

## **Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) Policies & Procedures for Off-Campus Study GPA Petitions (revised February 2017)**

The Committee on Academic Standing (CAS) is comprised of three faculty members, the Associate Dean of the Faculty, representatives from the Office of Academic Advising and the Registrar's office, and two students nominated by SGA. In addition, a representative of the Office of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (OCSE) attends the CAS meetings. CAS is called upon to review and determine the eligibility of students wanting to study off campus to ensure they meet defined standards and expectations. The OCSE representative will present petitions to CAS for students who do not meet the established eligibility requirements. The OCSE representative does not vote on the outcome of the petition, rather, OCSE submits the petition for review and informs the discussion as needed. This document serves as a reference tool for all students wishing to petition CAS.

### **Eligibility:**

To be eligible to study off campus, Skidmore requires that a student have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.750. Students who have cumulative GPAs between 2.749 and 2.500 are allowed to petition CAS for an exception to this policy. Students with cumulative GPAs of below 2.500 are allowed to petition for an exception; however, CAS has never granted an exception to any student below a 2.500.

### **Petition Process:**

- All students wishing to present a petition to CAS must meet with an OCSE advisor to discuss the petition process and their individual petitions. Students are responsible for arranging this meeting.
- Students must meet deadlines established by OCSE to allow for processing of the application prior to the CAS meeting. If a weekly deadline is not met, the student's petition will be presented the following week.
- CAS meets once a week during the academic year. OCSE presents student GPA petitions to CAS during these weekly meetings. Petitions are reviewed by CAS during those weekly meetings only.
- Students, faculty, and parents cannot appear in person to present their petition to the committee at any time.
- OCSE will inform students of CAS's decision within three business days of the CAS decision.

### **Petition Materials Should Include:**

- A one (1) page personal statement written by the student that explains the reasons for the lower GPA and their plans for ensuring a successful term off campus. The statement should also outline the student's academic background and interests as they relate to and support the proposed off-campus program; describe the student's academic and cultural learning goals as they relate to the proposed off-campus program; and articulate the student's academic and personal strengths in relation to the challenges of studying off campus.
- Two letters of support from Skidmore faculty that speak to the student's academic abilities and classroom behavior patterns (e.g., intellectual commitment, diligence, reliability) and offer evidence of the student's ability to succeed while off campus. CAS may also request further testimony directly from faculty.
- An academic record that EITHER demonstrates a preponderance of work in the B- range from one semester to the next across various disciplines OR demonstrates an upward trajectory from

one semester to the next. CAS understands that one poor semester early in the first year on campus can have a tremendous impact on a student's cumulative GPA. Special attention will be paid to the cumulative GPA in the major.

**Petition Review:**

The committee considers all petitions on an individual basis, and, therefore, may approve a 2.500 and/or deny a 2.700 based on the quality of the student's personal statement and faculty recommendations, as well as a demonstrated improvement in academic record. The CAS also looks for demonstrated maturity and self-discipline indicating that the student is likely to succeed in the face of the additional challenges off-campus study presents.

Other factors that CAS could consider include the student's previous experience with the host culture of the program abroad (or successful experience with other cultures), fluency in the language needed for success in the program abroad, and the academic focus of the program and how it relates to the student's area of academic strength. A student's record of co-curricular and related accomplishments may suggest personal and intellectual qualities that help prepare the student for off-campus study. Such evidence may be considered as a complement to the academic record but not as a substitute for solid academic achievement or as an explanation for why the academic record is not stronger.

Based upon the consideration of the individual petition there are a few possible outcomes:

1. The student could be approved.
2. The student could be denied.
3. The student could be asked to provide additional information for consideration before a decision is made.

Reviewed and Approved by the Committee on Academic Standing  
February 2017