



THE SCHOOL FOR FIELD STUDIES



SUMMER FIELD GUIDE

CHILE

CENTER FOR CLIMATE STUDIES

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STAY ENGAGED

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- Follow us on Instagram: [@theSFS/@theSFS_chile](#)
- Want to learn more about the SFS team? [Find the full list of the SFS team bios here!](#)



LIFE IN THE FIELD:

WHAT TO EXPECT

SFS CHILE CENTER: CENTER FOR CLIMATE STUDIES

- The center sits alongside the jagged peak of Cerro Dorotea and the deep blue waters of the Señoret Channel as the gateway to Torres del Paine National Park
- Located in the ring of fire, Patagonia’s stunning, snow-covered volcanic range presents an unmatched opportunity to study complex geological and seismic processes
- The fragile ecosystem is especially vulnerable to impacts of climate change – unpredictable storms, glacial melt, shifting temperatures, fires, and droughts
- This rugged landscape is home to penguins, foxes, sea lions, and guanaco.

Academic Foci

- Winter ecology
- Conservation challenges posed by climate change and resource extraction
- Southern hemisphere high-latitude indigenous cultures
- Socio-ecology, conservation, and globalization

SUMMER I

The Patagonian Winter

Weather and Climate

It will be winter in Patagonia, so be prepared with layers. Temperatures range from 27-41°F with breezes up to 15 mph.

Setting

A former hostel in the small-town Puerto Natales.



PUERTO NATALES	PUNTA ARENAS	SANTIAGO
5-minute walk	3-hour drive	4-hour flight
Population ~19,000	Population ~144,000	Population ~6,900,000
Nearest town. Doctor, pharmacy, library, soccer field/running track, restaurants, cafes, and supermarkets	Southernmost city in Chile. Houses Tourists on their way to Antarctica.	Capital city. Advanced medical care.

Facilities

HOUSING	OTHER FACILITIES
<p>8 rooms, 2-4 students per room in twin sized bunk beds</p> <p>Shared closet, storage cubbies, and desks</p> <p>Each room has a private bathroom with showers hot water and a western style toilet.</p>	<p>Common room with with games, TV, and kitchen supplies (microwave, stove/oven, toaster, fridge, tea kettle and coffee maker).</p> <p>Kitchen, living room, dining area, classroom, staff offices, student housing and some staff housing.</p> <p>Two washing machines (detergent provided) and two dryers.</p> <p>There are 2 small outdoor spaces within the center, but parks are nearby.</p>

Food

- A cook prepares 3 meals a day, 6 days a week. On the cook's day off, staff will leave basic meal supplies in the student fridge that students will be able to prepare in the student kitchen, or you can choose to eat out in town.
- Example breakfast: eggs, toast, oatmeal, cereal, and fruit.
- Example lunch/dinner: Rice, soup, salad, potatoes, beans, sauteed vegetables, pastas, a protein option (meat and non-meat), and dessert.
- Snacks between meals include bread, peanut butter, jelly, and butter.
- Meals outside the center while traveling are very meat heavy, and vegetable light.
- SFS can accommodate most dietary needs and preferences, but variety of food may be limited due to local availability and cost. SFS recommends bringing vitamins, protein powder or bars, nuts and nut butters, your favorite snacks, etc.

Exercise

- Basic weights, yoga mats, a soccer ball, and a volleyball are available at the center and there are multiple gyms in town
- Soccer field/Running/bike track nearby in town and can run through town along water when weather permits
- Swimming lanes (with use of swim cap and goggles) and gym available in town with monthly membership

Community

You will live at a field station, rather than a homestay, local apartment, or university dorm. You will spend most of your time with your cohort 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 research is only possible with the input of local people and in consideration of cultural history. We always take the lead from our community, so community engagement may vary each term to reflect the requests of our partners.

Chores

Students and staff alike are expected to do their own dishes and to engage in keeping the center beautiful. Specific chore responsibilities and schedules will be shared during orientation.

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 share these specific times during orientation.

Electrical Appliances

The electrical voltage in Chile is 220 (U.S. uses 120). Check all electrical devices for "Input: 100-240." If it says something like 100-120, you need a voltage converter.

Chile uses plug type C (U.S. uses A and B). All students will need to buy plug adaptors for their electronics.

Internet

Wireless internet is available at the center, but you should expect slow and intermittent connection. SFS reserves the right to limit internet activities occurring on our servers. This includes, but is not limited to, prohibiting streaming or downloading audio or video content for example video calls or subscription-based streaming services.

Computers

Students need to bring their own laptops with Microsoft Office (or the ability to open Microsoft files) and USB port.

Electronic devices are subjected to a much harsher environment than normal. In particular, Apple products do not fare well in high humidity and are more difficult to repair or replace locally. Please take precautions to protect your device.

Phones

Students are provided with local phones and/or local sim cards. Students are responsible for maintaining credit on their phone to communicate with staff and peers.

Mail

- Packages are not permitted to be sent to the center
- Average one-way travel time for mail from the U.S. to Chile is 21 days
- No mail can be sent the last three weeks of the program, as you will not receive it! Mail will not be forwarded.

Letters should be sent to:

Student name, SFS Center for Climate Studies
P.Arauco 779, Puerto Natales, Chile

HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

24-hour Emergency Hotline

SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency hotline while students are abroad. If a parent or guardian needs to urgently contact a student in the field, call 978.219.5113.

Student Health & Wellness Manager

Each center has a full-time Student Health & Wellness Manager (SHAWM) who is the primary medical responder and student support personnel on campus.

- Certified as a Wilderness First Responder (WFR)
- Trained in sexual assault first response
- Advises and counsels students on group dynamics and adjusting to life abroad
- Conducts in-country risk assessment and management
- Also coordinates program logistics and engages students in community outreach

Orientation

Upon arrival to campus, students participate in an orientation about local community and culture, daily center operations, and relevant risks and hazards. Prior to arrival on program, SFS recommends students understand the risks associated with travel in a foreign country.

Medical Care

SFS maintains a detailed risk assessment and management plan which outlines risks and response protocols, including local, national, and international medical facilities and their treatment capabilities. These plans ensure that staff are always aware of the best route for appropriate medical care.

If a visit to a medical care facility is needed, a SFS staff member will 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. Some medical emergencies or conditions 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).

- Downloaded the free app in your app store or by visiting the [My SSP website](#)
- Provides 24/7 mental health and wellness support by chat, phone, and video
- My SSP is a supplemental resource. Students should work with their mental health provider to make a support plan.

Self-Care and Wellbeing

Study abroad can be amazing 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. The ways you manage stress, take care of yourself, or find joy 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 schedules can reduce the frequency and ease with which you are able to contact family, friends, counselors, etc. or post to social media. Talk to your family, friends, and mental health provider prior to departure to figure out a communication plan and to reduce the stress of providing updates in real time.
- **Privacy and time alone.** 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.). It may not be possible to find a private spot to rest and recharge daily. Think of ways that you can create some space for yourself when you are unable to physically distance yourself from others such as using headphones.
- **Solo runs or hikes.** While SFS campuses allow for regular exercise, it may look different from your normal routines. For example, you will be required to use the buddy system when exercising off campus for the first week and will always carry their SFS phones. Students will still need to use the buddy system after dark during the duration of the program (see SFS policies and procedures). Additionally, while away from the center, it may not be feasible to find time or space for exercise. Think of how you can be flexible with your exercise routines.

Sexual Health and Wellness

When it comes to sexual health and wellness during your program, please consider:

- The ramifications that a short-term relationship may have on a small residential campus or within the community
- The current dialogue and understanding of consent in the U.S. do not always apply in other cultures
- If you decide to engage in sexual interactions, use protection
- Medication for sexually transmitted infections and emergency contraception may not be available
- If you feel subjected to sexual harassment, you should walk away from any situation that makes you uncomfortable without concern for being culturally inappropriate. You can report harassment or assault to any SFS staff member or HQ representative with whom you feel comfortable.
- In the case of a sexual assault, SFS will make every effort to support you. This includes access to medical care, the option to report to 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.

Managing Social Drinking

If drinking alcohol is part of how you socialize with friends, this will remain an option during your days off with certain applicable restrictions.

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. It is always important to demonstrate gratitude towards the local community by maintaining respectful behavior.



PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE

BILLING

Our finance department will reach out to you after acceptance to collect your deposit and process your tuition payment. Up to date costs and refund policies can be found [here](#).

TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS

Passport

You must have a passport in hand four months prior to departure that is valid for at least six months after your intended program departure date.

Visas

Students will enter using a tourist visa. Students' Chilean visas will be granted upon arrival to Chile. Visa costs are the responsibility of the student but currently remain free for U.S. citizens.

Non-U.S. citizens may require a different visa process and are responsible for obtaining their own visa valid for the duration of their program.

If traveling before or after the program, make sure that your visa will remain valid for the entirety of your stay.

Arrival to your Program

Students are responsible for the cost of flights to and from their program. Students will receive travel instructions 2-3 months prior to the start of their program. Do not book flights before receiving these instructions.

SFS staff will meet students at the airport on the date and time specified in the airport instructions and transport them to the center. Students will receive airport instructions 1-2 weeks prior to the start of their program.

If traveling before or after the program, make necessary arrangements for your luggage. SFS is not responsible for transporting or storing luggage before or after the program. You are also responsible for meeting the group at the airport at the designated date and time.

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.

MEDICAL REQUIREMENTS

SFS Medical Approval Process

No student may enter the field until medical approval is granted by SFS. The review is not meant to exclude, but to inform and allow support systems to be put in place. Students are required to complete the SFS medical approval process using our HIPAA-compliant portal to inform SFS staff of their medical and mental health needs and accommodations. [More information](#).

Accommodating students with disabilities

- Students requesting physical and mental health accommodations should contact SFS Office of Student Affairs
- 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 accommodations 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.

Mental Health

Students who undergo regular counseling should verify that their mental health provider is available while the student is abroad.

Vaccinations and Prophylactic Medication

Required

- Covid vaccine series and booster (must be completed at least 2 weeks before arrival)

Recommended

- Up to date with routine vaccinations (i.e. MMR, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, etc.)
- [Centers for Disease Control](#), travel clinics, or medical providers can provide further recommendations

Insurance

Health Insurance

Students are required to procure their own comprehensive health insurance. SFS does not review insurance policies; it is the student's responsibility to ensure that their coverage meets these requirements:

- Valid in the program country(s) for full duration of the program. Keep in mind any personal pre- or post-program travel.
- Covers more than just emergency medical care. Look for comprehensive medical insurance that includes basic medical care, including non-urgent illness or injury, 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. Check with your policy provider on what services are available out-of-country.
- Students should check if their home institution provides international health insurance. Some universities may have their own insurance requirements for participation in study abroad.
- Most insurance companies provide international coverage on a reimbursable basis. Therefore, students should bring sufficient funds (i.e. a credit card with a limit of at least \$3,000) to pay for medical expenses up front, and then request reimbursement when they return home. Students are responsible for all insurance billing, medical costs, and all incidental expenses including transportation, accommodations, etc., incurred by all parties involved.

Emergency Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance

All students are automatically enrolled in the SFS emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG).

- Effective for the duration of the program only and does not cover personal travel before or after the program
- Covers the cost of transportation, accommodations, and medical care associated with an evacuation in cases where evacuation is deemed medically necessary (e.g. life-saving support during air evacuation)
- The coverage provided by the SFS emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance plan is not the same as health, medical, or dental insurance. This insurance plan does not cover basic medical care, laboratory tests, or pharmacy needs. Students on SFS programs are required to supply their own comprehensive health insurance as outlined above.
- 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

IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Every country is shaped by its history, and therefore attitudes towards gender identity, sexual orientation, race and ethnicity, and religion can differ greatly. Consider how different aspects of your identity might be perceived in a new cultural context. Keep in mind that what seems like discrimination may simply be curiosity.

Researching the country that you will be living in can help you prepare yourself. In specific, you may want to research:

- Current and past political and societal issues
- Racial, ethnic, and religious composition
- LGBTQIA+ climate – Resources: [1](#) and [2](#)
- Cultural norms and local laws

Most SFS students expect to encounter differences between themselves and their host country, but don't realize the most significant differences may be between themselves and their own student group. Reflecting on your own culture and identity before studying abroad can help you better navigate your experience abroad.

This table lists several common U.S. values and prompts you to consider how other people might have different values

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. How might a tendency to look towards the future or past impact views surrounding issues like climate change?
Time	Many U.S. Americans live very scheduled lives, abiding strictly by time commitments and tardiness is not accepted most contexts. In other cultures, human interaction is generally valued more than timeliness. It may be acceptable to be 30 minutes late to a commitment if it means spending time with family or friends. What are some ways that a difference in perception of time might impact you while abroad?
Equality	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. Consider how to adapt to your host culture.
Individualism	There is a common emphasis on the individual in the U.S. There is an idea hard work can determine your future success. Think about how commonplace it is to set personal goals or enrich your personal knowledge and skills. In contrast, in other countries 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. How will you navigate a culture that might be more collectivistic than you are used to?
Directness	In the U.S., there is a tendency to express opinions, thoughts, and dissent openly and directly. Other cultures may have a more indirect communication style where it is not typical to express dissent or emotions directly and confrontation is avoided. Be cognizant of how you may want to adapt your communication style while abroad.

LGBTQIA+

SFS is welcoming of all students at our centers. However, when traveling outside the center, please be aware of the following:

- Laws and social customs may differ from your home country. In many countries, only heterosexual partnerships between cisgender people are recognized as legal and/or accepted within the culture.
- Local laws may be enforced inconsistently. Countries that criminalize same-sex partnerships may also use the law to criminalize gender identities and gender expressions.
- Even if there are no legal concerns, cultural practices may not support freedom of expression and travelers may experience discrimination and harassment. Attitudes may vary, even within the same country.
- Some languages are gendered, resulting in there being a lack of terms that encompass non-binary and gender-neutral expression. Furthermore, some cultural practices are based on traditional gender roles and gender expression. As a result, those who do not identify as they physically present may sometimes be misgendered or misidentified.
- Health services specific to transgender people may be limited or unavailable in your program location. You may be denied services in your affirmed gender while you are traveling outside of your home country.

Legal Name and Passport Information

While traveling on an SFS program, in some cases it is not possible to use preferred names and gender identities. For example, visa paperwork, plane tickets, hotel reservations, and tours at historical sites typically require the use of your legal name and sex as it corresponds to your passport information. Also, please keep in mind that some countries do not legally acknowledge Gender X on a passport and may ask travelers to provide binary sex information.

Your Role in the Community

It is a great privilege to study in another country and be welcomed into these communities. It is not your place to try and change its culture or its values. 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. 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.



PACKING GUIDE

PACKING TIPS

Luggage

SFS does not have a specific policy regarding how much or what type of luggage students bring, just make sure you bring only what you can maneuver yourself! The following packing list does not suggest amounts, so pack according to your own needs.

Wear and Tear

Many students bring old clothes to wear in the field and leave behind at the end of the program. Do not bring anything that you would not want damaged!

Culture and Clothing

A minimum of 3-inch seams are required for all shorts worn in town.

Consider your Impact!

As you pack, please consider the impact of the products that you bring with you to your program, both the ingredients and packaging.

Plastic can be difficult for waste management in remote environments. To keep single-use plastic/paper consumption to a minimum, think about bringing a reusable shopping tote, metal straw, cloth napkins and other items. We also highly encourage biodegradable soaps, shampoos, and conditioner.

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. You can find this information at <https://www.faa.gov/>.

Electronic Cigarettes and Vaping Devices

The FAA prohibits these devices in checked bags and they may only be carried in the aircraft cabin.

Medical Marijuana

Possession of marijuana and cannabis-infused products, including some cannabidiol (CBD) oils, is currently illegal under federal law. SFS does not allow possession or use of any drugs or medications that are illegal for the full duration of SFS programs including free time and weekends away.

PACKING LIST: REQUIRED ITEMS

Clothing

- **Pants**
 - **Pants** Lightweight blends that dry quickly. 2+ for field work, 2+ jeans/leggings/normal pants for day to day, and comfy pants for around the center.
 - **Waterproof rain pants**
 - **Shorts** for exercising
- **Tops and Outerwear**
 - **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** A mix of synthetic fabrics and cotton
 - **Insulated coat** down or synthetic
 - **Wool or Fleece sweaters**
 - **Waterproof hooded rain jacket** Water resistant is not sufficient
 - **Warm Scarf, Hat, Gloves etc.** One set should suffice. Past students recommend waterproof gloves!
- **Underwear and Socks** for more than one week including 3+ pairs of light wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks. Past students recommend synthetic/quick-dry underwear.
- **Long underwear or Base layers** to wear under your hiking pants and shirts. Winter in Patagonia is cold and windy.
- **Cozy, lounge clothes** for around the center.
- **A few casual clothes or nice clothes** for your off days in town
- **Pajamas** appropriate for shared rooms and bathrooms
- **Sun hat and Sunglasses** Hat should have drawstring
- **Footwear**
 - **Over-the-ankle hiking boots** Waterproof required. Please break-in prior to arrival.
 - **Casual shoes** for the center, in town, working out, or camping. You will want a break from your hiking boots!
 - **Sandals, flip flops and or slippers** for around the center or to wear in the shower

Personal Items and Toiletries

- **Biodegradable Toiletries** Basic items such as toothpaste, soap and shampoo can be purchased in town.
- **Period care** You can purchase basic period care products in town. We encourage you to use a menstrual cup or environmentally friendly, biodegradable options.
- **Personal first-aid kit** including Anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, Band-Aids, Tape, Tweezers, Nail clippers, Antihistamines, Pro-biotics, Anti-diarrheals, Vitamin C, Cold medicines, etc.
- **Over-the-counter medications or Prescriptions.** Note that overseas prescriptions are not accepted. You should bring adequate supplies of prescription medications with you to last the duration of your program alongside your doctor's prescription to avoid customs delays. Think about inhalers, allergy medication, contacts/glasses, etc.
- **Motion sickness medication/Dramamine/Ginger chews** if you experience motion sickness.
- **Masks and Covid tests** Bring enough masks to last the duration of the program and 4+ home rapid tests
- **Record of immunizations and Health history**

For the Dormitory

In the dorms and at hotels, sheets, blankets, and pillows will be provided.

- **Towels** Bring one shower towel and one face towel/wash cloth. Quick dry is best.

For the Field and Classroom

- **Flash drives or External hard drive** at least 1 GB recommended
- **Computer** that can open Microsoft Office documents and has USB port
- **Surge protectors and Plug adaptors**
- **Binoculars** preferably 8 x 40 but anything in the 6 x 30 to 10 x 40 range is fine
- **Headlamp** with several packs of batteries. A flashlight should be brought as a backup, but not as a replacement
- **Waterproof bags or Sturdy plastic bags** Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well

- **Day Pack with Waterproof pack cover** with hip and chest straps suitable for taking gear into the field. 15-30L recommended.
- **Weekend Bag with Waterproof pack cover** with hip and chest straps to hold 3-5 days' worth of supplies in the field. 35-55L backpacking backpack recommended.
- **Sleeping bag** can be rented in town. Please pack one rated for the appropriate temperatures.
- **Sleeping pad** can be rented in town.
- **Notebooks and Pen/Pencils** can buy locally
- **Water bottles/Bladders** 2-3L capacity
- **Sunscreen** One bottle. Can buy locally
- **Tupperware and Travel mugs** for packing lunches. Can buy locally.

PACKING LIST: ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED ITEMS

- **Purse/tote bag** for town
- **Small clothing repair kit**
- **Laundry bag** with your name on it!
- **Earplugs and Eye mask**
- **Baby wipes**
- **Hand sanitizer**
- **Pocketknife** Do not carry this in your carry-on luggage
- **Small botanical hand lens** 10x magnification. For those interested in plants and invertebrates
- **Wristwatch** preferably water-resistant
- **Trekking poles**
- **Hammock**
- **Waterproof school supplies** Rite in the rain is a good brand
- **Lightweight blanket**
- **Umbrella**
- **English-to-Spanish dictionary**
- **Journal**
- **Games, Movies, and Books**
- **Musical instruments**
- **Snacks, Drink powders, Mio, Fiber packets and Dietary supplements** Any favorites
- **Camera**
- **Voltage converter** If needed for electronics
- **Headphones and/or Bluetooth speaker**
- **Waterproof cases for electronics** along with silicone packets (or some water-absorbing equivalent)
- **External batteries**

QUESTIONS

Questions about the billing process? Billing@fieldstudies.org

Deposit payments, invoices, charges to your account, financial aid packages, billing deadlines, and loan paperwork.

Questions about medical approval or health and safety? Health@fieldstudies.org

Immunizations, safety in the field, managing a medical condition during your program, and dietary needs and preferences.

Questions about learning accommodations? Academics@fieldstudies.org

Students with learning accommodations should contact the Office of Academic Affairs prior to entering the field.

Questions about your program or your enrollment? Admissions@fieldstudies.org

Which program is the best fit for you, submitting application materials, travel and visa logistics, and other program-specific questions.