

# PLANNING FOR YOUR OFF-CAMPUS STUDY IN 2008–09

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**Congratulations** on receiving Bowdoin’s approval of your off-campus study! Whenever and wherever you intend to study away, please read and keep this summary of what you need to do between now and departure.

## 1. AGREEMENT OF PARTICIPATION

Please sign the Agreement of Participation, enclosed with your approval letter, and return it to the OCS office **as soon as possible, and in any case no later than 28 March**. Do *not* wait for your program to admit you. The agreement will not prevent you from remaining at Bowdoin if you cannot study away.

Changes of the program or period for which you are approved by Bowdoin are rarely permitted; in unusual circumstances, however, such as if you are rejected by a program, a new Bowdoin application for another program on the options list will be considered.

You are provisionally preapproved for Bowdoin credit for the courses you listed on your OCS application form; most students also receive provisional preapproval of certain courses toward a Bowdoin major or minor. Do not worry too much if you end up being unable to take these exact courses when you arrive on your program. You will be asked before final course registration on your program to email your course choices to OCS; you should also email your major/minor department with a course description if you need provisional approval for a new course. Do also make sure that you are taking a normal full load of courses on your program.

With your approval, Bowdoin’s records will reflect your status as study away, on the program and for the period for which you applied. If you decide to stay at Bowdoin after all, you need to ask OCS to change your status. (It makes no difference if you have or have not returned your agreement of participation.) To request a change of status, either complete a form in the OCS office, or write us a note (email to [offcamp@bowdoin.edu](mailto:offcamp@bowdoin.edu) is fine) that makes clear your exact intentions. The change of status will be processed in a day or so and communicated to all relevant Bowdoin offices. It is preferable to request a change before registration for Bowdoin courses and housing, from which you are blocked if your status for that semester is study away. If you make a late change after registration, Bowdoin housing is not assured, and you will have to wait till add-drop period to register for courses. Other changes of status, such as for a leave of absence, must be authorized by a dean in Student Affairs.

## 2. COMPLETE YOUR APPLICATION TO YOUR PROGRAM

Find out what you need to do to apply to your program; do not leave it to the deadline, or assume that it is a “postmark deadline,” as many programs fill quickly. If you are applying to an English-speaking university, you will also need to decide whether you want to apply directly or through a third-party provider (e.g., Arcadia CEA, IFSA-Butler, CIEE, Interstudy), which for an additional cost offers extra services and assistance.

IES and DIS applicants will receive a message from us about special admission procedures through OCS. All other applications should be sent directly to the program. Many programs have a dean’s/home-school approval form, which we routinely sign in OCS, after checking your Bowdoin file to confirm that you are in good academic and disciplinary standing; do not go to Student Affairs. You will also need to send your program a Bowdoin transcript; complete a request form at the Registrar’s Office (Moulton Union) to receive one in a sealed envelope. If you are applying for a spring program, you should usually wait until you have a Bowdoin transcript for the previous spring, except for a very small number of programs that have a single deadline.

## 3. PASSPORT AND VISA

If you will need a passport, apply without delay. If you have one, note that some countries require a passport to be valid for as much as 6 months after exit. Review the application requirements at [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). If you are not

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a US citizen, check with the consulates of your own country and your destination. Find out from your program about visa requirements, if any, which vary by country and even by consulate. Photos for passports, visas and other applications can be taken at CVS at Cooks Corner for a reasonable price.

#### **4. PREDEPARTURE MEETING**

There will be a mandatory predeparture session for students going on fall and full year programs, at which OCS staff and a panel of returned students will give you important information on academic credit, health and safety, cultural adaptation, and other topics. The meeting will be on **Thursday 17 April, at 7:30 PM in Daggett Lounge, Thorne Hall**. It will last about an hour and a half. Depending on the availability of returned and departing students, we may also set up country-based group discussions. Watch for email notices. The meeting for students studying away in spring 2009 will be held in the fall, on a date to be announced.

#### **5. CHECKLIST OF OTHER TASKS**

For advice in more detail than the notes below, please refer to our website <[www.bowdoin.edu/ocs](http://www.bowdoin.edu/ocs)>, especially under *Predeparture Planning* and *While You're Away* (where you will find a PDF of the Off-Campus Study Handbook similar to that distributed at the Predeparture Meeting).

**Transportation.** Most programs let you book your own flight; if so, do so early enough to get a low fare.

**Health And Insurance.** Read your program's materials and visit the Centers for Disease Control site <[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)> to find out about vaccines, certificates, and medications. Information is also available from the Bowdoin Health Center, which will complete health forms and perform physicals at no charge, and administer necessary shots for the cost of the vaccine. *Do not delay to make your appointment.*

**Financial Arrangements.** You will pay all deposits and fees directly to your program or university, not to Bowdoin, with the exception of the ISLE and SITA programs. Due dates may be *significantly* earlier than Bowdoin's. Anticipate deposits and advance payments; up to \$2,000 may be required at the time of admission. Make sure you know what (travel, housing, meals, excursions, insurance) your program fees include. Bowdoin's off-campus study fee is \$1,000 per program.

**Financial Aid.** Aid is based on an Off-Campus Study Budget, available from the Student Aid personal web portal at <[www.bowdoin.edu/studentaid/myaid](http://www.bowdoin.edu/studentaid/myaid)>. Send the blank form electronically to your program; it will return the completed form to Student Aid. You are encouraged to apply to your program for merit- or need-based scholarships, but you must apply for all federal aid, including Stafford and FPLUS loans, at Bowdoin. Generally, your family contribution will be close to the amount you would pay at Bowdoin.

**International Student Identity Card.** Some programs recommend the ISIC, an internationally recognized card which offers student discounts (e.g., museum entries, air fares) and basic insurance for travel outside the US. Visit <[www.myisic.com](http://www.myisic.com)> for more information. You can buy a card in OCS.

**Honors projects, scholarships, etc.** Your off-campus study may lead to ideas and resources that culminate in a Bowdoin honors project, graduate school in the US or overseas, or a graduate scholarship application. If you will be away for the year or spring, you will have little time to work this out after you return; talk to advisors *now*.

**Advance reading.** Do plenty of preparatory reading. Your program will probably have a reading list for its country. You can also find relevant printed and on-line publications through the Bowdoin Library. Several other helpful books regarding such issues as cultural adjustment are available for consultation or loan in the OCS office.

*Please keep this sheet for further reference. Much more information at <[www.bowdoin.edu/ocs](http://www.bowdoin.edu/ocs)>.*