



CHILE

FIELD GUIDE



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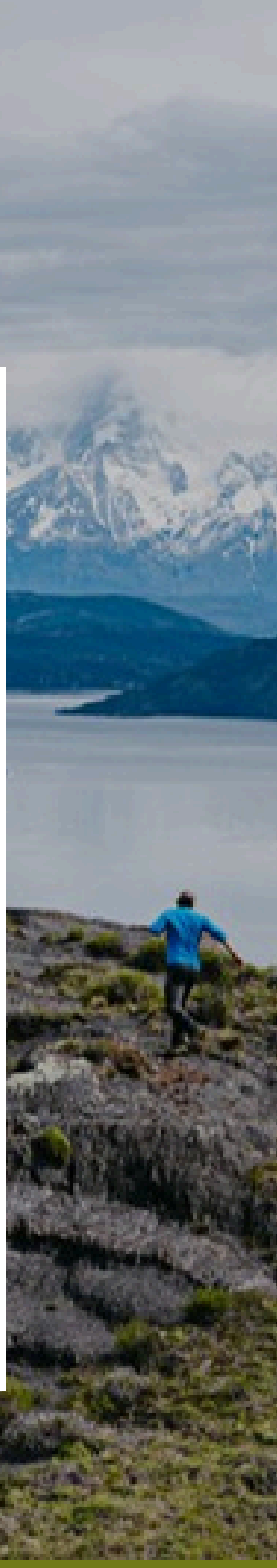
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LIFE IN THE FIELD



Academic Foci

- The center sits alongside the Cerro Dorotea peak and Señoret Channel as the gateway to Torres del Paine National Park.
- From jagged peaks, massive glaciers, and narrow fjords to expansive grasslands and lush temperate rainforests, patagonia presents an unmatched opportunity to study remote ecosystems and complex geological processes.
- The fragile ecosystem is especially vulnerable to impacts of climate change – unpredictable storms, glacial melt, shifting temperatures, fires, and droughts.

SEMESTER: WILD PATAGONIA: FIRE AND ICE

Glacial and freshwater dynamics. Geology and volcanic activity. Coastal and alpine ecology. Penguin behavior. Endangered species protection. Conservation strategies and practices. National parks and protected area management.

SUMMER 1: THE PATAGONIAN WINTER

Winter ecology. Southern Hemisphere high-latitude indigenous cultures. Socio-ecology, conservation, and globalization. Impacts of resource extraction and climate change.

Each program combines theory learned in the classroom alongside field-based applications. Time in the classroom is structured to give students a solid understanding of environmental history, theory, and conservation techniques before deploying their knowledge or specific techniques in the field. All classes are taught in English.



Setting and Facilities

A former hostel in the tourist town of Puerto Natales.

RURAL



URBAN

PUERTO NATALES

5-minute walk.

Population ~24,000

Nearest town. Doctor, pharmacy, library, restaurants, shops, cafes, and bars.

PUNTA ARENAS

3-hour drive

Population ~144,000

Southernmost city in Chile. Tourists on their way to Antarctica.

SANTIAGO

4-hour flight

Population ~6,900,000

Capital city. Advanced medical care.

HOUSING

Eight rooms, 3-6 people per room in twin bunk beds. Shared closet, desks, and storage spaces.

Shared bathrooms with shower (hot water) and western-style toilet.

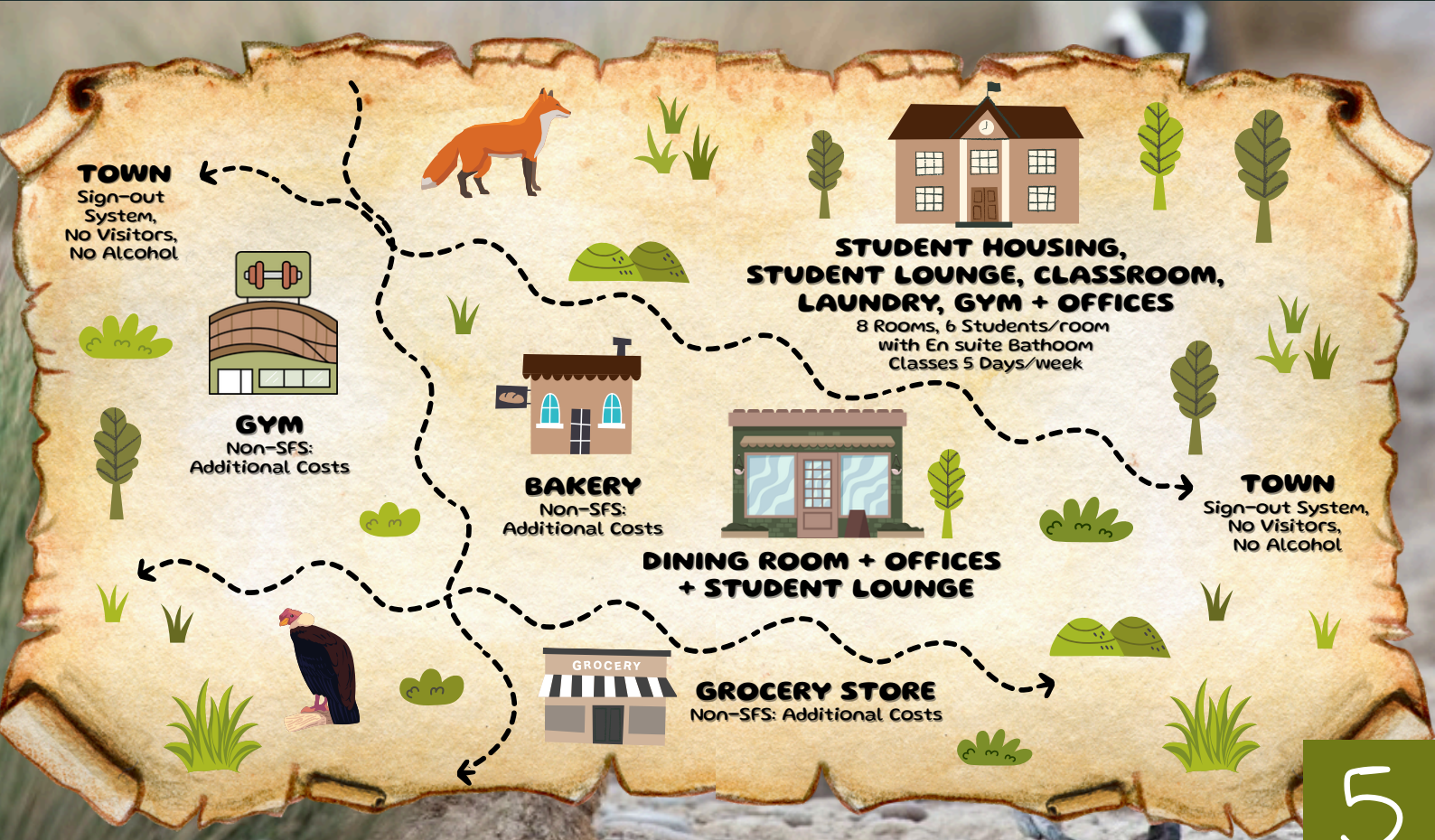
OTHER FACILITIES

Common room with projector, games, and basic kitchen supplies.

Classroom, kitchen, dining area, living room, staff offices, some staff housing, and two small outdoor areas.

Two washing machines (detergent not provided). Two dryers.

Center Map





Campus Policies



CURFEW, SIGN-OUT LOG & BUDDY POLICY

Because center locations are often unfamiliar to students, policies including nightly curfew, sign-out logs, and a buddy system help keep students safe.



CHORES

Students are expected to take responsibility for their space. Students will help set up/clean-up for meals. Specific chore responsibilities will be shared during orientation



DRUGS PROHIBITED

Consumption or possession of alcohol is limited to beer on campus. Students who consume alcohol need to do so in moderation and maintain respectful behavior toward others.

SFS does not allow possession or use of any medications or substances that are illegal in the U.S. or host country for the full duration of SFS programs including free time and weekends away. Check local laws before possessing, purchasing, or using e-cigarettes or vaping devices on program.



NO VISITORS

Students are obligated to stay at the center during program time. No visitors are allowed on campus without center staff approval. If family or friends are planning on visiting have them do so during program breaks or coordinate with the center director for approval. Time off during program time to spend with guests is limited.



TIME OFF IS LIMITED

Students will have highly structured schedules on weekdays and Saturdays with Sundays generally free to spend at the center or in town. Attendance is required for all activities including multi-day trips that may fall on the weekends. Semester students will be given occasional weekends off and a 5-9 day mid-semester break. Summer students will be given 1-2 weekends off. Travel to certain regions or neighboring countries during time off may be prohibited based on risk levels or center policies.

Students are responsible for their own food and accommodations during non-program time. Students are not allowed to stay at the center during weekends off or during mid-semester break. See page 12 for estimated costs.



NO KNIVES OR WEAPONS



Community Interaction

Students live at a center, rather than a homestay, local apartment, or university dorm. This means they will not navigate the local culture, cuisine, or language every day. However, meaningful research is only possible with the input of local people, so community engagement and Directed Research projects vary each term to reflect the requests of our partners. Some examples of past outreach initiatives include planting trees, working in community gardens, and outreach at schools.



Food

SFS can support most dietary needs, but the variety of food will be extremely limited due to local availability and cost. SFS cannot accommodate strict Halal or Kosher diets. Meals are simple and repeat every week, so SFS always recommends bringing vitamins, protein bars, nuts, favorite snacks, etc.

Meals may consist of rice, pasta, soup, salad, beans, vegetables, and a protein option (meat and non-meat). Off-center meals are meat-heavy with few vegetables. Snacks may include toast with spreads.



Climate

Students will be exposed to cold and extremely windy environments.

Fall runs March - May. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 26-64°F.

Winter runs June - August. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 24-48°F.

Spring runs September - November. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 30-60°F.

Summer runs December - February. Temperatures in Puerto Natales range from 39-66°F.



Money

The local currency is the Chilean Peso (CLP).

Both cash and debit/credit cards are widely accepted. All students are required to bring a credit/debit card with at least \$3,000 in funds in case of emergencies. Mastercard and Visa are the most commonly accepted cards internationally. Notify banks about international travel.

Students should bring at least \$300 USD with them to start (see page 12). CLP can be ordered from banks prior to traveling, exchanged for USD at the airport, or withdrawn from ATMs. When bringing USD to exchange, travel with bills in excellent condition (clean, unwrinkled, unmarked, with no tears). Students will have access to ATMs in Puerto Natales.



Exercise

The center has basic weights, yoga mats, resistance bands, one static bike, one pull-up bar, a soccer ball, and a volleyball. In town, there is a public soccer field and running/bike track and a paid gym with a pool.



Considerations

Language: Spanish is the official language. Locals have intermediate to advanced knowledge of English. Students without basic Spanish may find interactions with locals limited. Most of students time will be spent with their cohort, so do not expect to practice the local language daily.

Culture and Diversity: 59% identify as White and 25% as Mixed. However, most Chileans share a similar ancestry and culture. 88% are Christian and 10% non-religious. Racial features are often used as nicknames (Gringo, Negro, etc.) Spanish is a gendered language. Catcalling is prevalent.

Physical Readiness: Students must hike for up to 8 miles at a time over rugged terrain, occasionally while carrying 20-30 pounds of gear. During overnight trips, students will sleep in remote field environments with rudimentary amenities.

Hazards: Cold, extreme wind, pumas, etc.

Travel: Students will frequently travel long distances by car.



Electricity

The electrical voltage in Chile is 220 (the U.S. uses 120). Check all electrical devices to see if a voltage converter is needed. Chile uses plug type C and L (the U.S. uses A and B). All U.S. students will need plug adaptors.



Internet

Wireless internet is available at the center, but it can be slow and sometimes unavailable. SFS reserves the right to limit internet activities occurring on our servers including, but not limited to, streaming or downloading audio/video content (Facetime, Netflix, etc.). During most expeditions, internet will not be available.



Computers

Students need to bring laptops with Microsoft Office (or the ability to open Microsoft files offline) and a USB port. Electronic devices are subjected to a much harsher environment than normal. In particular, Apple products are more difficult to repair or replace locally. Please take precautions to protect devices.



Phones

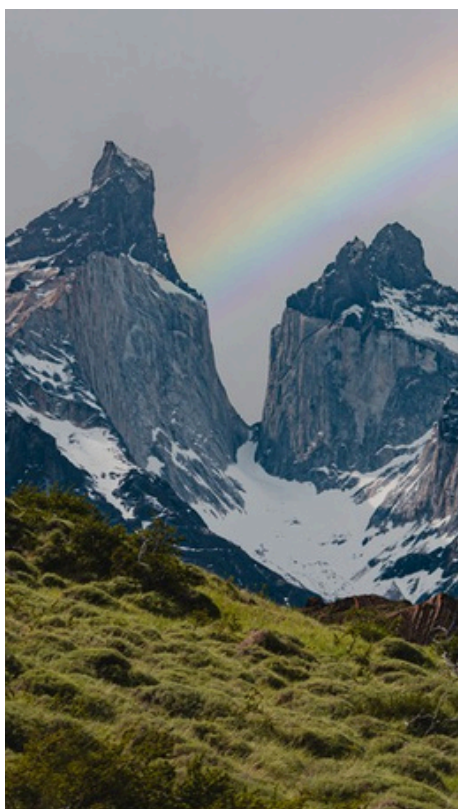
Most students with unlocked phones purchase eSims or local sim cards to use on program. Students without unlocked phones or international phone plans are provided with local phones. A refundable deposit of \$30 USD is required for use of SFS phones. All students are responsible for maintaining credit on their phone to communicate with staff and peers. Local sim cards and phone plans cost approximately ~\$10 USD per month. Additional credit may be needed for optional international calls or students can use Wi-Fi based options.



Mail

No packages can be sent to the center. Do not send any medications by mail. The average one-way travel time for letters from the U.S. to Chile is 3 weeks. Therefore, no letters can be sent during the last 3 weeks of programs, as students will not receive it! Mail will not be forwarded.

Address: Student Name, SFS Center for Climate Studies,
P. Arauco 779, Puerto Natales, Chile





Sample Schedule

This schedule is a sample; no week will follow it exactly. Programs typically begin with long classroom days and transition into more fieldwork later on. Final schedules are provided upon arrival and are subject to change, including the day-of, due to weather, availability, and factors outside of SFS’ control. Flexibility is essential.

All events are mandatory. We respect religious and cultural observances, but because of our cohort-based field programs, accommodations (schedule changes, special meals, personal observance time, etc.) may be limited. Communicate any anticipated needs with SFS in advance to discuss any feasible arrangements.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Free time at the Center/ In Town (Laundry, Homework, Relaxation) At the center, students will prepare food for themselves during days off.	8-9am Breakfast	8-9am Breakfast	8-9am Breakfast	6:30 – 7am Breakfast & Pack lunch	6:30 – 7am Breakfast & Pack lunch	8-9am Breakfast
	9am-12pm Political & Social Dimensions of Conservation - Lecture	9am-12pm Patagonian Ecology - Lecture	9am-12pm Patagonian Ecology - Lecture	7:30am-1pm Earth Systems & Climate Science - Field Exercise		9:30-11:30am Political & Social Dimensions of Conservation - Lecture
	12-1pm Free time at the Center	12-1pm Free time at the Center	12-1pm Free time at the Center		7:30am-6pm Field Trip w/ Lunch in the Field	11:30am-1pm Free time at the Center
	1-2pm Lunch	1-2pm Lunch	1-2pm Lunch	1-2pm- Lunch in the Field	Field trips can be any day of the week and occasionally last multiple days.	1-2pm Lunch
	2-5pm DR Skills - Lecture	2-5pm DR Skills - Lecture	2-5pm Language, Culture, & Society of Chile - Lecture	2-6pm Field Trip		2:30-4pm Community Engagement
	5:45pm-7pm Dinner and Afternoon Meeting	5:45pm-7pm Dinner and Afternoon Meeting	5:45pm-7pm Dinner and Afternoon Meeting	6-7pm Dinner	6-7pm Dinner	5:45pm-7pm Dinner and Afternoon Meeting
	7-11pm Free time at the Center / In Town	7-11pm Free time at the Center / In Town	7-11pm Free time at the Center / In Town	7pm Curfew (Camping)	7-11pm Free time at the Center / In Town	7pm-12am Free time at the Center / In Town
11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew	11pm Curfew		11pm Curfew	12am Curfew

- Meals and Announcements
- Free Time
- Community Engagement
- Classroom Time
- Field Work
- Curfew



Health & Safety in the Field



24-Hour Emergency Hotline

SFS maintains a 24-hour emergency hotline. To urgently contact a student in the field, call 978.219.5113.



Health & Wellness Manager

The Student Health & Wellness Manager is a full-time primary medical responder and student support personnel on campus and on excursions. They are certified in Wilderness First Response, or an equivalent certification, and trained in sexual assault first response. They also advise students on life abroad, conduct risk assessments, and attend medical appointments.



Orientation

Prior to departure, SFS requires attendance at a pre-departure orientation focused on essential aspects of the program. Students must also research the inherent risks associated with traveling abroad and cultural considerations themselves. Upon arrival to campus, students receive an additional orientation about the local community and culture, center operations, and relevant risks.



Medical Care

SFS maintains detailed risk assessment and management plans. If a medical care facility visit is needed, staff will accompany the student to the appointment. There may be times when medical care is delayed. Students are responsible for all medical costs and all incidental expenses related to injury, illness, or quarantine incurred by any party involved, including but not limited to transportation, accommodations, etc. Some medical conditions may necessitate medical withdrawal from the program. Final decisions on medical withdrawals are made by SFS. See the Health and Safety Guide for more information.



Mental Health Support

Adjusting to new environments while away from usual support systems is challenging. While abroad, there is decreased communication with home, limited privacy, and fewer opportunities for exercise. Many students find the rigorous schedule of SFS programs and the rare opportunities for alone time overwhelming.

SFS is partnered with Telus Health ([My SSP website](#)) to provide students with access to free, mental health and wellness support via WIFI. My SSP is a supplemental resource, and students should work with their mental health provider to create a primary support plan while abroad. See the Health and Safety Guide for more information.



Identity

Each country is shaped by its history, and therefore attitudes towards gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and religion can differ greatly. What seems like discrimination may simply be curiosity. Students should research how their identity might be perceived in a new context.

Studying abroad is a privilege, and it is not our students' place to change the host country's culture or values. SFS campuses are permanent fixtures and home to staff year-round. As representatives of SFS and students' own countries, behavior that is disrespectful, illegal, or contrary to cultural norms can degrade the relationship with the community.



Sexual Health & Wellness

Please consider:

- The ramifications that a short-term relationship may have on a small residential campus or within the local community.
- Access to protection, medication for sexually transmitted infections, and emergency contraception may not be available.
- The current dialogue and understanding of consent in the U.S. does not always apply in other cultures.
- If anyone feels subjected to sexual harassment, they should walk away from the situation without concern for being culturally inappropriate. They can report harassment or assault to any staff member.
- In the case of a sexual assault, SFS provides support to student including access to medical care and support systems and the option to report to law enforcement. However, local laws and limited availability of resources such as rape kits can complicate reports of sexual harassment or sexual assault in foreign countries.



LGBTQIA+

SFS welcomes all students at our centers, but recommends students know the following:

- Laws and social customs of the host country may criminalize same-sex relationships or certain gender expressions.
- Travelers may experience discrimination and harassment.
- Some cultural practices are based on traditional gender roles. As a result, some students might be misgendered.
- Some languages are gendered, resulting in a lack of terms that encompass non-binary and gender-neutral identities.
- Health services specific to transgender people may be limited or unavailable.
- It is not always possible to use preferred names or genders (visa paperwork, plane tickets, hotel reservations, and government sites). Gender X is not recognized worldwide, and students may need to provide binary sex information. See the LGBTQ+ Resource Guide for more information.



PREPARING FOR DEPARTURE



Program Costs

The relationship SFS has with students' schools will determine the billing process. Within a week of acceptance, students or their schools will be required to pay a non-refundable deposit to reserve their spot. Afterward, we will reach out to students or their schools to collect tuition payments. Up-to-date costs and refund policies can be found [here](#).

Included in SFS program costs are program advising and orientations, tuition and research fees, airport transfers, housing and meals during program time, field excursions and cultural activities, official transcript processing, and evacuation and 24/7 support in case of emergencies.

PROGRAM	BILLING DEADLINE
Spring	November 1st
Summer 1 or 1+2	April 1st
Summer 2	May 1st
Fall	June 1st

BASIC COSTS (BILLED BY SFS)	SEMESTER	SUMMER 1
Tuition	\$24,000	\$7,000
Room & Board	\$7,950	\$2,500
BASIC PROGRAM COST	\$31,950	\$9,500
ADDITIONAL COSTS (ESTIMATED, ACTUAL COSTS MAY VARY)		
Airfare	\$2,000	\$2,000
Passport	\$200	\$200
Visa fees (if applicable)	N/A	N/A
Immunizations/Medications	\$200	\$200
Personal Expenses	\$1,100	\$400
Program Breaks - Accommodation & Food	\$1,000	N/A
ESTIMATED ADDITIONAL PROGRAM COSTS	\$4,500	\$2,800
TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS (BASIC + ADDITIONAL COSTS)		
ESTIMATED TOTAL PROGRAM COST	\$36,350	\$12,300



Financial Aid

All students are encouraged to apply for SFS financial aid. Financial aid applications are reviewed on a rolling basis starting in February for summer programs, April for fall programs, and September for spring programs. Early submissions are welcome. Students who submit an SFS financial aid application by the payment deadline will be considered for our full range of aid options. Learn more [here](#).



PASSPORT

Students must have a passport in hand four months prior to departure that is valid for at least 6 months after departure from Chile.



VISA

Students will enter Chile using a tourist visa. Students' Chilean visas will be granted upon arrival to Chile and last 90 days. Nothing needs to be done for the visa pre-arrival. Tourist visas are currently free to obtain, but visa costs are the responsibility of the student, and prices are subject to change. Staff will plan and pay for a trip to Argentina for semester students to renew semester students' tourist visas for another 90 days.

Non-U.S. citizens may require a different visa process and are responsible for applying for, obtaining, and paying for their own visa valid for the duration of their stay.

If traveling before or after the program, students should make sure that the visa will remain valid for their entire stay.

FLIGHTS

Students are responsible for the cost of flights to and from their program. Students will receive travel instructions at least 2 months prior to the start of their program. Do not book flights before receiving these instructions.

SFS staff will meet students at the airport on the date and time specified in the airport instructions and transport them to the center. Students will receive airport instructions 1-2 weeks prior to the start of their program. If students are traveling before or after the program, they are responsible for meeting the group at the airport at the designated date and time. Additionally, SFS is not responsible for transporting or storing luggage before or after the program.

SFS is not responsible for reimbursing travel expenses for programs canceled or rescheduled due to acts of war or civil unrest, strikes, weather, quarantine/epidemics/sickness, government regulations, or failure of equipment, power, or communications.





Medical Requirements



Medical Approval Process

Students are required to complete the SFS medical approval process. The review is not meant to exclude, but to inform and allow support systems to be put in place. No student may enter the field until medical approval is granted by SFS. See the Health & Safety Guide for more information.



Vaccinations & Medications

Required

- None

Recommended

- Centers for Disease Control, travel clinics, or medical providers can provide further recommendations.



International Health Insurance

Students are required to buy international health insurance. Students will receive international health insurance requirements upon acceptance to their program. Keep in mind most companies reimburse medical costs, so students need an emergency credit card/debit card with at least \$3,000 USD to pay for medical expenses upfront.

All students are enrolled in an emergency evacuation and repatriation insurance plan through American International Group, Inc. (AIG) for the duration of their program only. This is supplemental insurance to students' own comprehensive health insurance outlined above. See the Health & Safety Guide for more information.



Accommodating Disabilities

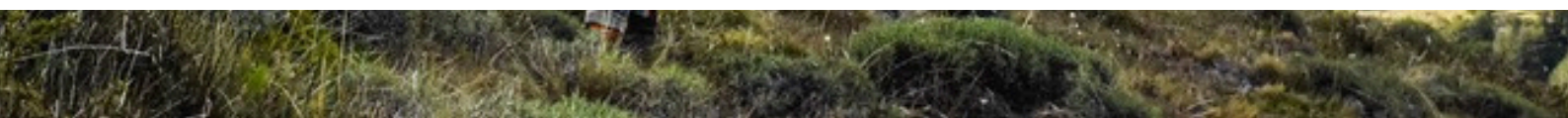
SFS works with students, schools, and physicians to determine required accommodations and whether they can be safely and reasonably maintained on program. We strive to meet students' needs, but due to the remote nature of programs, there are varying levels of accessibility. Questions regarding health or learning accommodations can be directed to the Student Life Department or the Office of Academic Affairs respectively.



PACKING GUIDE



Packing Considerations



Luggage

SFS does not have a specific policy regarding how much or what type of luggage students bring, however, students will be sharing a room, and there is limited space to store belongings. Bring only what can be maneuvered oneself and check with all airlines for luggage restrictions and fees.



Culture & Climate

Many students bring old clothes to wear in the field and leave behind at the end of the program. Do not bring anything that cannot be damaged!

A minimum of 3-inch seams are required for all shorts worn in town.

While packing, consider the impact of the products brought to the program, both the ingredients and packaging. Plastic can be difficult for waste management in remote environments. Think about bringing a reusable tote, metal straw, cloth napkins, etc. We also highly encourage biodegradable soaps, shampoos, and conditioners.



Required Packing

- **Pants** Lightweight blends that dry quickly. 2+ for field work, 3+ jeans/leggings/normal pants for day-to-day, and comfy pants for around the center.
- **Waterproof rain pants**
- **Long underwear/base layers** to wear under clothes. 2+ pairs to last during excursions. Keep base layers tight-fitting to wear underneath pants/jackets.
- **T-shirts** Synthetic shirts are great for chilly nights, wet weather, and field days. Cotton shirts are nice for non-fieldwork days, but please keep them loose-fitting with no midriff exposed.
- **Long-sleeved shirts** A mix of synthetic fabrics and cotton.
- **Casual/nice clothes** for town.
- **Cozy loungewear** for around the center. Students recommend balancing loungewear with field clothes.
- **Insulated coat** Down or synthetic.
- **Wool sweaters or fleeces** worn near daily. Able to fit over long-sleeved layers.
- **Waterproof jacket with a hood** Water resistant is not sufficient.
- **Warm scarf, Hat, Gloves, etc.** 1 set. Past students recommend waterproof gloves.
- **Underwear** for more than one week. Past students recommend synthetic/quick-dry underwear.
- **Socks** for more than one week including 3+ pairs of light wool or synthetic (not cotton) hiking socks.
- **Pajamas** appropriate for shared spaces.
- **Sun hat and sunglasses**
- **Hiking boots** over-the-ankle and waterproof.
- **Sneakers** or other casual shoes.
- **Rubber sandals** for showers or the center/hostel.

Sheets, a pillow, and a blanket will be provided at the center.

- **Sleeping bag (SEMESTER ONLY)** Rated for the weather during your session. Can be rented in town.
- **Sleeping pad (SEMESTER ONLY)** for camping trips. Can be rented in town.
- **Towels** 1 shower towel and 1 face/hand towel. Quick dry towels recommended! Additional towels will be provided at the center.
- **Toiletries** Basic items can be bought in town but bring enough for at least a week. Preferably biodegradable.

- **Record of immunizations and Health history**
- **Personal first-aid kit** Consider Anti-itch creams, Neosporin, Bacitracin, Tylenol, Ibuprofen, Pepto Bismol, Band-Aids, Tape, Tweezers, Nail clippers, Antihistamines, Pro-biotics, Antidiarrheals, Vitamin C, Cold medicines, Immune boosters, Hydration salts/Liquid IV, etc.
- **Prescriptions** Overseas prescriptions are not always accepted. Bring adequate supplies of prescription medications to last the duration of the program alongside doctors' prescriptions to avoid customs delays. Think about inhalers, allergy medication, contacts/glasses, etc.
- **Motion sickness medication/ Dramamine/ Ginger chews** preferably non-drowsy.
- **Period care** Students can buy basic period products in town. We encourage menstrual cups or environmentally friendly, biodegradable options.
- **Computer** that can open Microsoft Office documents offline and has a USB port or USB port adapter.
- **Surge protector and Plug adaptors** multi-outlet best for hostels.
- **Headlamp with extra rechargeable batteries** Flashlight is not a replacement, but can be brought in addition.
- **Crampons** (SUMMER ONLY)
- **Dry bags or sturdy plastic bags** Gallon-sized Ziploc bags work well.
- **Day pack with waterproof cover** small backpack suitable for taking gear into the field. 15-30L recommended. Ideally with chest strap, and hip straps.
- **Backpacking bag with waterproof cover (SEMESTER ONLY)** with hip and chest straps to hold 3-5 days' worth of supplies in the field. 35-55L recommended.
- **Water bottles/bladders** 1+ with at least 2-3L capacity.
- **Sunscreen** 1+ bottles. Can buy locally.
- **Tupperware and Travel mugs** for packing lunches. Can buy locally.





Optional Packing

- **Purse/tote bag** for town.
- **Small clothing repair kit**
- **Laundry bag** with name labeled on it.
- **Swimsuit** for swimming in town.
- **Hand warmers**
- **Lightweight blanket**
- **Rite-in-the-Rain notebooks** No need to buy Rite-in-the-Rain pens as pencils will work!
- **Trekking poles** Can rent in town.
- **Camping gear/Tent** for personal treks during free time. Can rent in town. Cannot use SFS gear.
- **Hammock**
- **Notebooks and Pens/Pencils** Can buy locally.
- **Umbrella**
- **Journal**

- **Games, Movies, Books, and Crafts** Recommended to bring Nintendo Switch controllers.
- **Earplugs and Eye mask**
- **Baby wipes and Hand sanitizer** Can buy in town.
- **Snacks, Drink powders, and Dietary supplements** Any favorites.
- **Camera**
- **Binoculars** Preferably 8 x 40 but anything in the 6 x 30 to 10 x 40 range is fine.
- **Voltage converter** if needed for electronics.
- **HDMI Adapter**
- **Headphones and/or Bluetooth speaker**
- **Waterproof cases for electronics and silicone packets** (or some water-absorbing equivalent).
- **Wristwatch** Preferably water resistant.
- **Extra batteries and External battery packs**



Contact Us

Keep up with SFS Follow us on Instagram [@theSFS/](#)[@theSFS_chile](#), read [news from the field](#), and find the [full list of the SFS team bios here!](#)

Questions about billing? Billing@fieldstudies.org

Deposit payments, invoices, billing deadlines, financial aid packages, and loan paperwork.

Questions about health and safety? StudentLife@fieldstudies.org

Medical paperwork, immunizations, managing medical conditions, and dietary needs and preferences.

Questions about academics? Academics@fieldstudies.org

Learning accommodations, syllabi, and directed research.

Questions about admissions or enrollment? Admissions@fieldstudies.org

Which program is the best fit, application materials, and travel and visa logistics.