

General Guidelines for Semester Legal Studies Abroad

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN LAW SCHOOL
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE LAW

300D LEGAL RESEARCH
ANN ARBOR, MI 48109-1210
Tel: (734) 764-0535 Fax: (734) 763-9182

The University of Michigan Law School faculty approves the idea of studies overseas for one semester for credit toward the J.D. degree with the primary goal of enabling students to study at foreign law faculties. This opportunity is offered with the awareness that, increasingly, legal endeavors transcend national boundaries and that an international and comparative perspective is an important part of professional preparation for the 21st Century.

The goal of an opportunity for semester legal studies abroad is to permit students to receive the educational benefit of engaging in legal studies in another country at an outstanding educational institution where the Michigan student will be pursuing a foreign curriculum in classes with predominantly non-U.S. students. Students who wish to spend a semester taking law courses at a foreign law school must obtain permission from this Law School's Graduate Programs and Foreign Affiliations Committee (the "Committee").

Opportunities Available. Students interested in any of the opportunities mentioned below should obtain program-specific information available in the Center for International and Comparative Law (300D Legal Research), or on the Law School's web site at:

<http://www.law.umich.edu/curriculum/studyabroad/Pages/default.aspx>.

University Linkages. Semester study abroad opportunities exist for University of Michigan law students at Amsterdam Law School in the Netherlands, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva, University College London, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium, European University Institute in Florence, Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law, Bucerius Law School Hamburg in Germany, and Waseda University Law School in Tokyo.

Amsterdam Law School in the Netherlands offers a study abroad opportunity, created in 2007, for up to four students each academic year in either the fall or winter term. The program is conducted in English.

Graduate Institute of International & Development Studies (IHEID) in Geneva offers a study abroad opportunity, created in 2007, for up to two students each academic year in either the fall or winter term. The language of instruction is English and French. It is possible to take only courses offered in English, but the curricular offerings are more extensive if the student is sufficiently proficient in French to take courses offered in French.

The University College London study abroad opportunity was created in 1996 and expanded in 1998. The University College London will accept up to ten Michigan law students for the fall term.

The Katholieke Universiteit Leuven in Belgium offers a study abroad opportunity for up to two students each academic year in either the fall or winter term. This program is conducted in English.

Faculty of Law, Bucerius Law School Hamburg study abroad opportunity, which began in fall 2002, permits up to two students for the fall term. Students who are proficient in German will be given preference. However, knowledge of German is not required.

European University Institute in Florence offers a study abroad opportunity, which began in fall 2003, for up to two students for the fall term. The working languages of the Institute are French and English.

Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law study abroad opportunity, beginning in winter 2006, for up to two students each academic year for the second term of the academic year. Fluency in Hebrew may be necessary, because, currently, a limited number of courses is offered in English. Please note that the US Department of State has issued a Travel Warning for Israel. Students should give careful consideration to the risks associated with study at Tel Aviv. Please consult the University of Michigan's Overseas Travel Guidelines at <http://www.umich.edu/~itoc/guidelines.html>.

Waseda University Law School, Tokyo, Japan study abroad opportunity, which began Fall 2006, permits one student per academic year for either the fall or winter term. There currently are a limited number of appropriate courses offered in English at Waseda University Law School. Therefore, fluency or substantial ability in Japanese may be necessary.

Student-Initiated Semester Study Abroad Program. Students may propose a student-initiated semester study program at law faculties of foreign universities.

NOTE: Student Study Abroad reports are available for review at the Center for International and Comparative Law. The student reports describe in detail the overseas experience from the perspective of students who have studied at the foreign university. It is strongly recommended that interested students read these reports before deciding to study abroad.

Requirements for Transfer of Credit

As a condition to receiving credit for the study abroad semester, students:

1. Must satisfactorily complete an independent research paper under the supervision of a University of Michigan Law School faculty member in addition to the student's course work at the foreign law school, which needs to have been approved in advance by the University of Michigan Law School. The legal research paper must be for a grade, consist of 3 credit hours, and be on a topic which relates to the semester studies overseas.
2. Must satisfactorily complete their class requirements overseas with grades equivalent to "C" or better or as required by the Committee.
3. Must submit to Assistant Dean Virginia Gordan a 10-page report on their overseas studies experience, as a condition to receipt of credit. The report should contain a detailed description of the student's academic experience abroad including the nature and content of each class taken. The report is due no later than three weeks after your last exam.

PLEASE NOTE: Credit for semester legal studies abroad will be recorded on the University of Michigan transcript on a mandatory pass/fail basis except for the research paper under the supervision of a University of Michigan Law School faculty member which must be for a grade.

Selection Process

Students who wish to be considered for study abroad opportunities must submit a **COMPLETE** proposal to the Law School's Graduate Program and Foreign Affiliations Committee ("the Committee"). It is the responsibility of the student to establish to the satisfaction of the Committee that his or her proposal for semester legal studies abroad is thoughtfully related to his or her educational and professional development. Students who wish to study at Tel Aviv University Faculty of Law must be interviewed by Professor Reuven Avi-Yonah prior to submitting their proposals. In addition, students who wish to study at Waseda University Law School must be interviewed by Professor Mark West prior to submitting their proposals.

See **Attachment A** for proposal requirements.

To be eligible for consideration for study abroad, a minimum cumulative g.p.a. of 3.0 is expected. For compelling reasons and upon special application of the student, the Committee will consider a request for an exception to this minimum g.p.a. requirement. Regardless of g.p.a., the Committee may consider the academic record of the student in determining whether to approve overseas study for the student.

Only third, fourth, and fifth semester law students, who have at least one remaining semester of study at this Law School following completion of a semester abroad, are eligible. There is a strong presumption against a semester abroad in the final semester of school. A final semester abroad may be approved by the Committee only upon a special petition of the student which should demonstrate sound academic reasons for not undertaking the program in an earlier semester, should show important educational benefits to be gained from the program, and should include a very well-developed description of the student's research proposal with a time table, approved by the student's Michigan supervisor, demonstrating timely completion of the research paper. Students should be aware that typically grades will NOT arrive from the foreign law school in time for the student to take the bar exam immediately following their final semester.

The Committee will review each student's proposal to reach a decision whether to approve the student for study abroad. As noted above, each foreign university has a limited number of openings for Michigan students.

In the case of over-subscription of spaces in study abroad programs at particular foreign universities, eligible students will be selected by lottery as follows. All students who have been granted permission by the Committee to study abroad will be assigned a number at random. Starting with the lowest number (1), students will be assigned to their highest preference foreign university for which there is still available space.

Selection criteria for each study abroad opportunity may differ (e.g., higher g.p.a. requirement, language proficiency requirement, etc.) and students should consult the specific information for each university to see additional requirements. The foreign law schools reserve the right to review student applications for semester study abroad following their pre-selection by the Committee (and when relevant, the lottery) and to make the final admission decision.

Since selection for a semester study abroad opportunity is not guaranteed, students are cautioned against making plans such as air ticket purchase and housing decisions until they have received written notification of whether they have been finally selected for semester study abroad at a particular school.

Students wishing to pursue legal studies for one semester at a foreign law school for credit toward the JD degree are advised to first consult with Assistant Dean Gordan (vgordan@umich.edu) to discuss their proposed study plans.

Deadline

The deadline for submission of the student's **COMPLETE** proposal to the Committee for semester study at any of the eight foreign universities listed on pages 1 and 2 of these Guidelines in either the 2010 fall term or the 2011 winter term is Monday, January 25, 2010. The deadline for student-initiated semester study abroad program proposals for the 2010 fall term is also January 25, 2010, and for the 2011 winter term it is October 4, 2010. Requests to submit late proposals should be made to Assistant Dean Virginia Gordan (vgordan@umich.edu; TEL: 734-764-5269).

Proposals should be delivered to the Center for International & Comparative Law (Room 300D LR – in the Reading Room).

Tuition Charges

Students who choose to study overseas are required to pay the same full tuition and fees to the University of Michigan Law School they would pay if they remained in residence at the University of Michigan Law School. Tuition and fees for the 2009-10 academic year per term are \$21,505 (in-state) and \$23,005 (out-of-state). (Actual 2010-11 tuition will be determined by the Board of Regents of the University in the summer of 2010.)

Financial Aid

If eligible for financial aid, students may receive financial aid to cover tuition charges as well as living expenses and travel costs for an approved semester abroad. For further information about financial aid, students should consult the Law School's Office of Financial Aid. Students will be asked to provide documentation about estimated living expenses and tuition charges.

Health Insurance and Visa

Students should obtain health insurance coverage for their overseas stay. Students should consult the closest consulate of the country where they plan to study to take the necessary steps required for entry (i.e. student visa).

Disabilities

If a student interested in studying abroad has a disability for which he or she may need accommodation during the semester overseas, please contact Assistant Dean Gordan in advance of submitting your proposal to the Committee.

Students seeking approval for semester study abroad should be aware they need to comply with all University of Michigan Law School's graduation requirements.

The following paragraphs provide answers to some frequently asked questions:

1. For all programs, a maximum of twelve credit hours may be earned in a regular (non-summer) term for an approved study abroad semester. The twelve credits include the required three credit, graded research paper. The number of credit hours to be transferred will be established by the Committee following review of the student's proposal.

2. Thirteen weeks of classes (exclusive of exam periods) are required for receipt of one semester of residence credit for study either here or abroad.
3. Students may not take more than twelve hours of non-law credits toward their law degrees. Permission to take a non-law course at a university outside the University of Michigan that counts toward fulfillment of J.D. degree requirements is only rarely granted.
4. The Academic Regulations impose a six-hour limit on independent study toward a J.D. This overall limit is equally applicable to students who take a semester abroad. A project in excess of three hours requires the student to arrange supervision by three faculty members, and this applies to study both here and abroad.
5. Students may not receive credit for both a study abroad semester and an externship toward a JD degree.
6. Students must satisfactorily complete at least 64 credit hours in regularly scheduled U.S. law school classes out of the total necessary for graduation. Credit for work, such as independent research, externships, and non-law course work do not count as regularly scheduled law school classes. Questions about this should be addressed to Assistant Dean for Student Affairs, David Baum (dbaum@umich.edu).

Miscellaneous

Some states have requirements for hours of study in a U.S. law school. Students should check the requirements of the states in which they wish to be admitted to practice to determine the permissibility of studies at a foreign law school.

For Further Information

Questions about study abroad should be directed to the Center for International and Comparative Law (300D Legal Research, 764-0535, wls@umich.edu, – Stephanie Wiederhold) or Assistant Dean Virginia Gordan (300C Legal Research, 764-5269, vgordan@umich.edu).

Updated September 2009

ATTACHMENT A

COMPLETE PROPOSALS MUST INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

(NO TWO-SIDED COPIES - DO NOT STAPLE DOCUMENTS - DO NOT PUT DOCUMENTS IN FOLDER, BINDER, ETC.)

1. An insightful explanation of the student's reasons for wishing to pursue semester study abroad in general and reasons for wishing to pursue studies at each of the foreign universities for which the student is applying. It should describe the specific educational objectives to be achieved during the study abroad semester, including how study abroad fits into the student's overall legal education and professional goals.
2. Students may apply for more than one semester study abroad program. If they do, they must indicate in their proposals their rank order of preference for the programs applied for.
3. The proposal should also include a description of the 3-credit hour research project which the student must complete under the supervision of a University of Michigan Law School professor and the manner in which the paper relates to the student's study objectives. The proposal must include the name of the professor who has agreed to serve as research supervisor, if the student is selected for study abroad. The proposal should specify that the professor has agreed to supervise the student's paper and has approved the student's educational objectives and paper topic. It is the student's responsibility to develop a research topic and obtain a faculty supervisor.
4. The title, professor's name, and description of the courses which the student proposes to take. (For applications for Leuven and Amsterdam, please include the ECTS units for each course and the total # of ECTS units.) Please note that students probably will make preliminary course selections from the course offerings from the previous academic year, because, most likely, the course schedule for the upcoming year will not yet be available. Proposals will be reviewed based on this preliminary selection of courses. Students are required to later submit to the University of Michigan Law School final course selection for advance approval by Assistant Dean Virginia Gordan after receipt of the new course schedules from the host institution.
5. Number of transfer credit hours requested toward the JD degree
6. Current resume
7. *Undergraduate transcripts
8. Unofficial law school transcript (i.e. printed from Wolverine Access is acceptable)
9. List of your fall 2009 term courses and winter 2010 term courses (include course title, professor, and credit hours)

***Undergraduate Transcript Request Procedure:**

The student is to request from the Law School Registrar's Office (300 HH; TEL: 763-6499; E-mail: lawrecords@umich.edu) that a copy of his/her undergraduate transcript(s) from his/her law school file be sent to the Center for International & Comparative Law (300D Legal Research) to arrive **BY THE DEADLINE** for submission of his or her proposal to the Committee. **The Registrar's Office requires the student to place the request AT LEAST two business days prior to the study abroad proposal deadline.**