

South Africa

UCEAP Advising Notes

Objective of the Advising Notes Document

This document is an advising tool written by a Berkeley Study Abroad adviser to review program specific details that may impact a student's *decision to apply* for an EAP program. The document is *not* a summary of eligibility requirements, academic, housing, application and other logistical details freely available to students on the UCEAP and BSA website, and reviewed by a student in the Program Self-Assessment. The best source of detailed program information is always the [UCEAP Program Guide](#) from the prior academic cycle. If any concerns you have are not addressed on the UCEAP website, in the Program Guide or the Advising Notes document, please contact the BSA adviser for this program.

Advisor Contact Information

For BSA Adviser name, email and drop-in advising hours, visit <http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/advising>

Curriculum

Universities in South Africa are based on British higher education in structure and method. For some courses, this may be more lecture-based instruction requiring effective note taking of lectures and the ability to demonstrate understanding of material based solely on lectures. Students must be prepared to assume more responsibility and independence in completing readings, be assessed for a course through a single paper or exam, and be able to seek out assistance from instructors and South African students. For more information about courses and academics, see the [UCEAP Program Guide](#).

South Africa is on the calendar year system; hence, their academic year begins spring (first) semester and continues through fall (second) semester. When reviewing courses, applicants should carefully note University of Cape Town course levels (100, 200, 300, 400, 500), required prerequisites, duration (year vs. semester), and term (first vs. second semester).

Information on courses is described further in the [UCEAP Application Instructions for UCT](#). Refer to these documents for course information *only* and disregard any sections pertaining to Application for Admission and Applicant Admission Process at this time. Additional information on courses is available in the [UCT Faculty Handbooks](#). UCEAP students are required to take 1-2 courses in the school/faculty in which they are admitted.

Students interested in African Studies courses should be aware that such courses are highly popular with international students and UCT limits the numbers of international students in any class on campus to no more than 50% of class enrollment; therefore, African Studies courses cannot be the main objective of all UC student study. Students are recommended to consider general major coursework with community engagement opportunities in order to learn and experience issues impacting South Africa.

Students take courses with local and international students. Students interested in taking courses alongside South Africans should note that courses with topics on Africa and South Africa have generally been more popular with international students than South African students. Although not required, students may wish to consider a language course in one of the official languages of South Africa (e.g. Xhosa, Afrikaans).

Internships and Research

The opportunity to offer service to the disadvantaged communities of Cape Town is a highlight of many students' study abroad experience in South Africa. Internships are arranged by UCT's Students' Health and Welfare Centres Organization (SHAWCO) and will be secured once you are on-site. Students must complete a substantial paper or series of papers in addition to the internship in order to receive academic credit (Pass/No pass basis only). If interested in research for academic credit, students must enroll in a UCT class which has a required research or fieldwork component. Students may also pursue community service and volunteer activities independently on a non-credit basis through local organizations.

Housing

Limited campus housing may be available. Otherwise, all students will live with other U.S. and international students in a shared apartment or house in a safe neighborhood arranged by Ida Cooper Associates. Ida Cooper Associates and the International Academic Programmes Office (IAPO) will arrange housing before your departure based on the housing preference questionnaire you will complete in the UCEAP Pre-Departure Checklist. The lodging and amenities will vary by each housing option, but you can easily buy things that meet your needs in Cape Town. Houses are not centrally heated, and you may want to purchase a heater for the winter months or a fan for the warmer months.

Unless otherwise instructed, you will make your housing payments directly to the landlord in local currency, even if you are on financial aid. In some cases, credit card payments may be accepted. Before leaving South Africa, you must pay the balance of any outstanding rent, library, gym, and other charges in full. If you leave unpaid fees behind, your grades will not be released to UC and you will be responsible for paying these fees directly to the host university even after returning to the U.S.

Visa and Entry Clearance

Travel after the UC term ends and before the official UCEAP program start date is **not possible** due to the visa application processing times. Approximately 3-4 weeks before your program begins, all students must travel to the South African Embassy (Consulate) in Los Angeles to obtain their visa in-person.

For NorCal students: The BSA Adviser for this program can connect you via email with the other UC Berkeley students going to South Africa during your study abroad term. You may want to plan the trip to the South African Consulate in Los Angeles together - to make it more fun and to save on money (gas and possible overnight stay). You can return home after dropping off your visa application. You then need to wait for your passport to be mailed back to you with your student visa stamp inside, which will probably arrive immediately before departure.

The BSA Adviser for the program can also help connect you with other UC students going to South Africa. You will all be heading to the LA Consulate around the same time. Please note that consulates are closed over the weekend.

Special Demands of the Program

Health and safety remain primary issues of concern for study in South Africa, particularly crime/security, motor traffic, and HIV. Students should review the [US Department of State South Africa Country Page](#), UCEAP [Program Guide](#) and [Risk Assessment](#) to familiarize themselves with risks associated with participation on the program.

Students should also familiarize themselves with the role of race, gender, sexuality, and religion while studying in South Africa, and develop appropriate expectations according to personal backgrounds and self-identification. LGBTIQ students are invited to reference the [UCEAP LGBTIQ Community Resource Page](#) to learn about host country laws and norms.