1. **How do I apply?**

You can access all the application procedures, forms, and the online application on the International Center website: [http://studyabroad.calpoly.edu/programs/nse/outgoing.html](http://studyabroad.calpoly.edu/programs/nse/outgoing.html). Please read through the application procedures and forms prior to starting the online application. The online application cannot be saved and restarted at a later time, so make sure to allot adequate time for the process. Note that you will need to be prepared with the Universities you are choosing and what plan you are requesting.

2. **How competitive is the placement process and what criteria is used for placing students?**

Your home campus NSE Coordinator will determine whether you are eligible to be placed on exchange. The general eligibility requirements include: 2.5 cumulative GPA, full-time enrollment at time of application and term prior to exchange (excluding Summer); maintaining good academic, social, and financial standing at Cal Poly. Priority status will be given to those who apply by January 15th. Since several NSE schools are quite competitive for placements, you may need this priority status. Cal Poly NSE applicants who are competing for the same 1st choice schools will be ranked. The ranking criteria will consist of both academic and personal information, including (but not limited to): quality of the application, the interview, references, compatibility with the host schools, knowledge of host campus offerings, maturity, flexibility, adaptability, GPA, personal reason/special circumstances, and if relevant, language proficiency. The selection committee ranking of applicants will take place after the interviews and at least 5 days prior to the NSE Placement Conference. At the placement conference the placements are made on a level playing field – no pre-arranged placements. Placements are based on spaces available.

**How can I increase my chances of being placed?**

First, you want to make sure that you meet the minimum eligibility requirements for NSE and any special requirements of the host school. You are encouraged to review the placement statistics and try to list 3-5 realistic choices of schools you are willing to be placed at. The placement decision will be based on the spaces available, but some schools are more flexible than others, depending upon their payment plans and whether they will admit all eligible students. Typically, the 1:1 exchange schools tend to be quite competitive, whereas, the Open exchange schools will accept all qualified students who apply. Review the placement statistics with the NSE Coordinator to see what schools still remained opened after the first day of the placement conference. Don’t list a school that closed after the first day of placements as anything but a first choice. Be as flexible as you can be with the payment plans. You will have a greater chance of being placed if you are willing to go either Plan A or Plan B.

3. **How do I determine what the expenses will be at my exchange school?**

Students must pay a one-time application fee of $250 at the time of application. This application fee is not refundable once we attempt to place you at the NSE Placement Conference. Some host campuses may assess an institutional application fee and/or NSE activity/orientation fee. Housing, meals, books, insurance, etc, is paid at the host school. Students accepted on Plan A also pay host school resident
tuition at the host school. Plan B resident students pay Cal Poly resident fees to the University Cashier prior to your scheduled registration time at Cal Poly. Plan B non-resident and international students will pay Cal Poly non-resident fees. You should consult the NSE website: www.nse.org for the Campus Budget Information for the host university to view the most current costs for tuition, fees, housing, meals, transportation, books, etc. You can also view the Campus Detail Information to be informed of any mandatory fees that will be charged by the host school.

4. Can I use my financial aid to help pay for tuition and other costs?

Yes, you can be packaged for financial aid to cover tuition and other exchange expenses. If you are placed on Plan B, you will pay Cal Poly fees and Cal Poly will disburse your financial aid (including state, institutional, and federal aid for qualified students). If you are placed on Plan A, you will pay the host school’s in-state tuition and the host school will package you usually for federal financial aid only (i.e. Pell Grant and Stafford Loan). Those students who are receiving the Cal Grant and a substantial amount of state or institutional aid should seriously consider doing Plan B, so you can continue to receive the full aid package from Cal Poly. It is important to file the FAFSA forms for financial aid by the March 2nd priority filing deadline and list campus codes for Cal Poly AND the school codes for any potential schools that you will consider placement on Plan A.

5. How do I register for classes at the host school, and when?

Once you are placed at the host school, the NSE Coordinator from that school will send a packet that contains instructions, admission forms, housing information, and class registration material. Make sure that you take advantage of meeting the important deadlines for registration. Often you will need to complete an application form in order to be entered in the host university database as an NSE student. Some NSE schools will provide priority status for registration, while others cannot provide special registration consideration to exchange students. Often students will be registering by phone, mail, or online. The registration procedures vary by school. You must meet all course pre-requisites as required by your host campus. In order to increase your probability of a desired course schedule, students are encouraged to pay close attention to registration deadlines, work closely with your Cal Poly advising center or faculty advisor, and to be flexible.

6. How do I pay tuition on NSE?

Tuition and fees are assessed at the in-state (resident) rate of your host campus (Plan A) or at the Cal Poly rate (Plan B). Plan B students will pay fees to Cal Poly in the same manner as they do when enrolled at Cal Poly. Each campus determines which of these tuition and fee plans, A, B, or both, can be used by their students. Regardless of whether you participate under Plan A or Plan B, you will also be expected to pay those fees which are assessed as a condition of your enrollment (e.g., general service fee, laboratory fees, art and photography supplies, technology fees, and computer fees).

7. What is the course approval process for my major and GE courses?

Prior to leaving on exchange you will complete the NSE Advising Agreement with the assistance of your academic advisor and the NSE Coordinator. You will select all the courses you would consider taking during your exchange period. For flexibility, identify two or three times as many courses as you will actually take. The advising agreement will indicate whether the course offered at the host school is intended for your major, GE, or as an elective. You will also list what the equivalent course is at Cal Poly. Students should request major course approval signatures from their major department (Advising Centers can assist you with this process). You will need to provide academic advisors with the course descriptions provided in the host school’s catalog. Students should complete the GE Course Substitution for Study Abroad form available in the Cal Poly International Center (52-E32). Strive to find courses similar to the Cal Poly GE areas. The NSE Advising Agreement will be provided at the NSE Post-placement meeting in mid-March. The completed advising agreement is turned into the
NSE Coordinator. Students should keep a copy for their records, as well. Once the official transcript is requested by the student and received from the host school at the end of the exchange, the transfer credit will be evaluated. It typically takes up to two quarters for the transcript to be evaluated and for the credit to appear on the Degree Progress Report. Students will have an opportunity to petition courses that may not have been approved prior to going on exchange, once they return to Cal Poly. We suggest that you keep the course syllabi for all courses taken on exchange.

8. How do grades transfer back to Cal Poly and will the grades impact my GPA?
At the completion of your exchange, you should request that an official transcript be sent from the host school to Cal Poly’s Admissions Office (transcripts are NOT automatically sent). All grades will be considered for transfer credit and will be calculated into your Higher Education GPA.

9. Can I work while exchanging to another school?
Yes, but we advise students not to depend on jobs to fund an exchange. We cannot guarantee that you will find a job, or that it will pay you enough to meet your expenses at the host school. If your host school is packaging you for financial aid, you may be eligible for federal work-study – if requested on your FAFSA. Most campuses will list on-campus jobs in the Career Services Office.

10. Does NSE allow me to establish residency at the host school?
No. Students participating in NSE are considered visiting students and typically cannot establish residency at the host school while on exchange. Students contemplating transfer to the host school must realize that non-resident tuition will be paid at the host site, (often for one academic year after the exchange is completed) along with a host of other requirements established by the state to which the student transfers. Students are strongly advised to check with the host school’s Admissions Office to review all transfer requirements.

11. Where can I find a catalog for the host school(s)?
Most NSE campuses will have their catalogs available online. You can find links to all NSE campuses on the NSE website: www.nse.org.

12. When will I find out whether I’m accepted to the host school?
Qualified students are placed at the early March NSE Placement Conference. NSE placements are announced at the post-placement meeting held at Cal Poly in mid-March where students will be asked to complete the Placement Acceptance Form for the host university.