A variety of environmental problems now affect our entire planet. As globalization continues and the earth’s natural processes transform local problems into international ones, no societies are untouched by major environmental problems.

Ever since it was first created as an academic unit over 35 years ago, UCSB’s Environmental Studies Program has encouraged its students to consider completing some portion of their undergraduate study through the Education Abroad Program (EAP) or similar “off-campus” studies program. An opportunity to study in a foreign university not only offers an international dimension to an undergraduate education, but can deepen a student’s understanding of the causes and effects of today’s environmental problems on a global scale.

Each year dozens of Environmental Studies (ES) majors choose to study abroad in countries such as Australia, Brazil, Denmark, South Africa, and Costa Rica. With careful academic planning and the application of study abroad units towards the ES major’s elective and/or “Outside Concentration” requirement, ES students can have an experience of a lifetime studying in a foreign university with no loss of time in completing their degrees.

Why study abroad?

UC’s Education Abroad Program provides Environmental Studies students the unique opportunity to study environmental problems and issues in one of over 30 countries located on six different continents. With close to 140 universities to choose from, EAP enables students to spend a period of their academic career -- a year, a semester, a quarter or summer term --studying abroad.

The opportunities available to students will help them develop a global understanding of the structure and dynamics of complex environmental systems. The program may also enhance the future careers of ES students through classroom, laboratory and field experiences that are unique to the country and region in which they study.

Where should I study abroad?

Students wishing to complete a substantial part of their Environmental Studies Major abroad have a wide variety of options. There are at least 18 different countries with host universities that have specific environmental studies programs or departments (see below for a partial list). Many additional countries offer a variety of environmental courses through more "traditional" academic departments such as biology, sociology, geography, and anthropology. And with the option for students to satisfy their “Outside Concentration” requirement by taking their units from any single, non-environmental, department or program, ES majors may choose to attend any EAP host university and still apply a significant number of units towards their degree.

The Cost of EAP

Studying abroad through EAP can be comparable to the cost of study at UCSB. EAP participants pay UC fees and continue to receive UC financial aid while abroad. EAP students are also eligible for special grants and scholarships from UC and other sources.

When should I study abroad?

With the inherent flexibility the ES major offers, environmental studies students have a significant range of choices and options as to when they can study abroad. Although it is not required for ES majors to have their
preparation for the major requirements completed before studying abroad, because of the considerable breadth of course work required at the lower-division level, most ES majors choose to complete as many of these courses as possible before leaving to study abroad during their junior or senior year. Most students find it preferable not to have to complete lower-division requirements when they return from EAP study.

Transfer students are eligible to participate as early as their first quarter at UCSB. For more information, visit the EAP web site.

What classes should I take?

Environmental Studies students are advised to complete as many of their lower-division preparation for the major courses as possible before they plan to go abroad. As the vast majority of courses taken while studying through EAP are at the upper-division level, this will allow a student to meet the prerequisites for many of the EAP courses they might want to take and achieve maximum flexibility in applying their course work towards upper-division major requirements.

Depending on a student’s area of academic interest and the number and type of courses offered at their host university, it is possible for an ES major to apply as many as 32 upper-division EAP units towards major requirements. This would include no more than eight to twelve units of “environmental” electives towards Area B of the ES major and as many as 20 units, or the entire Outside Concentration, towards Area C. Students considering participating in EAP are strongly encouraged to meet with one of the Environmental Studies Academic or Student Peer Advisors to review their major requirements and discuss how to maximize the number of EAP units they may apply towards their major.

Keep in mind that at least 20 units of upper-division major coursework (or 12 upper-division minor units) must be completed in residence at UCSB along with other residence requirements. Consult an advisor in the College of Letters & Science for more information.

EAP students automatically earn UC credit for the work they complete abroad. However, application of credit to major requirements is subject to the discretion of the department and approval of the college. Check the EAP Course Catalog (https://myeap.eap.ucop.edu/Galileo/Service/CourseCatalog/CourseCatalog.aspx) for specific courses taken by UC students on EAP during the last five years. More courses may be found by navigating to the host universities’ websites.

How do I get started?

Begin by identifying your goals for study abroad and then consult the EAP web pages (http://eap.ucop.edu/) to identify appropriate EAP programs. To search programs which offer particular disciplines, explore the resources found under Program Search. Navigate to host universities’ web sites on the available links to learn more about the schools and their departments.

Stop by the EAP office at 2431 South Hall. Peer advisors who have recently returned from studying abroad as well as staff advisors are eager to answer your questions.

Go see your Undergraduate Advisor in the department office and make an appointment to speak with an advisor in the College of Letters & Science.

Plan Ahead!

Applications are due as much as eight months prior to a program’s start date and some programs have academic or language prerequisites that must be satisfied in advance. Please check the EAP web site for application deadlines: www.eap.ucsb.edu