

Voting for Study Abroad Students



Created for students

Why should I vote when I am studying abroad?

There are important elections every year. Local and state elections get less attention but have a great impact on your community and everyday life.

How can I register to vote and request a ballot?

You can both register to vote and request your overseas absentee ballot now, even if you're not leaving until the fall. Go to FVAP.gov today to generate a Federal Post Card Application (FPCA). The FPCA allows you to request voter registration in your state of legal voting residence, request absentee ballots for all federal elections (and usually all state elections) in a current calendar year and update your voter contact information. Sign and send in your FPCA right away.

Most states allow you to email this one-page form. Other states require the form to be mailed or faxed to the address [provided](#). The FVAP.gov website will tell you what your state allows. The forms are free to mail within the U.S. if you use the postage-paid template. Otherwise, you must pay for postage, whether in the U.S. or outside the U.S.

After you submit your FPCA, check with your local election official(s) to make sure it was received and accepted. You can find contact details on FVAP.gov. You should do so after a few days if you sent it by email, a week or so if you sent it by postal mail. It is recommended that you send in a new FPCA every January and each time you move abroad.

How will I receive my ballot while I am abroad?

All 50 states, as well as DC and the territories, will email ballots to voters outside the country if you send in the FPCA form. Email is recommended because your ballot will arrive faster. If you don't have a local address yet, you can put down the address of your



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study abroad center on the FPCA form. If you ask for your ballot by email, it won't matter if you can't receive postal mail there.

- You should receive your ballot 45 days before Election Day. For November elections, your ballot will be sent out in the third week of Sept. If you requested your ballot closer to the election, you should get it within a few days of emailing your FPCA, or within a week or two of mailing it. An emailed ballot may go to your spam inbox, so check there.
- If you haven't received your ballot 45 days before Election Day, a few days after you emailed your FPCA, or a week or so after you mailed your FPCA, contact your local election official(s).
- If you requested but haven't received a ballot by the end of September or early October, go to [FVAP.gov](https://www.fvap.gov), complete a Federal Write in Absentee Ballot (FWAB) and return it immediately.

How will I cast my ballot from abroad?

Your state ballot will include all the elections you can vote in, for federal, state and local offices. It's important to vote in all of them. All elections have a great impact on your life and your community. You can find [nonpartisan candidate guides at Campus Elect](#). Complete your ballot as you normally would.

Many states allow for electronic return of completed ballots. Others require them to be printed, filled out and mailed with sufficient postage. Your ballot will specify how you can return it. Return your ballot as soon as possible. Mid-October is the suggested vote-by date for those abroad. Be sure to check the status of your ballot to ensure it was received.

Note that if your state ballot arrives *after* you send in your FWAB, you should still vote and return it. Your election official will discard the FWAB and count only your state ballot. This is *not* voting twice.

You never know how close elections will be. Your vote matters.

And make sure to let your local election official(s) know when you return to the U.S., so there won't be any confusion the next time you vote in person.

About Us

Campus Election Engagement Project (CEEP) is a national nonpartisan project that helps administrators, faculty, staff and student leaders at America's institutions of higher education engage students in federal, state and local elections. CEEP views voting as a



means to promote a more equitable and inclusive democracy and to address past and present disenfranchisement. To learn more, visit campuselect.org or contact us at info@campuselect.org.

HOW TO CAST A BALLOT WHILE LIVING ABROAD



1. REGISTER TO VOTE AND REQUEST YOUR OVERSEAS ABSENTEE BALLOT

Find the form at FVAP.gov. Sign and send in your Federal Postcard Application (FPCA) by email, fax or mail as soon as possible.



2. WATCH FOR YOUR BALLOT

Your ballot should arrive by email 45 days before the election or within a few weeks of requesting it. Haven't received your ballot? Contact your local election official. (Find contact details on FVAP.gov.)



3. COMPLETE AND RETURN YOUR BALLOT

Check the process for your state. You may be able to return the ballot electronically, or you may need to print and mail back your ballot (with correct postage). **Return your ballot as soon as possible.**

