



Program, Safety and Operations Update | FA24, SP25 & FA25

Dear partners,

The Institute for Shipboard Education | Semester at Sea's mission is to offer students voyages of discovery that spark bold solutions to global challenges. Our 61-year-old program takes a global comparative approach to study abroad and deliberately introduces students to 10 or more countries across three continents, thereby exposing them to places, people, cultures and issues that only a small fraction of U.S. study abroad students ever experience.

We are proud of our program, our safety record and the services and support we provide to students to ensure they have both a challenging and safe, up-close and expansive, semester aboard the MV *World Odyssey* and in our ports of call.

This document is intended to provide a high-level overview of our program and outline our preparations for the Fall 2024, Spring 2025 and Fall 2025 voyages of Semester at Sea, which will be our 134th, 135th and 136th. This document includes:

- The Fall 2024, Spring 2025 and Fall 2025 Itinerary Overview
- How our itineraries are built and managed
- Safety and security planning and services
- Port-of-call preparations
- Our academic program and partnership *and more*

Thank you for all you do to support your students and international education. We're proud to work with and alongside you!

Sincerely,

Scott Marshall, President and CEO of the Institute for Shipboard Education
Laura Strohming, Chief Program Officer and Vice President of Student Affairs
Bruce Middleton, Vice President of Operations and Risk Management
Mary Vogl, Chief Academic Officer
Jason Hughes, Vice President of Marketing and Recruitment
Amy Lepp, Director of Enrollment and University Relations



Mission, Strategic Priorities & Learning Outcomes

Semester at Sea takes 500+ students each fall and spring to 10 or more countries on three continents. Our independent nonprofit is headquartered at Colorado State University, our academic home since 2016. (More on CSU is included below.)

Our mission is to launch “journeys of discovery that spark bold solutions to global challenges.” Semester at Sea teaches students how to interact with a wide range of cultures and people from varied backgrounds, belief systems and more. Our program ultimately helps students become global citizens who are prepared and motivated to take on the world’s most pressing issues.

Our four strategic priorities align with this mission and extend it. These aspirations challenge us to:

- make our program accessible to all students who wish to participate
- to achieve carbon neutral operations
- to cultivate rich learning communities among our students and alumni
- and to make our program better known.

In 2023, we updated our [Voyage Learning Outcomes](#), which reinforce and extend these priorities.

Voyage Overview: FA24, SP25 & FA25

The [Fall 2024 Voyage](#), Semester at Sea's 134th, will set sail on Monday, Sept. 9, 2024, from The Netherlands. After its first port in Lisbon, Portugal, the ship will travel to Morocco, Ghana, South Africa, Mauritius, India, Vietnam, and Hong Kong before disembarking in Bangkok, Thailand, on Sunday, Dec. 22, 2024. Altogether, students will visit 10 countries on three continents, spending six days in all countries except Mauritius. The full itinerary, including diversionary ports, is available on the [Semester at Sea website](#).

The [Spring 2025 Voyage](#) will begin in Laem Chabang, Thailand, embarking Sunday, Jan. 5. Students and [Lifelong Learners](#) will spend six days in each port, including Vietnam, Malaysia, India, Kenya, South Africa, Ghana, and Morocco and five days in-port in the country of Spain. Voyagers will disembark on Sunday, April 20, in Bremerhaven, Germany.

The [Fall 2025 Voyage](#) will embark from IJmuiden, The Netherlands, on Monday, Sept. 9, and set sail to France, Spain, Morocco, Ghana, South Africa, Mauritius, India, Vietnam, and Hong Kong. Voyagers will disembark on Sunday, Dec. 22, in Bangkok, Thailand. The detailed itinerary for the [Fall 2025 Voyage](#) is available on the [Semester at Sea website](#).

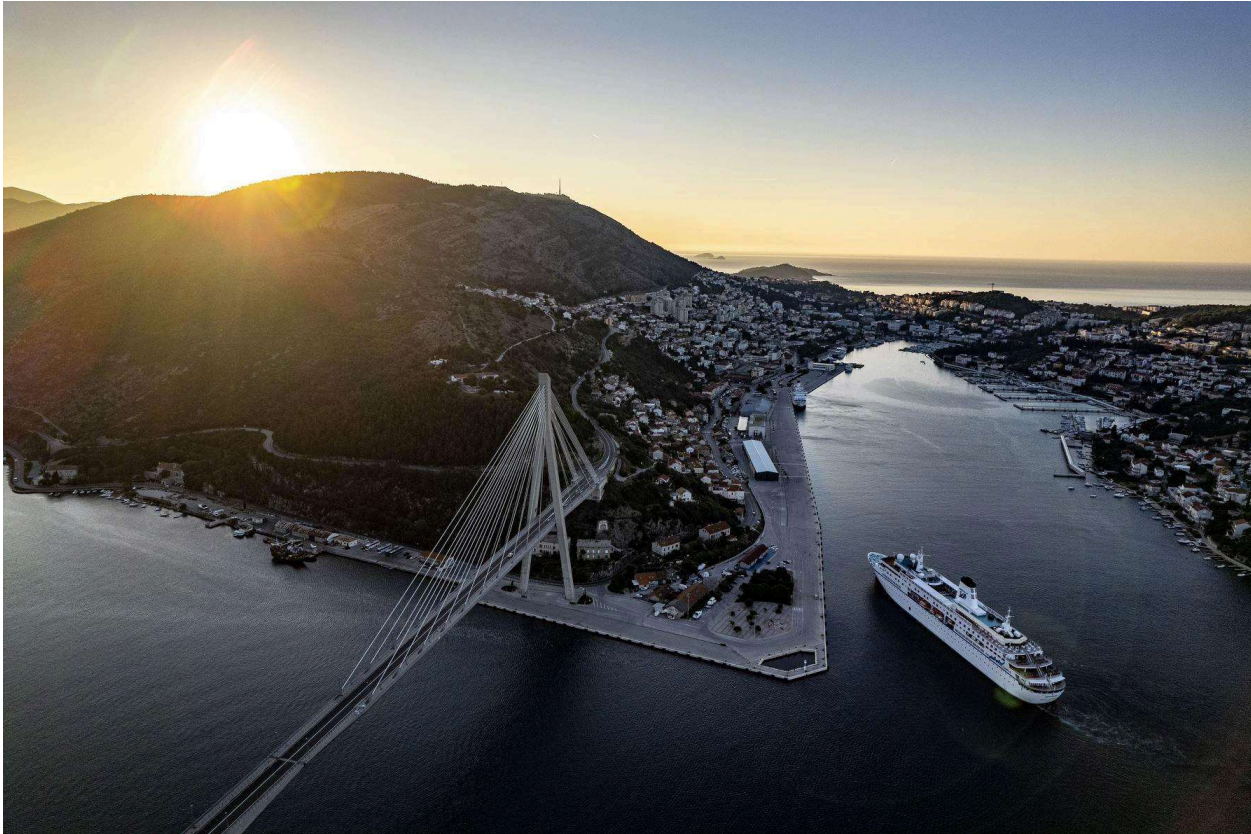
Itinerary creation and management

The Institute for Shipboard Education (ISE) | Semester at Sea has been leading educational voyages that span the globe for over 60 years. Our home office team is composed of international education, travel, safety and operations experts that design, organize and oversee two annual semester-long voyages. ISE's home office, along with more than 60 onboard faculty and staff, the MV *World Odyssey's* professional crew, and a network of in-port operators and partners, together provide students with an expansive, intentional and challenging global experience in a secure and supportive environment.

ISE's Vice President of Operations and Risk Management and team, in consultation with our Captain, technical management company, agents and the ISE senior leadership team, drafts, maintains and updates Semester at Sea itineraries. These itineraries are set to introduce students to parts of the world rarely seen by U.S. citizens or students studying abroad, as well as ports of significance given the courses taught on board. Our first priority is safety. The second is each port's value as an educational and cultural learning lab, along with our experience offering a comparative educational experience in that port. Operational considerations such as weather and ocean current patterns, refueling, provisioning, responsible disposal of waste, and back-up contingency port options are also prioritized during itinerary creation.

All countries on all SAS voyages must pass a health, safety, and security assessment at the time of itinerary planning as well as closer to the voyage. This includes reviewing briefings

and recommendations by the U.S. State Department, World Health Organization, U.S. Centers for Disease Control, Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI), and their contracted intelligence and medical partners..



Safety, security and student support services

The safety and security of our voyagers is of utmost importance to our organization, the *World Odyssey's* professional crew and our shipboard partners. The Captain and technical management team, along with our operations team, monitor weather, security conditions and advisories and will at any time divert the ship and voyagers when deemed necessary. One benefit of having a moving campus is this opportunity to divert if necessary. Each voyage itinerary includes a list of diversion ports in the case of a natural disaster, conflict in the region, pandemic, or any other health or safety concern. Should we decide to divert, schools will be notified promptly via email of the updated itinerary and plan.

The exceptional safety and security services we provide have been a distinguishing feature of our program for six decades. Our students are supported throughout their semester (at sea and on land) by a full-time and always-on-call professional staff that includes a five-member onboard medical team led by two full-time M.D.s, a counseling center with three professional counselors, and a student and residence life staff led by an onboard Dean of Students, an Assistant Dean of Students, and six Resident Directors. Each voyage

has a Care Team whose members work to prevent, identify, assess, intervene, manage, and coordinate a response to situations involving voyagers that may pose a threat to the safety or well-being of themselves, other individuals, and the shipboard community. Members of the team include a Care Team Director, counselor, medical professional, the Dean and Assistant Dean of Students, and the Academic Advisor They meet daily at sea.

We also have full-time staff serving in roles such as Academic Advisor/Registrar, Librarian, Writing Center Director, Faculty-Led Programs Coordinator, voyage communications, and more. These are in addition to the ~30 faculty on each voyage who not only teach but support students on board and in port. In total, this diverse group of faculty and staff leverage their expertise to address both academic and emotional needs, helping students navigate the unique challenges of life aboard and in diverse global settings. Their experience along with the training ISE provides in cultural sensitivity, personal development, and holistic support ensures that students' well-being is comprehensively supported throughout the voyage.

Voyagers have access to the ship the entirety of the voyage, including while in port. The ship maintains tight security 24/7 and promotes a multi-level security plan to ensure only our participants and registered guests gain access to the ship. Personal belongings are searched and/or scanned by X-ray prior to entering the ship and any prohibited items are confiscated. At the port/pier, Semester at Sea has a contractual agreement with each country's port agent to provide security at the port entrance and to patrol the pier area where the ship is docked.

For in-country programming, Semester at Sea utilizes contracted and insured local partners who demonstrate a commitment to health and safety with a proven track record. Many of these partners have been working with Semester at Sea for more than ten years. Contracted partners must meet minimum insurance requirements, guide training expectations, and emergency response preparedness. They are responsible for ensuring vehicles are routinely inspected, guides have all relevant certifications and licenses, and that clean drinking water and food are provided and prepared in trusted locations. All partners undergo a thorough inspection and on-site re-evaluation every three years. At least one Semester at Sea faculty or staff member will be leading each program along with the local team, and this person has access to all of the ship's on-call resources should unforeseen events occur.

All students also receive and are trained on an emergency phone app (SAFEY) that allows them to contact emergency services and the ship 24/7 if ill, injured or in need. Not only does this app connect them with emergency services in-country and pinpoint their exact location, but it puts them in touch with our on-call staff in-country who are supported around the clock by SAS's home office team.

Semester at Sea partners with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) to provide robust medical support services no matter where the ship is in the world. Through this partnership, Semester at Sea has access to worldwide medical resources, expert medical advice, world-class security and intelligence briefings, and evacuation coordination and emergency response support 24/7. All voyagers are automatically enrolled in this plan at no extra cost.

Port-of-call preparations

This exceptional level of safety and support is further enhanced by our program's orientation and training activities leading up to voyage and the required pre-ports that occur on the ship the night before each port.

The Student Life and Student Services team at Semester at Sea provides a detailed orientation curriculum to voyagers in advance of each voyage embarkation. Voyagers are provided and required to review a detailed [Voyager's Handbook](#) that, in addition to orienting them to our ship, curriculum and on-board services, outlines required safety and security information. Additional information regarding travel, safety, courses and registration, as well as health and safety services, are delivered to students via two or more Zoom-based pre-ports, provided in a dedicated student portal, and repeated and expanded upon in onboard orientation sessions on the first two days onboard.

As a result of our globally-focused course offerings, our students most often arrive in each new destination after having learned about the country and its social, political and business environment in **Global Studies** (which is our one common class), their other courses on board, and in lectures delivered by interport lecturers.

These interport lecturers come on board to travel with us to each new port. They visit classes and offer community-wide lectures in the evenings to illuminate the unique features, challenges and opportunities that exist in the countries we'll soon be visiting. Spring 2023 interport lecturers included Koki Muli Grignon, former Ambassador to the United Nations for Kenya.

That said, it is our pre-ports where students, faculty and Lifelong Learners on board receive their most immediate and tangible guidance on how to safely navigate, enjoy and experience each destination. At these events, students hear from faculty and students familiar with the countries we'll arrive in the following morning. Voyagers learn about cultural norms, popular destinations, currency, transportation and tipping, among many other topics. They also hear from the ship doctor and team about safety precautions, are provided with contact information for all on-call staff, get reminders about field program start times and more. These pre-port presentations are recorded and available to be watched at any time during the port stop in the students' cabin should they want to refresh themselves on any of the information presented. The key information is also physically recorded in a pre-port "Green Sheet" students receive and are required to carry with them on their travels.



Our Academic Partner: Colorado State University

Since Fall 2016, Colorado State University has been the Institute for Shipboard Education's academic partner. CSU is not just ISE's "School of Record." Together, faculty and staff from numerous CSU units and departments work with ISE to ensure the quality of the voyage faculty, the academic rigor of the curriculum, the appointment of academic leadership and the integration of academics, student life and in-country learning. Each voyage's academic dean is an administrator or faculty member at CSU.

- Colorado State University has been [accredited](#) by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) (and the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools) since 1925.
- CSU is a public land-grant Carnegie I research university that offers Bachelor's degrees in 65 fields of study.
- All classes taught on a Semester at Sea voyage are regular CSU courses (as found in the [university course catalog](#)) and have the same number of contact hours as the equivalent campus courses.
- All Semester at Sea faculty and course syllabi undergo rigorous review and approval processes by the respective CSU academic department.
- The Semester at Sea curricula have been approved by a CSU Faculty Advisory Council and the CSU University Curriculum Committee.
- The language of instruction (unless otherwise explicitly stated in the course description and/or syllabus) is English.
- Like Semester at Sea, CSU has a demonstrated commitment to access and inclusion.

Our Living-Learning Community

Our shipboard campus is our living-learning community. All voyagers (students, faculty, staff, lifelong learners) live side by side aboard the *World Odyssey* in ship cabins. Semester at Sea is intentionally designed for community-based learning, from the preparation and reflection angle. Students prepare for and return from intense experiences to their home base onboard, and live in the academic environment. The shipboard living arrangement is integral to student learning. This student learning occurs intentionally and through informal interactions daily throughout the voyage.

Intentional Living Learning Activities and Events (non-academic)

- We invite **Interport Lecturers** to our ship for most of the countries we visit. These are renowned experts in fields such as diplomacy, politics, business, the arts, and higher education. They speak in classrooms and address the shipboard community on topics of global and local importance.
- We also invite **Interport Students** from a few countries on the voyage. These students give community presentations, take part in classes, and talk with students about their lives in their home countries, helping students know what to expect before arriving.
- An **Evening Seminar series** offers opportunities for the shipboard community to hear educated experts speaking on pertinent global issues.
- **Student-led programming** - Students are encouraged and supported in offering unique programs and events for in-country reflection and to help promote an inclusive environment for all community members.

Informal Learning

- One of Semester at Sea's assets as a program is its close-knit community. Students learn daily from the informal interactions with faculty, staff and other students. Post voyage, students often point to their shipboard home as their favorite 'port', because of the deep bonds they create, and the inclusive opportunities for community and social engagement.

Contact us

Our team is grateful for the partnership of Study Abroad offices, Risk Management Officers, and the universities, colleges and students they serve across the country.

We acknowledge that our assessments of risk management look different than a typical provider program in a single location and that you may have additional questions of how to assess a voyage in your risk management rubric. If you require additional information regarding our planning, safety and security measures, or voyage preparations, please contact your regional director or another member of our University Relations team. You can find your best contact by scrolling to the bottom of this page:

<https://www.semesteratsea.org/admissions/contact/>.



For more information or with any questions, please contact:

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