

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVESITY, LONG BEACH
CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM FACULTY
REGARDING THE COSTA RICA SEMESTER**

1. *What courses should I offer while in Costa Rica?*

For the most part, faculty can teach any upper-division GE course in Costa Rica which has some relevance to the setting, that is, either to Costa Rica itself or to Latin America more generally. In addition, you will serve as the faculty of record for the Spanish Language and Culture course. This is a beginning Spanish language course that is taught by an adjunct professor in Costa Rica and includes cultural experiences. (There are also more advanced Spanish language courses available for students who qualify.) You will also supervise students who choose to do an internship in Costa Rica (see number 3 below for more information).

2. *Must the courses I teach be applicable to students' General Education requirements?*

The short answer is "yes." Our experience over the years is that this is what students are looking for, and so they sign up for these courses in greater numbers than non-GE courses (although some GE courses might double-count for the major). Because of the new General Education Executive Order, in order to be considered for this position, you should propose courses that have been approved for upper-division GE credit in category B, C, or D. To learn about the current Costa Rica Semester program, [see our website](#).

3. *How many courses do I teach?*

As mentioned above, Costa Rica Semester faculty teach two lecture/seminar courses while in Costa Rica. They also serve as faculty of record for the Spanish Language and Culture course taught by a Costa Rica-based instructor. In coordination with our Costa Rica service provider, the instructor works with faculty to bring in speakers on relevant topics having to do with Costa Rica or Central America. The Spanish Language and Culture class is a mandatory course for all students participating in the Costa Rica Semester program. The faculty member will also be the instructor of record for an internship course in Costa Rica or allow individual students the option to engage in a directed studies course in their field, when needed. Finally, it is important to note that students are not allowed to add or drop courses once they are in Costa Rica.

4. *What kind of a teaching schedule will I have in Costa Rica?*

Each academic course offering will be taught two days a week. The Spanish Language and Culture class is taught intensively in the first month of the program and involves field trips. Faculty are expected to accompany students on these field trips.

5. *I've heard there are internships and community service opportunities available to students while in Costa Rica. How does that work?*

Our service provider has specialized staff to assist students who want to participate in internships or community service while in Costa Rica. Students should have upper-division standing, check with their department for any specific requirements, and register for the class here at CSULB before leaving. Internships usually run three days a week from 1:00 to 6:00 pm in professional Costa Rica settings.

6. *Who provides student housing, classroom space etc. for us while in Costa Rica?*

The university contracts with the American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) as its Costa Rica service provider. AIFS provides classroom space, as well as a host of other services, including student housing, arrangement of field trips, travel advisement and assistance for students, etc. Additionally, AIFS provides office space for faculty, and other kinds of assistance to both faculty and students while in Costa Rica.

8. *What are the dates of the Costa Rica Semester?*

The Costa Rica Semester normally begins in the mid-January and concludes in mid-April.

9. *Will I continue on my regular salary while I am teaching on the Costa Rica Semester?*

Yes, faculty members are paid their normal full salary, just as if they were teaching their full load of classes on campus.

10. *Do I have to pay for my own airfare to Costa Rica, and must I accompany students on a group flight?*

Faculty members buy their own tickets to and from Costa Rica. If the minimum enrollment is met, the faculty member is reimbursed by AIFS up to the amount it would cost them if they were to go on a student group flight to Costa Rica.

11. *I have heard that housing in Costa Rica is expensive, and I will have to continue paying my home mortgage, or apartment rental here locally while I am there. Is there any financial assistance for me regarding housing in Costa Rica?*

AIFS provides for faculty housing in Costa Rica in a studio or one-bedroom apartment, if minimum enrollment is met (15 students).

13. *What am I obliged to do in Costa Rica, aside from my teaching duties?*

While your teaching duties are the main thing you must do while there, we also want faculty to interact as much as possible with students. Exactly what that means varies from faculty member to faculty member. AIFS also arranges several cultural experiences for the group. It is expected that faculty will accompany students on these trips. In addition, note that for many Costa Rica Semester students this may be their first time outside of the United States (for some, it is their first time outside of southern California). There is the expectation, therefore, that faculty members more or less keep an eye on students. For example, if a student appears to be depressed, or to be acting out in some way, particularly if that behavior were disruptive to the group, we would want the faculty

member in question to work closely with AIFS staff to talk with the student, and to see what could be done for him or her. In general, we look for very student-oriented faculty members for the Costa Rica Semester, who enjoy working and interacting with students.

14. *Are there any other faculty duties, or ancillary obligations, associated with the Costa Rica Semester?*

The Education Abroad Office in the Center for International Education takes on the main responsibility for advertising the Costa Rica Semester to students, as well as the processing of all application paperwork. We also very much need faculty assistance, however, to get the word out. Therefore, we ask faculty to talk about the program first of all in their own classrooms, but also to do whatever else is in their power to assist in the disseminating of information about the Costa Rica Semester to CSULB students. This includes, but is not limited to, attending as many student "Information Sessions" as schedules will allow, assistance with getting fliers distributed in their department/college, etc. In addition, faculty attendance at the student Pre-Departure Orientation Session is required. We also ask faculty to work closely with the staff in the Education Abroad Office by supplying descriptions of the courses they propose to teach for inclusion on the Costa Rica Semester website, as well as early information on the text book(s) they will require students to buy for their courses.

15. *Is my department compensated for absence?*

Yes. Academic Affairs supports the Costa Rica Semester by compensating departments at the vacant rate.