Guidelines for Study Abroad at Penn Law

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I. **General Guidelines**

Each year, Penn Law permits a number of 3L students to study at another law school outside the United States.¹

Penn Law does not permit summer legal study for credit.

a. **Academic Requirements**

Credits transferred in are based on the coursework done at the other institution and on Penn Law’s assessment of the specific courses taken. A full semester of study at another law school transfers in as 12 semester hours. All study abroad classes taken must be taken for a grade, unless everyone else in the class is graded on a Pass/Fail basis for that course.

Students remain responsible for meeting all Penn Law JD requirements, including completing the correct number of semester hours to graduate (55 upper-level credits), the Senior Writing Requirement, the Public Service Requirement, and the Professional Responsibility Requirement. It is the student’s responsibility to be aware of and make accommodations for any potential scheduling conflicts (e.g., semesters in which Professional Responsibility may not be taught).

The Law School views studying abroad as an alternative to other opportunities to study outside the Law School at other Penn departments or schools during students’ second and third years. Therefore, students studying abroad may count only one class at another Penn school toward the law degree. In addition, study abroad is not available for those students who have transferred into the JD program from other schools or for those who are pursuing joint degrees.

No more than two Penn Law students are generally permitted to participate in any single overseas law program at the same time.

Anyone seeking an exception to these general rules should write to the Associate Dean for International Affairs, Amy Gadsden, and Dean of Students, Gary Clinton, and explain any extraordinary circumstances that might support his or her waiver request.

b. **Financial Considerations**

Students who study abroad through a Penn Law Partner program are, for financial purposes, generally treated as if they were still enrolled and taking classes at the Law School in Philadelphia.

All Students studying abroad on non-Penn Law programs are charged a “non-matriculation fee. The dollar amount of this fee varies from program to program, but is always at least 5%

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¹ Students wishing to study at another Law School within the United States must make an appointment to meet with the Dean of Students, Gary Clinton, no later than January 31 of the academic year prior to the proposed period of study away to discuss their eligibility and the application process.
of Penn’s applicable tuition and fees. The fee is designed to reduce the possible role of financial incentives in influencing the decision to study away.

Students studying outside Penn Law may or may not be eligible for direct financial aid grants, depending on the program, but may apply for loans through the usual Penn Law process.

For detailed financial information, please read the relevant sections below.

c. **Eligibility**

Unless special permission is received, or a particular program requires attendance in the spring, all study abroad is to be done in the fall of a student’s 3L year.

In the event that a student is approved to study abroad during the spring of the 3L year, that student runs the risk that grades from the overseas law school may not be received in time for him/her to receive a diploma at commencement. Provided all other requirements are been satisfied, a student in such circumstances would still be permitted to walk in the commencement ceremony with his/her class. She/he would, however, receive a diploma by courier at a later date.

Transfer students, joint degree students and students who take more than one class outside the Law School at other schools within the University of Pennsylvania and who wish to count credits from these courses toward their Penn Law degree, are **not** eligible to study abroad.

Q: Can a student take two classes at Wharton, study abroad and then have the credits from both count toward his/her Penn Law degree?

A: No. While a student wishing to study abroad may still take more than one additional class outside the Law School, credits from those classes will not count toward the credits required to graduate from Penn Law. The student will, moreover, have to pay fees for such classes beyond the amount of his/her normal Law School tuition.

d. **Options and Deadlines**

As described in the following sections, students who wish to study abroad may choose from among two programmatic options:

i. Penn Law Partner Programs
ii. Ad-hoc Study Abroad Programs.

Students interested in pursuing any one of these approaches should arrange to meet with the Associate Dean for International Programs to discuss eligibility, application deadlines, and specific requirements for receiving Penn’s permission to study abroad.
Unless otherwise authorized, the **deadline for submitting a completed copy of the application form(s) is November 28 of the academic year prior to the proposed period of study abroad.**

In addition to application form(s) and essays, students wishing to study abroad through any of the above tracks must transmit via email:

1. a copy of their Penn Law transcript; and  
2. a resume.

Please note that students applying to study abroad are assumed, absent specific notice to the contrary, to agree to serve as contacts for other students interested in their experience and to authorize the Penn Law Office of International Programs to disseminate their Penn Law e-mail address to such students. These e-mail addresses will not be shared with anyone outside the Penn Law community without the students’ permission.

e. **Credit While Studying Abroad**

Students may transfer in up to 12 credits from academic work undertaken while studying abroad for one semester. Penn Law uses the following formula, promulgated by the ABA as a guideline, to facilitate its calculation of the credits to award for work done abroad:

| One semester hour (credit) is equal to 55 minutes of class time per week over a 13 week semester. This means that one semester hour is equal 715 minutes of time spent in class. |

Thus, a student studying abroad who successfully takes four law classes, each of which meet for one hour, three times a week over a 13 week semester, should be able to transfer 12 credits back towards his/her graduation requirements at Penn. The terminology with which the overseas law school labels such a course load (e.g., "22 credits", “4 credits", "4 classes", etc.) is irrelevant from Penn Law’s perspective.

To be applied towards a student’s Penn Law graduation requirements, these 12 credits must all be in law-related classes. For example, a study abroad student is welcome to take a class in Australian history. Whatever credit he/she receives from the foreign law school for this class, however, will not generally count toward his/her Penn Law degree. Similarly, credit from basic language courses, while undoubtedly beneficial, cannot be applied towards the requirements for a student’s Penn Law JD.

Coursework taken overseas should not focus on themes of U.S. law, unless it does so in an explicitly comparative manner. You will not receive credit for coursework which substantially duplicates work you have already taken or could take at the Law School.

It is expected that all students studying abroad will transfer back 12 credits.

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2. The Sciences Po and HKU programs take place over the entire 3L year and students may obtain up to 27 credits for work completed while on those programs.
II. **Penn Law Partner Programs**

Penn Law currently has negotiated official study abroad affiliations with six foreign law schools:

- ESADE Law School (Barcelona)
- Hong Kong University
- National Law School (Bangalore)
- Sciences Po (Paris)
- Tsinghua Law School (Beijing)
- Waseda Law School (Tokyo)

a. **How to Apply**

Candidates wishing to study abroad through official Penn Law programs must complete Part I of the Study Abroad Application and receive approval from Penn Law before submitting their applications directly to the partnered law school.

b. **Selection Criteria**

Individual students will be approved for overseas study on the basis of a number of factors including academic achievement at the Law School; relationship of study abroad to personal and professional goals; foreign language ability; maturity and cultural adaptability; and potential for contributing to Penn Law’s overall international programming.

When there are more applicants than spaces available in any one program, the Law School will look to the same criteria to allocate places.

(Please note that, notwithstanding any approval from Penn Law, the school responsible for the overseas law program retains final authority to accept or reject students.)

c. **Financial Considerations**

Students participating in official Penn Law study abroad programs pay tuition, apply for loans, and remain eligible for Penn Law financial aid grants just as if they were attending the law school in Philadelphia.

III. **Ad-Hoc Programs**

a. **Direct Enrollment vs. Programs Administered by U.S. Law Schools**

There are two alternatives to study abroad outside of Penn Law Partner Programs.

The first of these options is through direct enrollment in a foreign law school identified by the student. This choice places a certain burden on the student who, among other things, must research the information required by Part II of the Study Abroad Application in order to demonstrate the foreign program’s satisfaction of the rigorous ABA standards at [www.abanet.org/legaled/studyabroad/abroad.html](http://www.abanet.org/legaled/studyabroad/abroad.html)
Information on, and links to, many law schools around the world may be found at www.ilrg.com/lsahq/

It is also possible to study overseas through enrollment in an ABA-approved foreign study program hosted by another U.S. law school. A list of a few such programs may be found at: http://www.abanet.org/legaled/studyabroad/abroad.html

b. How to Apply

Candidates interested in studying abroad through Ad-hoc programs, must complete Parts I and II of the Study Abroad Application and receive approval from Penn Law before submitting their applications directly to the overseas law school, or the ABA-accredited law school that manages their chosen program.

c. Selection Criteria

Individual students will be approved for overseas study on the basis of factors including academic achievement; relationship of study abroad to personal and professional goals; foreign language ability; maturity and cultural adaptability; and potential for contributing to Penn Law’s overall international programming.

In addition, the Law School must evaluate that specific overseas law program in which the student proposes to participate. Such evaluation will consider topics including the faculty and curriculum available to the Penn Law students and the administrative infrastructure available to support their studies.

Several different programs may be based at the same overseas institution; the Law School may evaluate these programs in different ways. Please note that the Law School’s approval of past requests to participate in a particular Semester Abroad program does not guarantee that future requests will also be approved.

Notwithstanding any approval from Penn Law, the school responsible for the overseas law program retains final authority to accept or reject students.

d. Financial Considerations:

Students approved to study abroad through ad-hoc programs are charged a non-matriculation fee that is equal to the greater of:

i) the difference between the applicable Penn tuition and fees and those of the Semester Abroad program

ii) 5% of the applicable Penn tuition and fees.

Students who would receive direct (i.e., non-loan) financial aid if they were still studying in Philadelphia remain eligible to receive some portion of that aid if they are approved to participate in a Semester Abroad program. The Law School uses the
following formula: a student’s direct aid is first calculated as a percentage of his/her overall Penn Law tuition. The student’s non-matriculation fee is then reduced by the same percentage.

Students may also apply for loans through the usual Penn Law process. The student, however, is responsible for making direct payments to the non-Penn program as well as paying Penn’s non-matriculation fee.

**Example #1**

Penn’s Tuition is $20,000. A student with $10,000 in direct financial aid wishes to enroll directly in Hamburg Law School, which costs $5,000. The student’s non-matriculation fee is thus initially calculated as equal to $15,000. Since the student is attending Penn on a 50% scholarship, that amount of the non-matriculation fee is then reduced by the same percentage. The student ends up paying Penn at final non-matriculation fee of $7,500 and making a direct tuition payment to Hamburg in the amount of $5,000.

**Example #2**

Penn’s tuition is $20,000. A student who attends Penn Law on full loans is approved to enroll in the ABA-approved University of Northern South Dakota Law School program in Toronto, which costs $11,000. The student thus owes Penn a non-matriculation fee of $9,000. The student’s loans are disbursed directly to the student, who is responsible for paying Penn $9,000 and also paying $11,000 in tuition directly to the University of Northern South Dakota. That school, in turn, makes its own arrangements with the Toronto school.