To: Academic and advising units  
From: Maggie Slattery, Assistant Dean for General Education  
Re: Use of study abroad credits for General Education Integrative Studies requirement

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance on the use of study abroad courses (SUBJ X99) to satisfy the General Education Integrative Studies requirement.

One specific goal of General Education is to help students deepen their intellectual curiosity and be self-motivated learners who actively engage in the educational process by seeking out new learning experiences. Students who elect to study abroad demonstrate this capacity. An immersive learning environment inherently incorporates the Global Learning and Integrative Thinking learning objectives by providing instruction from a different socio-cultural stance, deepening of understanding through experiential learning outside of the classroom, and expanding student perspectives through implicit and explicit comparison to their domestic self- and social-context.

To recognize this learning and to encourage students to choose educational opportunities through study abroad, the Office for General Education encourages colleges to consider study abroad credit (SUBJ X99 courses) for the Integrative Studies requirement by petition.

Study abroad courses meeting the intention for Integrative Studies substitution (per Senate Policy 82-60, Exceptions to Degree Requirements) would have normally been considered for a General Education substitution in a single domain or multiple domains and the integrative component is met by the immersive international experience coupled with the breadth of knowledge domain(s) [GN, GA, GH, GS, GHW]. The course should be:

- taught entirely abroad. This recommendation for substitution is not intended for embedded, hybrid, or domestic courses with an international content focus.
- have content that primarily focuses on country or region of study.
- have any non-regional content serve to provide foundational knowledge or context to deepen understanding of local or regional content.

The course would ideally incorporate synthesis of knowledge across cultural perspectives through:

- experiential learning outside of the classroom (site visits, field trips, local guest lectures, case studies, etc.)
- synthesis of experience and academic learning in assessment (i.e. reflective journaling, blogs, written or oral presentations, etc.)
- instructor with local or regional expertise
- use of different intellectual frameworks or methodologies

Courses may range from 1 to 6 credits and have an X99 course number. Courses that transfer as a direct equivalency of a Penn State course must adhere to the established attributes and are not recommended for substitution for integrative studies under this proposal. For example, a study abroad course given a direct equivalency of HIST 120 (GS, IL) would not qualify for substitution due to lack of distinction from HIST 120 taken domestically in the degree audit.

The process for requesting a study abroad course be substituted for the integrative studies requirement should follow the normal curricular petition process, as determined by the student’s college and will be reviewed by those who routinely approve General Education substitutions for each academic unit. For degree audit purposes, this substitution would most commonly be put in the inter-domain section.