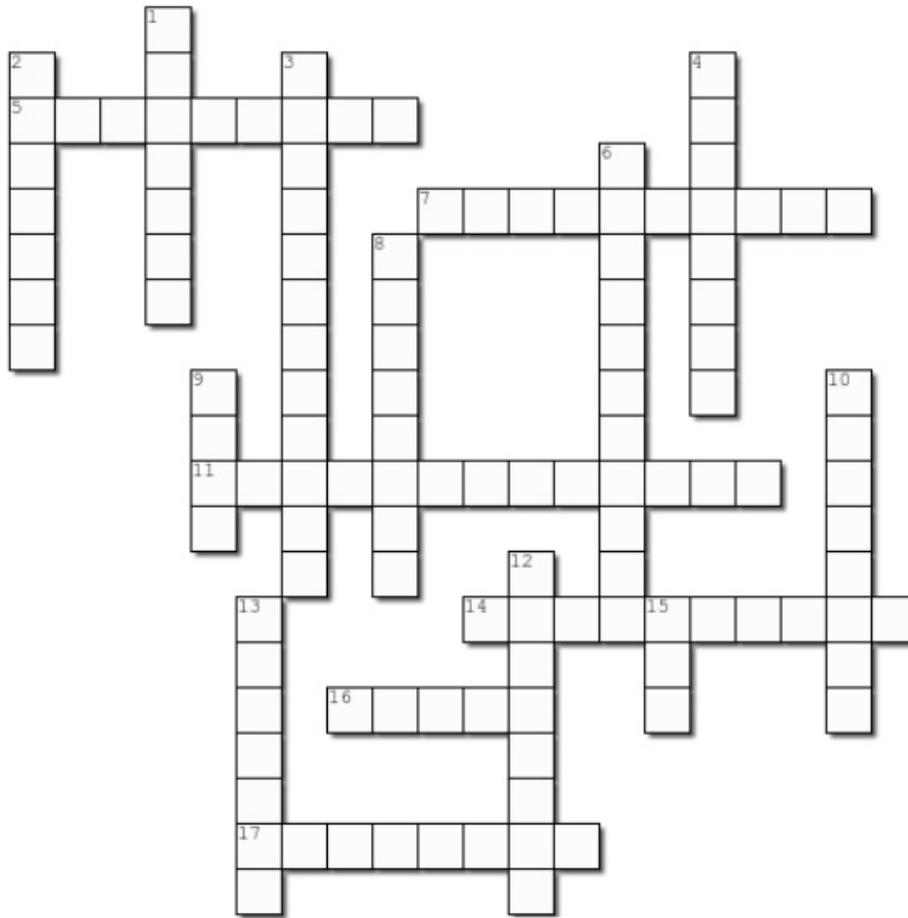
- Keep up with the SFS [News from the Field](#) blog
- Follow SFS and SFS Chile on Instagram: [@thesfs](#)/[@thesfs chile](#)

Didn't find what you were looking for? Check the following resources for more information:

- **Financial Planner for Chile:** all program costs, including expected out-of-pocket costs, information about currency, and money exchange
- **Academic Handbook for Chile:** information about the environmental issues of the region, SFS's approach to grading and assessment, transcripts, academic policies, using research data for a thesis)
- **Travel Guide for Chile:** specific information about booking flights, visas, arrival to the program. Emailed to enrolled students 3-4 months before the program.
- **SFS Policies and Procedures Manual:** behavioral, administrative, medical, operational, and financial policies

And if you're looking to pass the time, try your hand at this SFS-themed crossword!

Life in the Field



Across

- 5. neighbors, partners - the people you'll meet
- 7. pl. might cause an itch
- 11. large scale impact studied at every center
- 14. rain or waves won't stop me
- 16. solution for mid-afternoon grumbles
- 17. in the lab or in the field

Down

- 1. porch or tree hangout spot
- 2. puts the S in STEM
- 3. variety of life
- 4. stamped and signed from far away
- 6. lasting , balanced, a goal for our future
- 8. substitute for night vision
- 9. meal staple
- 10. can't leave home without it
- 12. carries all the things you'll need in the field
- 13. solar consequences
- 15. abbv. daily meeting