

Transfer Credits and Letter of Permission Factsheet

Prepared by the Saint Mary's University "Global Learning and Intercultural Support" Office
E-mail: Mobility.international@smu.ca

Introduction

Since you have been accepted to the SMU Exchange Program, you probably had questions such as "which courses I will take at the host university can be accepted for transfer credits?" and "how many credits will I receive for those courses?" – all details around these questions will be determined based on the Letter of Permission Request Form and the course description you will submit to your academic advisor. Your academic advisor's contact information is found at:

<http://www.smu.ca/academics/academic-advising.html> (undergraduate students) or

<http://www.smu.ca/academics/grad-programs-and-coordinators.html> (graduate students).

A Letter of Permission Request Form (LoP) is one of the most important documents during the exchange program! Without prior permission from the Dean of your Program, you will not be able to transfer credits back to your SMU degree. Your academic advisor will be there to provide help and guidance for you in this important academic arrangement.

The Letter of Permission Request Form is found at <http://www.smu.ca/academics/ar-service-centre-forms.html>. Each LoP has room to list 5 courses, and you may need multiple sheets depending on the number of courses you want to request a review for approval.

If you recall, before you applied for the exchange program, you were asked, at a minimum, to find out from your advisor:

- whether there is room for transfer credits in your degree program;
- what courses you have left to do to complete your degree program; and
- if any of those remaining courses could be taken abroad on a transfer credit basis.

Now that your exchange host university is determined, it is time to **start the Letter of Permission process!**

9 Steps to completing your LoP

Complete your LoP as follows. There are 9 steps for students in the exchange program. Once you open the document at <http://www.smu.ca/academics/ar-service-centre-forms.html>:

- 1) Under **Student Information**, fill in your own information

2) Under **Registration Information**, write down the host university and fill in the year for the term you will be abroad

3) Under **Courses Applied For**, fill in the Course Number (if available) and Course Title.
(Note: Leave “Credit Value” and “SMU Equivalent” blank as these sections will be completed by your academic advisor.)

4) Sign and date the form

5) Print out the detailed course descriptions of the courses you want to take and attach them to your LoP.

(Note: The course descriptions/syllabi are often found on the host university website. If your academic advisor needed more information than what you could find on the website, e-mail the Global Learning and Intercultural Support Office mobility.international@smu.ca and request more information from the partner university on your behalf.)

6) It is helpful for the academic advisor to know why you wish to take the course at another institution, how the requested course fits into your academic program, and whether it has been determined that no other equivalent or suitable course is available at Saint Mary's University. To that end, we suggest you write a letter stating the above mentioned when you apply for the LoP request.

7) Take those 3 items (i.e., the LoP form, the course information, and your letter of application) to the academic advising office of your Program: <http://www.smu.ca/academics/academic-advising.html> (undergraduate students) or <http://www.smu.ca/academics/grad-programs-and-coordinators.html> (graduate students).

(Note: Usually you will be asked to leave your LoP application materials with the advisor's office. Your advisor will review your information and consult relevant academic departments to determine whether the course(s) can be accepted for transfer. Once the review is complete, they will fill out the **Undergraduate Students - Faculty Advising Office/Graduate Students – Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGSR)** section of the LoP and inform you that your LoP is ready for your pick-up. This process could take from a week to a few weeks, so **don't expect your advisor to sign your LoP on the spot or to tell you right away which courses can be accepted!**)

8) Once you pick up your signed LoP at the advisor's office, take the LoP to the Service Centre (McNally Main 108) so the information can be added to the system. The Service Centre staff will sign, date, and stamp the form and give you back the original and a copy.

9) Submit a copy of the finalized LoP to the Global Learning and Intercultural Support Office (Atrium106) **by one month prior to the start of the exchange term**. Keep the original copy of your LoP for your record and have it with you while on exchange.

Other helpful tips and reminders about the transfer credits and Letter of Permission process:

- List on your LoP a set of courses you hope to take plus a selection of alternative courses as back-up. Have all of them reviewed for transfer credit hours so that you can switch the courses around with the pre-approved back-up choices during the course registration process at the host university.
- Be prepared to complete additional LoPs as necessary when the host university updates the course offerings for your exchange term(s) and/or when your course registration changes at the beginning of the exchange term.
- DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE TERM TO SUBMIT A NEW LOP ABOUT ADDITIONAL COURSES! A Letter of Permission request will not be accepted retroactively.
- If you are completing an additional LoP from overseas, you can send the course descriptions to the SMU Global Learning and Intercultural Support Office at mobility.international@smu.ca and we can help complete the LoP for you and submit it to the academic advisor. Please include in your e-mail that the Global Learning and Intercultural Support Office has your permission to sign your LoP on your behalf.
- Among the courses you are interested in taking, there may be some courses you want to take for your personal interest without transfer credit hours to your SMU program. If you are not seeking to transfer credits for certain courses, you do not need to have those courses reviewed by your advisor for approval.
- If you received approval for a course but if you ended up not taking the course, do not worry about having that course removed from your LoP.
- If you are applying for a student loan, be sure that you remain a full-time student by transferring more than 3 courses (9 credit hours) or equivalent per semester. You must also request the SMU Global Learning and Intercultural Support Office mobility.international@smu.ca to prepare your confirmation of participation letter and send it to the Service Centre/Financial Aid.

Remember,

- Your transfer credits will be recorded after an official transcript is received from the host university, and it takes 2-3 months after you finish the exchange program. Please keep this in mind, if you are studying abroad in the final semester of your degree program and planning to graduate soon after the exchange program.
- the course numbers/titles on the LoP have to be an exact match to the courses that appear on your host university transcript!
- in order for the credits to be accepted, you must receive a grade of 65% or higher in the host university grades. Exceptions to this rule is made on a case by case basis when the grading scheme of the host institution is different from that of Saint Mary's University.
- the Registrar will record the credit hours only, so it will not affect your SMU GPA.

- **Before you can receive the transfer credit hours on your SMU account, you must complete the SMU Exchange Debriefing Questionnaire -- this is an important part of the program requirements!**

What happens if I failed a course at the host university?

- If you received a grade of 64% or lower for a course, and if that course is on your LoP, it will be recorded on your transcript without the credits. In other words, a course taken on a letter of permission will be recorded on your SMU transcript whether you pass or fail the course.
- If you failed a course that's on your LoP and if you wanted to have that course removed from your LoP so it will not appear on your SMU transcript, there is a formal process you need to follow with the Dean's Office. The Dean will review such requests only when there was an extenuating circumstance, such as hospitalization, major illness, death in family, etc.

How do I register for courses during my exchange term?

You will not be registering in courses at SMU during the exchange program (unless you will be taking a SMU on-line course or a directed studies course concurrently with the exchange program). However, the SMU Global Learning and Intercultural Support Office will register you in "AWAY1000" on your SMU account for the duration of your exchange program to signify that you will be away on a Letter of Permission.

As for the actual courses you will take during the exchange program, the host university will provide detailed instructions for you to follow. In some cases, you may register in courses on-line on the host university's portal site, or you may have an advising session at the beginning of the semester with the host university's advisor before your courses are confirmed.

How does my tuition payment work for my exchange term?

-You will pay the SMU rate of tuition to SMU based on the number of transfer credit hours that will be accepted into your SMU program. Once your LoP is approved, your SMU tuition for the exchange program will be posted on your SMU banner account and **you pay just like your regular SMU tuition** by the beginning of the corresponding term at SMU. For example, if you are in the winter semester exchange program in 2017-18, the payment deadline is January 12 2018 (the same payment deadline as SMU Winter Semester).

Note 1: If you are on a Canadian Study-Permit (i.e. "international" students), the international differential fees will also be part of your SMU Exchange tuition.

Note 2: On some of the host university website for exchange students, you may see a mention that "tuition is waived for students from partner universities". You are not assessed tuition fees by the host university, because exchange students are expected to pay tuition to the home university for the courses they take at the host university.

-There are exceptions to the above payment method. For some programs you enroll in at the host university, your tuition fee is directly assessed by the host university and you will follow their payment

instruction and deadline. Some examples of those programs include the International Summer/Spring German courses at Giessen, Pre-term intensive Portuguese courses at PUC-Rio, ISU Frankfurt, ISU Giessen, Spanish courses at upna, Spanish courses at La Salle, etc. If tuition is already charged by the host university, SMU will not assess tuition for the same courses.

In addition to the above, please see specific information for your Faculty below.

- Faculty of Arts and Environmental Studies → p.6
- Sobey School of Business/ Bachelor of Commerce → p.7
- Faculty of Science → p.8

Faculty of Arts and Environmental Studies

Letter of Permission notes for Arts & BES Study Abroad Students

Before the exchange application was submitted:

At your academic advising appointment the advisor can prepare a degree audit to determine outstanding requirements and credits.

During and after the exchange selection process:

Students must submit their Letter of Permission and course descriptions to have their chosen courses reviewed. This will determine which courses can be accepted for transfer and the appropriate Saint Mary's University equivalent. Average processing time for a Letter of Permission is 2-5 business days.

Please note:

- The Academic Advisor is not equipped to advise on choosing a partner host school for your exchange abroad. They can give information on courses required for your Saint Mary's program, and as a result, advise on what types of courses to look for.
- Letters of Permission for specific courses required for your major should first be reviewed by your Department Chair before being submitted to the B.A. Advising Centre.

For more information, please contact

Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Environmental Studies

McNally Main 214B

Telephone: 902-420-5437

Fax: 902-491-8634

Email: SMARTS@smu.ca

Website: [Bachelor of Arts Advising Centre](#)

Dean: Dr. Margaret MacDonald

Program Advisor: Necia Browne and Emily Anderson

Sobey School of Business/ Bachelor of Commerce

Before the exchange application was submitted:

-An approved Letter of Permission is not a required supporting document when students submit their exchange application. However, at a minimum, students should find out from the advisor whether there is room to take electives on a transfer credit basis in their degree program before they submit their exchange application.

-The academic advisor cannot advise students on which school to choose. When students meet with the academic advisor, the advisor can check 1) what courses they have left to complete and 2) if any of those remaining courses could be taken abroad. Then it is up to the students to research the partner institutions and their courses.

During and after the exchange selection process:

-Students must submit their Letter of Permission, course descriptions, and a letter of application first to their academic advisor and then the courses will be reviewed to determine whether the course can be accepted for transfer. The academic advisor cannot advise students on the spot as to which courses can be accepted for transfer.

Note

a) Non-commerce and free elective courses may be taken during the exchange program, as long as a Letter of Permission was submitted to the advisor and approved prior to starting the exchange program.

b) Letters of Permission for core Bachelor of Commerce courses and courses required for majors may be reviewed but will not be usually approved.

For more information, please contact

Sobey School of Business

Sobey Building 252

Telephone: 902-420-5527

Fax: 902-420-5892

Email: sobey.bcomm@smu.ca

Website: [BComm Advising Centre](#)

Dean: Dr. Patricia Bradshaw

Program Advisors: Mahbouba Kafrouny

Faculty of Science

Before the exchange application was submitted:

-An approved Letter of Permission is not a required supporting document when students submit their exchange application. However, at a minimum, students should find out from the advisor whether there is room to take courses on a transfer credit basis in their degree program before they submit their exchange application.

-The academic advisor cannot advise students on which school to choose. When students meet with the academic advisor, the advisor can check 1) what courses they have left to complete and 2) if any of those remaining courses could be taken abroad. Then it is up to the students to research the partner institutions and their courses.

During and after the exchange selection process:

-Students must submit their Letter of Permission, course descriptions/outlines, and a letter of application first and then the courses will be reviewed to determine whether the course can be accepted for transfer. The academic advisor cannot advise students on the spot as to which courses can be accepted for transfer.

Note:

A) Students should submit course outlines (syllabus) if they wish to have a Science course evaluated. Course Descriptions are generally adequate for elective courses.

B) Students are encouraged to submit course outlines for Science courses, but there are some departments that require students to take all 'Major' courses at Saint Mary's.

For more information, please contact

Science Advising Centre

Atrium 301

Telephone: 902-420-5661

Fax: 902-420-5261

Email: advisor.science@smu.ca

Website: [Bachelor of Science Advising Centre](#)

Dean: Dr. Steven Smith

Program Advisor: Laura Johnston and Courtenay Kyle