
Listserv Summary: Study Abroad Transfer Credits Grades and the Dean's List

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An inquiry was made as to how other schools with a policy whereby study abroad credits are transferred, but grades are not transferred - handle the scenario when their students return from study abroad having scored top results in their courses while abroad, i.e. high enough that they would normally qualify for Dean's List. Do other institutions allow students to qualify for the Dean's List and other such honors upon their return? What are the mechanics used for handling this?

Summary of responses:

There were nine responses to the email; three allow returned study abroad students to qualify for Dean's List or other honors, and six do not.

Details regarding the mechanics of handling this are below:

Those allowing study abroad students to qualify for honors/Dean's list:

- “We... let the students take their study abroad credits pass/fail, but if, upon their return, they see that they've done stunningly well, we let them count their grades. It's all or nothing, though – they can't choose the As and reject others.”
- “We recognize both. If we had visiting students who qualified for the Dean's or President's list prior to attending AUI, they were included and we certainly included our students who had earned Dean's or President's list honors elsewhere. It is a form of recognition and students appreciate it. Visiting students would have missed the ceremony because they were in another country so we recognize all such achievements.”
- “We also do not transfer grades from abroad. Students must earn the equivalent of a "C" or higher in order for us to transfer the grades to VCU. The grades do NOT calculate into the GPA; however, if a student was already on track to graduate with "Latin Honors" (cum laude, etc.), then when they are ready to graduate, our university goes back through all of the student's transferred grades (including study abroad grades, and any others) to recalculate the GPA to determine if the student really qualifies for those honors.”

Those not allowing returned study abroad students to qualify for honors/Dean's list:

- “Going on exchange does not impact students' grades. They retain the same GPA they had before going on exchange when they return. They would not qualify for the Dean's List or other honors for their time abroad. “

- “Our policy for students going abroad is to transfer credits, not grades, so the semester abroad does not affect their GPA. This works both ways: if they’ve done outstandingly well, or conversely, if they have failed courses abroad. Perhaps the faculty of the abroad university can write a type of recommendation letter for your student, to use in the future?”
- “Even when students have demonstrated high performance while studying abroad, we do not take any of their transfer grades into consideration at the home institution. We only transfer the credits, and no special recognition is given for earning high marks overseas. However, they don’t want to go overseas and fail their classes, either. We don’t transfer credit for failing marks.”
- “At our institution, we do not transfer grades, only credit. The reasoning for this is because it would be very difficult to determine the academic rigor of a course through one program compared to that same course at a complete different program in a different country/university. The positive side of receiving very high marks on a transcript is that they can be used in the future for the student’s graduate school applications, etc.”
- “We would not go out of our way to let someone know that a student has gotten the equivalent of all C’s, which might make them academically ineligible for some scholarships, thus for the sake of fairness we can’t just focus on those who do well. We tell our students that it may be a bonus to them—if they are normally an A student and get B’s or it may work the other way. In general they seem OK with that.”