

To: Interested Students Abroad

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Regards: International Study Opportunities, UC Berkeley
Berkeley International Study Program in Letters and Science

Subject: Important Information for Spring 2018 Semester

Date: September 14, 2017

The information given here is, to the best of my knowledge, correct. However, there may be some minor errors or mistakes. The memo is updated continuously in order to minimize such.

This memo must be read carefully, as carefully as you would read a memo that contained urgent materials for an exam. Doing so will take time, as there are many details to consider. However, once the memo has been read and absorbed, the prospective student should have acquired a clear and concise understanding of how to relate and communicate to national (domestic) institutions as well as to the University of California, Berkeley.

Visiting Students versus Degree Students

Most students at UC Berkeley have been admitted as degree students. They are enrolled in programs that take several years to complete, involving lecture courses as well as individual work with academic advisors. These programs lead to degrees such as BA, MA, PhD, JD, MBA, etc. Admittance into these programs involves a number of steps, such as taking standardized tests (e.g. SAT, GRE, GMAT), providing letters of recommendation, submitting essays, and so on and at UC Berkeley it is very competitive, with about 83,690 students applying and about 65,600 not admitted each year. A limited number of international students get admitted to earn a degree at UC Berkeley. In academic year 2013-2014, there are only 1,647 international undergraduate degree-seeking students, about 9 percent of the undergraduate student body.

An alternative way for international students to study at UC Berkeley for one or two semesters is through the University of California Education Abroad Program (EAP), which has limited space, and is restricted to a few institutions (in Brazil 2, Mexico 1, Norway 0, South Korea 1, and so forth). They do not receive a degree from the university. But they do receive transcripts proving participation and achievements, and these may be used to substitute for parts of the requirements at their domestic academic institutions (their universities in their home countries).

There is one other way for international students to study at UC Berkeley for one or two semesters – and that is by taking courses through the UC Berkeley Extension International Concurrent Enrollment program (see below). To do so, students must be invited by a professor or department and we are inviting you to participate in Spring 2017. Some of you may choose to study in Summer 2017 and/or Fall 2017 as well.

Opportunity for Visiting Students to Study at UC Berkeley

The UC Berkeley Sociology Department has established a program, referred to below as the Berkeley International Study Program in Letters and Science in which international students at a number of different universities across the globe are invited by Professor Trond Petersen to take courses in the participating departments (see the attached brochure at the end of this memo for the list of participating departments). These students take UC Berkeley courses through the UC Berkeley Extension International Concurrent Enrollment program on a space availability basis, in which there is almost always space (with a few exceptions).

Fall and Spring Semesters at UC Berkeley

The Berkeley International Study Program has the capacity to admit a limited number of students for Fall and Spring semesters, as well as the Summer Session. The students will be accepted as visiting students by agreement with the UC Berkeley Sociology Department and are required to take 12 credits in courses that are in the participating departments.

We are able to admit students both at the BA and the MA level, however, courses at the graduate level are limited and most students take bachelor-level courses.

It is expected, by UC Berkeley, that institutions that send students to the university, will also admit a limited number of UC Berkeley students. We are eager to expand the opportunities for our students to spend a semester studying elsewhere.

Duration of Exchange Student Period at UC Berkeley

Students may come to UC Berkeley for one or two semesters. Most BA students visit for one semester, but in some cases, it may be possible to stay for two semesters: the Spring and Fall or Fall and Spring semesters. Students may also extend their visit by taking courses during the Summer Session.

Courses

Students will be accepted to study by the Department of Sociology, but both BA and MA students must pay tuition for 12 credits taken in our participating departments. These 12 credits may not include courses taken in non-participating departments at UC Berkeley. If this, for some reason, cannot fit into your study program in your home university, perhaps this program is not the right one for you, or you can do studies for which you will not later be credited in your home university.

All students participating in BISP are required to take a one-unit course called "Strategies for Cross-Cultural Communication," Sociology 198. This course provides information and tips that will help students succeed in a new academic environment and help them make the most of their cultural experience here in Berkeley. It is also a great way for students to meet and talk with other students in English and practice new skills they are learning. The instructors also provide academic support advising to students. There will be space in this course for all of our visiting BISP students and should be the first course you enroll in when registration opens.

Almost all students are admitted to the courses they choose, but some departments occasionally have a few courses that will not have space due to high demand by UC Berkeley students. For this reason, we do not guarantee admittance to any particular course.

It is not possible to register in advance for the courses. Registration for all Concurrent Enrollment students takes place during weeks 1-4 of the semester. Concurrent Enrollment students will attend the courses they are interested in and the instructor will let them know if they are admitted after the first couple of classes have met. Students should be prepared to pay tuition fees for their courses to get officially enrolled. This process will be explained in detail at the orientation meeting before classes begin.

To find out more information about the courses, please go to the schedule's website for course descriptions: classes.berkeley.edu

Here at UC Berkeley, each instructor writes their own syllabus and it may change from one semester to the next. In general we do not get the syllabus from the instructor for each course until the time the class starts meeting. This is due to the fact that professors have full control over their courses. This system may be very different from the system in your home country, but there is nothing to do about this. But you may find syllabi from these courses, if they were taught in the past, on each department's website. Required readings, type of exams and other assignments, and lectures may differ from semester to semester, but you can get an idea of how an instructor likes to teach their course.

Rules Regarding Full-Time Student Visas to the USA

In order to obtain a student visa and to legally stay in the US students must be registered as full time students. This requires taking a minimum of 12 course credits in our program, at UC Berkeley. The US Immigration authorities demand that students are registered as full time students, and also control that they actually are doing this.

Courses for MA students

All MA students need to enroll in 12 course credits. It is difficult to get admitted to graduate courses as a Concurrent Enrollment student. Students should come prepared to take undergraduate courses, and be approved to potentially take all undergraduate courses if they are not able to get admitted to any of our graduate courses at the PhD level.

We highly recommend that MA students discuss with their advisor before coming to UC Berkeley, which undergraduate courses we offer could count for their degree.

Course Transcript

Approximately 4-6 weeks after the final exams, the student will be able to look-up their grade on their UC Berkeley Extension account. Course grades and course credits within the UC Berkeley system are included. These grade reports are not the same as a transcript of all courses taken at UC Berkeley. If a student needs to have a transcript sent to their institution, they should order one to be sent through the UC Berkeley Extension office. Information on how to order a transcript is also available on their website. The BISP Program will provide a complementary transcript to each student which is sent directly to the coordinator at their home university, provided that they sign an authorization form at the start of the semester.

In some cases students may also be able to get a proof of attendance for courses they have audited (sat in the class, but didn't earn credit). This is basically a letter written by the instructor acknowledging the student's presence and participation in the course. However, providing such acknowledgement and allowing a student to sit in on a course is entirely up to the professor giving the course.

UC Berkeley Course Credits and domestic academic institutions

Local rules and procedures determine the amount of credits a student will get at his/her home university for course credits from UC Berkeley, and how those credits may or may not satisfy degree requirements. UC Berkeley is a well-known and highly ranked academic institution, and generally students seem to get full credit locally for course credits from UC Berkeley. However, this is outside UC Berkeley control.

It is usually a good idea to look into this matter locally before deciding to apply to UC Berkeley. You should speak with an advisor for your degree program about the courses you plan to take and requirements you need to fulfill abroad. In some cases approval in advance from the home academic institution may be required in order to get full credit upon return. Such approval is also, in some countries, important in order to obtain student loans for studies at UC Berkeley.

Tuition at UC Berkeley

The costs for required courses at UC Berkeley for the Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 semesters, for 12 course credits (with a basic cost of USD 730,- per course credit), are as a minimum as follows:

<i>Fees:</i>		
USD	200	International Application fee
USD	125	Concurrent Enrollment Application fee (paid after arrival)

USD	700	Health Insurance Fees
USD	250	Cal 1 ID card
USD	1275	Sum of Fees

Tuition:
 USD 750 per unit/course credit

Sum Fees and Tuition:
 USD 10,275 for 12 course credits
 USD 11,025 for 13 course credits
 USD 11,775 for 14 course credits

These fees are based on the 2017-2018 academic year. Please check the Concurrent Enrollment page of the UC Extension website (<http://extension.berkeley.edu/static/student-services/concurrent/#fees>) for the most up to date fees.

Note: All fees are subject to change.

Language tests

For students with a high school or equivalent diploma from Northern Europe and several Central European countries, or with an English language background, UC Berkeley generally allows dropping the English language tests. Such waivers are given in the invitation letter from Trond Petersen addressed to International Concurrent Enrollment. When applying for admittance to the Concurrent Enrollment Program at UC Berkeley, a copy of this letter must be enclosed.

If a student does not have the above-mentioned diploma or English Language background, they are required to take the TOEFL (language) test. This test can be taken throughout East Asia. The fee for taking this test was USD 130 in 2004. Information about this test, including fees and when and where it is held, can be found at www.ets.org/toefl.

UC Berkeley Extension requires students to have either:

TOEFL score report of at least 90 IBT or 550 paper-based.

OR

IELTS score report of at least 7.0

Student Visa to the United States

UC Berkeley Extension office will issue all the documents required to obtain a student visa from the U.S. Embassy in your country. UC Berkeley Extension is very efficient at this. All required documents are issued within four weeks of receiving a completed application for admittance, and sometimes even faster than this.

Students will have to submit required documents to the U.S. Embassy, as well as make an appointment for an interview at the embassy in their country. There is a cost for the SEVIS ID and to the U.S. Embassy. It usually takes approximately 2 weeks to receive a visa from the U.S. Embassy once the interview has taken place.

It is recommended that you make an appointment at the U.S. Embassy as soon as you receive the required documents from UC Berkeley Extension.

Housing in Berkeley

There are many different types of housing available to visiting students. Most of our visiting students live in apartments or homes. Some will live in dormitory style accommodations such as the International House. Students are responsible for obtaining their own housing, but we provide several resources to assist students. Once students have applied a list of housing options is sent out, and student can connect with others who are looking for housing.

Housing in Berkeley is relatively expensive. A room in a shared apartment or house typically costs about USD 1000-1200 per month depending on the type of housing and how many students are sharing. Housing that is closer to the UC Berkeley campus is generally more expensive than housing farther away and accessible by public transportation.

Living in shared housing, where each person typically has her/his own bedroom, and shares kitchen, bathroom and living room(s) with 2-3 other persons, is a good way to get to know Americans and learn the language. Around campus, there are a number of "fraternities" and "sororities", where there might be a room in a shared student house. We also now have a facebook site for Berkeley students and our international visitors to communicate about housing options. To join go to <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BISPHousing>

The internet site "Craigslist.org" may also be used to find housing and get an impression of the housing market in Berkeley. Most landlords prefer or require tenants to apply in person, so you will have to wait until you arrive in Berkeley to sign an agreement. However, many students find housing before arriving in Berkeley through other international students who need to move out before their one-year lease is up.

Other facilities at the university

Students coming to UC Berkeley get access to a lot of other facilities as well. Using them most often requires paying a fee.

The university does not have designated reading areas for BA or MA students. For reading and coursework, many students use the libraries. It is highly recommended that you bring your own portable computer.

Work in the USA

The student visa generally does not allow visa-holders to work. However, students are permitted to work at UC Berkeley, as Junior Specialists, for a maximum of 20 hours a week for the duration of the stay. This requires that one first finds a job, then get a written offer for employment. Then one goes to the International Concurrent Enrollment office to get an On-Campus Work Permit. Using these two documents, one then obtains a Social Security Number (SSN). Once this has been issued, one may legally work at the university. However, this is not typically done as many jobs are filled by UC Berkeley students who are being funded by financial aid work study programs.

The Concurrent Enrollment application procedure

The program you attend is sponsored by the Department of Sociology at the University of California, Berkeley. The Department issues the invitations to students to study here, and all classes you will take are in the participating departments in the University of California, Berkeley, classes you will take together with regularly matriculated students at UC Berkeley, students who come from all Departments and Schools in the university.

In order to make it possible for you to come to study in the Department, the Department works with the UC Berkeley Extension Office (UNEX). Once the Department has issued an invitation for you to study here, UNEX handles your application to come to study here, issues the student visa, collects tuition and fees (after arrival here), assists you in electronically registering for classes, and provides a number of services to students who participate in the Berkeley International Study Program in Letters and Science.

Once you have followed the application procedures at your home institution for gaining nomination to study at UC Berkeley, please follow their instructions for completing the UC Berkeley Extension online application. We have provided step by step instructions and helpful tips for the UC Berkeley Extension application on a separate document that we have included with the application.