



Program Materials

Universidad Nacional
Heredia, Costa Rica

In addition to our regular IFSA-Butler application, we also have information and application materials that are specific to the Universidad Nacional in Heredia, Costa Rica. Included in this packet are the following items:

- Academic information for Universidad Nacional
- Family placement form

Once we receive your IFSA-Butler application, we will send you a packet via regular mail as well. However, this will give you a chance to get a head start on your program materials and may clear up some additional questions that you have.

Please return the family placement form within 10 days of applying to the program.

Academic Information for Universidad Nacional

Universidad Nacional (UNA) provides study abroad students with a large choice of course offerings in almost 20 *facultades*, all located on its beautiful campus in Heredia. UNA celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2008 and is proud of its academic achievements and ability to provide quality education to both national and international students.

This document should provide you with a general overview of UNA's academic requirements and course offerings in order to prepare you for a successful semester abroad. Please review this document in its entirety along with the "Academics" section of your *Preparing to Study Abroad* guide. Most importantly, remember that IFSA-Butler is available to answer any questions you may have. Please contact us at 8008580229 or ifsapilas@ifsabutler.org.

How is UNA different from my home university?

Specialization of Study

The system of higher education in Costa Rica is more specialized than the U.S. liberal arts curriculum, which means that Costa Rican students enter university with some background in the subjects they wish to study. Therefore, local students take most of, if not all, their classes in one faculty and receive a degree in one field. In the U.S. system, students take a little of everything and don't specialize until several years into their studies.

Carrera System

Additionally, you might notice that your Costa Rican classmates know each other very well. This is because students enroll in *carreras* rather than majors. *Carreras* are similar to majors in the United States but with a more structured program of study and fewer elective courses. Students from the same *carrera* enroll in the same courses during their entire undergraduate career.

Course Availability

Costa Rican universities operate on a different timetable than universities in the United States. For example, most students in the U.S. register for courses months before the semester begins; conversely, Costa Rican students register for their courses one to two weeks before the start of the semester. Because of this schedule, we have found it impossible to confirm course availability.

If you are flexible in your course choices, you will likely be able to find a course that fits your needs. However, if you need a very specific course to fulfill your home institution's requirements, we will not be able to confirm the availability of that course. We also cannot guarantee that you will be able to enroll in all of your first choices of the courses that are offered. Academic flexibility and patience are requirements for studying in Latin America! We recommend that you have at least 15

courses (per semester) preapproved by your home university before you arrive in Costa Rica. Please complete the course preference form attached to this document.

How many classes do I have to take at UNA?

All students studying on the IFSA-Butler program at UNA are required to enroll in the mandatory Advanced Spanish class, which is specially designed for program students only. In addition, you may select the optional program course Social History of Costa Rica. The remainder of your courses will be taken at UNA, and your entire course load must equal 15–16 U.S. semester credit hours for one semester or 30–32 U.S. semester credit hours for the academic year. The number of courses you take depends on the credit value of the courses you select. IFSA-Butler does not permit students to take online courses for credit at the host institution.

Advanced Spanish (4 U.S. semester credit hours)

This intensive Spanish class is specially designed for IFSA-Butler students and is mandatory. The course is offered at three different advanced levels, and placement is determined by a series of assessments during orientation in Costa Rica. The class is taught intensively during orientation and continues less frequently throughout the semester. See attached information.

Social History of Costa Rica (3 U.S. semester credit hours)

This optional class introduces IFSA-Butler students to Costa Rica's dynamic social history. Starting in the pre-Columbian era, this course guides students through major historical events which helped shape Costa Rica into the peaceful country it is today. See attached information.

Universidad Nacional (2 to 4 U.S. semester credit hours per course)

Most students take between three and four classes at UNA in order to complete their course load. Courses are generally worth 3 U.S. semester credit hours, although some carry 2 or 4 U.S. semester credit hours. The number of courses you take depends on the credit value of the courses you select. See instructions below for finding course information on the Web.

Literatura Hispanoamericana del Siglo XX (4 U.S. semester credit hours)

The Escuela de Literatura offers this special, nonintegrated course to IFSA-Butler students only. The literature department has very strict requirements for international students wishing to enroll in literature courses: very good command of Spanish language, high grades in previous Spanish classes and strong results on the Spanish placement test. Students who do not meet these requirements may enroll in Literatura Hispanoamericana. See attached information.

Please keep in mind that IFSA-Butler students are limited to taking no more than one nonintegrated class in addition to the mandatory Advanced Spanish class. That is, students can take only one of the following: Social History of Costa Rica or Literatura Hispanoamericana del Siglo XX.

You must take a full university course load as determined by IFSA-Butler. Credit will be awarded on a Butler University transcript based on a typical U.S. full course load. Please be aware that you may be charged additional fees by your home university or host university to take or process additional credits. Taking less than the full course load may jeopardize your student status and result in personal academic repercussions and/or loss of financial aid.

Where can I find UNA course information?

Current course listings, course descriptions and syllabi can be difficult to find because UNA courses are not finalized until a few weeks before the start of the semester. This is very typical for universities in Latin America. For this reason, UNA course information must be regarded as provisional. IFSA-Butler cannot guarantee that a specific course will be offered during your semester in Costa Rica. During orientation in Heredia, you will be given a finalized course list from which to choose courses for the semester. In the meantime, you may find provisional course information in the following two locations:

- UNA Web site: See "Finding Courses on the Web" below.
- IFSA-Butler office: If you cannot find a specific course on UNA's Web site, please email the IFSA-Butler office at

ifsapilas@ifsabutler.org. We have several course catalogs from previous semesters and a number of course syllabi on file. In your email, be sure to include the course title and department.

Finding Courses on the Web

- Start at the IFSA-Butler Web site: www.ifsabutler.org
- Click on "Programs" and select "Costa Rica" from the list
- On the left side of the screen, click on "Universidad Nacional"
- Click on "Online Course Catalog"

You will be directed to the "Sistema de Oferta Académica en Línea," where you can search by *centro* or *facultad* for available courses. Click on the link for the *centro* or *facultad* that interests you (i.e. Centro de Estudios Generales). Next, click on the area of interest (i.e. Área de Filosofía). A list of courses will appear. Click on the course title to obtain a brief course description. The number of credit hours, level of the course and hours per week that the course meets should also be listed.

Please keep in mind the following:

- *Nivel 1* corresponds with first-year courses and *Nivel 4* corresponds with fourth-year courses.
- *I Ciclo (primer ciclo)* is a U.S. spring semester (January to June).
- *II Ciclo (segundo ciclo)* is a U.S. fall semester (July to December).
- *Anual* refers to full-year courses. You can only enroll in yearlong courses if you plan to study the entire Costa Rican academic year, starting in January and ending in December.
- When the word *Latina* appears alone in a course title, it means classic, not Latino ethnicity. This applies mostly to literature courses.
- The UNA Web site does not always function properly. You may have to refresh your browser, use the Internet at off-peak times or try repeatedly to download information. Remember to be patient - it will eventually work!

How do I know if I am qualified to take a certain class at UNA?

All students must take into consideration the following points:

- All courses are conducted in Spanish by UNA faculty members. All lectures, course work, discussions and exams are also conducted in Spanish. Therefore, students who place into a less advanced level of Spanish may not be eligible for more advanced courses at UNA.
- You can only register for courses in which you meet the requirements and have sufficient academic background. You may want to bring course descriptions of previous courses you have taken in order to show you have taken the necessary prerequisites.
- *Licenciatura* level courses, such as those located in the Estudios Latinoamericanos (IDELA), are only available to students who have an extremely high level of Spanish and who currently have senior status at their U.S. institution.
- You can only register in one course from Estudios Generales and one course from Escuela de Arte.
- The Escuela de Literatura may limit enrollment in literature courses to those students who have very good command of the language, have received high grades in previous Spanish courses and who place into a higher level of Spanish during orientation. Keep in mind that once you register for a class in the Escuela de Literatura you cannot drop it!

Students considering taking science and engineering courses must consider the following:

- These courses require a high level of precision; there is little or no flexibility in the interpretation of the material.
- Very few international students take science and engineering courses.
- Professors are less likely to make allowances for difficulties in language or understanding the material.
- These courses tend to be more demanding academically and may require more time due to extra labs.
- It is very difficult to get an A; a grade of C is considered good in Costa Rica.

How will I register for classes?

Before leaving for Costa Rica, it is a good idea to start thinking about the courses you want to take while you are abroad. You will need to submit the course preference form to IFSA-Butler. This form is required by UNA; it is a great tool to help

you decide which courses you may want to enroll in for the semester. Be sure to discuss your courses with your U.S. university academic advisor. Take a copy of the course preference form with you to Costa Rica.

Course registration takes place once you arrive in Costa Rica, typically during your second week of orientation. A designated day will be set aside for registration at UNA. During this time, you will receive the updated course catalog and be able to speak with departmental professors about courses in which you are interested. You will then select your courses for the semester.

Keep in mind the order of registration is determined by your GPA. International students with the highest GPA register first. Make sure you select more classes than you actually need, just in case there are no more spots in a particular course you would like to take.

Additionally, registration is not done online! You will have to complete and turn in paperwork in order to register for classes at UNA.

In order to prepare for your registration appointment, make sure you:

- Do your research ahead of time!
- Take a copy of your course preference form (at least 15 courses preapproved by your home university) to your registration appointment. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with the home institution policy regarding the transfer of grades and credits from the host institution.
- Be flexible and patient, and keep an open mind!

I want to travel at the end of the semester. Can I turn in my final exam or final paper when I return to the U.S.?

No. You must complete your academic obligations before you leave Costa Rica. This includes final exams, final papers, presentations and any additional assignments requested by your professors.

When and how will I receive my UNA grades?

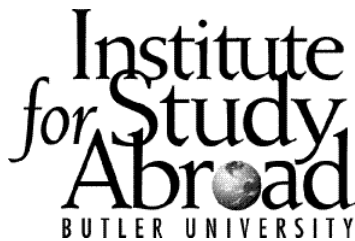
All courses are graded on a number scale ranging from 1 to 10. Students must obtain a 7 or higher in order to pass a class. Grades are recorded on the Butler University transcript using an A–F scale. There is no provision for pass/fail or auditing courses. See the "Academics" and "Program Fees and Financial Aid" sections in *Preparing to Study Abroad* for more information.

You can expect to receive your Butler University transcript three to five months after the program end date.

We're here to help!

The Costa Rican university system can be very difficult to navigate, and you may find yourself frustrated by bureaucracy, delayed responses to your questions, and inability to register for courses that you want or need. Because of this, we are here to help you before you depart and once you arrive in Costa Rica.

Our full-time resident staff will help you prepare for your semester or year in Costa Rica, and they will be available to answer any questions or help in any way throughout your time on an IFSA-Butler program. If you have any questions or concerns, you can always contact the IFSA-Butler Indianapolis office at 800-858-0229 or ifsapilas@ifsabutler.org. We wish you the best for a successful semester in Costa Rica!



Family Placement Form

Programs in Latin America

Keep this page. Fill out the attached program family preference questionnaire, make a copy of it for your records, and return it to us within 10 days.

Study abroad is much more than academics. Learning takes place not only during class, but 24 hours a day. One of the best out-of-class experiences is the homestay. It is a vital, required component of our program. Additionally, living with a host family is the factor most cited as helping improve students' Spanish.

We've found that students who are happy with their housing are generally happy in their adopted country. To make the most of living with a host family, you must be flexible.

1. **Redefine family.** Most students on our program imagine the perfect host family as one with two parents, some college-aged kids and a dog; however, we have very few families in our program that conform to that image. Generally, such families have very little time or space to commit to international students and are too busy to really interact with the international student.

On the other hand, few students enter our program excited about the prospect of living with a widow or single mother, but sometimes these less traditional families provide the best experiences. Older widows or couples have already raised their children and are familiar with the expectations of a young, newly-independent adult. Many truly enjoy the company of the student. Because we "recycle" host families that receive favorable ratings from students, we have a large number of this type of family.

2. **Taste all the food given to you.** The foods you eat abroad will be very different from those to which you are accustomed. Even if you are certain that you will not like a new food, try it anyway out of politeness.

A special note to vegetarians: vegetarians are poorly understood in Latin America, and they are often undernourished. Before departing the United States, you should decide how strict you are going to be. You should be as flexible as you feel comfortable, and be careful to stay healthy by including enough vitamins, calcium and proteins in your diet.

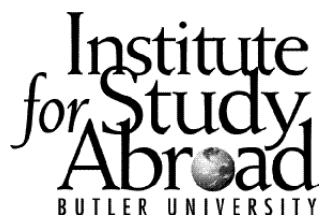
3. **Smoking is still considered socially acceptable** in many parts of Latin America, and so the likelihood of being placed in a home where people smoke is quite high. For this reason, we cannot guarantee that you will be placed in a non-smoking household, if that is what you prefer.
4. **Be prepared to give up some independence.** U.S. students have more disposable income and independence than young adults in other countries and societies in the world. Students in Latin America usually live at home with their parents throughout their college years, and they maintain the parent/child relationship until later in life.

Your host parents will treat you just as they are accustomed to treating others of your age group. Some students compare living with a host family to returning to high school; you will be in classes during the day and return each night to a family that is concerned about your well-being. What U.S. students may consider controlling behavior by the host family is usually a legitimate concern for their safety. Most host families relax their rules after a few weeks of getting to know the student.

5. **What's the single most important factor?** Host family assignments are made using the information you provide on the attached questionnaire. While we try to accommodate your preferences when placing you, we can't always take all of them into account. Please indicate what is **most** important to you so we can concentrate on your top priority when placing you with a host family.

While most host families have an altruistic interest in sharing their home, culture and country with a international student, the family receives a monthly payment for the housing service it provides. As a paying guest, you should feel comfortable in your new home. If you are unhappy after a trial period of a few weeks, discuss your housing situation with our resident director. We'll help you resolve any problems.

** Please refer to the "Living with a Host Family" section of the **Preparing to Study Abroad** booklet for more detailed information.*



Family Placement Form

Por favor, completar y entregar en 10 días a:

Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University

1100 W. 42nd Street, Suite 305

Indianapolis, IN 46208-3345

317-940-9704 Fax

Nombre: _____

Programa y país: _____

Teléfono: _____ Universidad EE.UU.: _____

Sexo: Hombre Mujer Edad: _____

Argentina/Chile/ Sem. 1 (Primavera EE.UU.) Sem. 2 (Otoño EE.UU.) Verano

Costa Rica/Peru: Año Académico (Sem. 2, 1) Año (Sem. 1, 2)

Mexico: Otoño EE.UU. Primavera EE.UU. Año Académico Verano

Preguntas sobre la salud y la dieta

¿Actualmente estás bajo un programa de dieta estricto? ¿Cuán flexible es tu dieta?

¿Eres vegetariano(a)?

En caso afirmativo, ¿qué no comes?

Carne roja

Huevos

Pollo

Productos de leche

Pescado

Otro (por favor indique)

¿Eres alérgico a algún alimento?

¿Tienes alergias o condiciones médicas que requieren arreglos especiales? Por favor, explícalos. (opcional)

¿Tendrías algún inconveniente en vivir en una casa con animales domésticos?

¿Fumas productos de tabaco?

¿Tienes alergias al humo?

La familia

¿Con cuál tipo de familia prefieres vivir?

Por favor, indica tus preferencias personales de uno a cuatro.

(1=más preferido, 4=menos preferido)

_____ Familia con niños

_____ Familia con hijos de nivel universitario

_____ Familia sin hijos

_____ Mujer soltera o viuda

¿Cuál papel te gustaría hacer dentro de la familia?

Muy independiente: No te molesta si la familia está fuera de la casa la mayor parte del tiempo. Pocas actividades con la familia. Mucho tiempo y espacio para ti mismo(a).

Algo interactivo: Quieres participar en las actividades de la familia, y a la misma vez mantener tu independencia. Quieres que la familia te invite a participar en actividades tuyas, pero no sentirte obligado(a).

Muy interactivo: Deseas integrarte con la rutina diaria de la familia y ser considerado(a) como hijo o hija real. Prefieres comer la cena todas las noches con la familia.

¿Cuáles son tus afiliaciones religiosas o étnicas? (opcional)

¿Qué característica consideras más importante en una familia?

¿Qué nos falta preguntarte?

Por favor utiliza el espacio siguiente para hacer una descripción de ti mismo(a) con más detalles. Infórmanos de tus características personales (por ejemplo, conversador, muy organizado(a), tímido(a), etc.), lo que te gusta y no te gusta, deportes favoritos, pasatiempos, y otros intereses. Añade aquí cualquier otra información que consideres importante que nosotros sepamos en cuanto a tu estadía en una familia.

Solo para los estudiantes que van a la Universidad Nacional en Costa Rica:

Cuál vivienda prefieres: centro de la ciudad en los alrededores pueblos cercanos

Housing Contract

I affirm that the above information is accurate and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that the Institute for Study Abroad assumes no responsibility for any problems resulting from being supplied with incorrect or incomplete information on this form, and **I also understand that once a housing assignment is given, no changes can be made.**

I understand and agree that I shall pay to IFSA-Butler all fees associated with the housing to which I am assigned as outlined in the program fee information provided to me by IFSA-Butler with my program contract.

Housing assignments are for the duration of the program, and the Institute for Study Abroad provides no alternate housing. **IFSA-Butler will not refund any sums paid for housing if a student vacates his or her housing for any reason, either voluntarily or involuntarily, before the end of the semester or term.**

I understand that while housing is guaranteed, my first choice of accommodation is not.

I understand and agree that living in housing arranged by IFSA-Butler is a requirement of the program to which I have been admitted. I further understand and agree that if I refuse or fail to live in program housing, I will be subject to dismissal from the program, withdrawal of services by IFSA-Butler, and/or loss of academic credit, with no refund of fees paid.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____