

**OUTWARD  
BOUND**



**Costa  
RICA**

## ACADEMIC CREDIT

An Outward Bound Costa Rica course is a powerful experience through which many students learn not only about themselves, but also about traditional classroom topics.

In this packet, you will find information on how to earn academic credit for your Outward Bound course.

We're here to help - Do not hesitate to contact us throughout the academic credit process with your local school or university.

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**Greetings from Costa Rica**

Outward Bound Costa Rica is an approved, registered academic institution in Costa Rica with over 20 years of experience educating students from around the world.

Through our programs, students are able to earn credit in Spanish Language, Cultural Anthropology, Natural History and Recreational Leadership. In addition, students have earned credit in Art, Biology, Economics, Environmental Studies, Folklore, Geography, History, Literature, Philosophy, Medicine, Nutrition, Physical Education, Political Science and Recreational Management and Leadership via independent study through their respective universities.

In order to obtain these credits, students read from various texts in anthropology, natural history, sustainable development and Spanish language. Moreover, they are exposed to native Costa Rican cultures through village homestays and service projects. Ultimately, this experiential learning process teaches students through direct exposure—an exposure that cannot be experienced in a traditional classroom. As a result, Outward Bound Costa Rica credit has been endorsed through a number of academic universities throughout the United States, Canada and Costa Rica.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like to discuss any aspect of the curriculum here at Outward Bound Costa Rica.

Sincerely,



Jim Rowe, PhD  
Executive Director

**Guiding Educational Philosophies**

Outward Bound Costa Rica courses are based on the educational pedagogy of over 70 years of Outward Bound experience and use many principles of Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound, developed at Harvard University. All students participate in group discussions, readings and activities. Outward Bound courses create an environment for students to learn through personal experience. The pedagogical foundation is one that demands personal reflection, group communication, cultural sensitivity, mental expansion, and physical commitment.

**Rationale for Academic Credit**

An Outward Bound Costa Rica course gives the student a safe, supportive environment in which to study the lands and cultures of Central America. Students participating in the course have unique access to the people and places which global debates have focused on for the last four hundred years.

As students spend time in Costa Rica and Panama, their experiences in the wilderness and in local villages push them toward developing not only cognitive skills but also psychomotor learning and affective skills. For example, as students see direct consequences for their choices while rafting, they strengthen their decision-making process. They learn the importance of addressing local community needs through service projects, the value of effective communication while assisting fellow students rappelling down a waterfall, and develop an understanding of ecology through hiking by the rainforest. Furthermore, students see first-hand the ramifications that international economics have on small village communities and the effects of deforestation.

*Cognitive Foci*

- Reading of required texts on anthropology, natural history and sustainable development
- Discussion of tropical ecology, zoology, botany, agriculture and environmental issues from both scientific and metaphysical perspectives
- Understanding of native Costa Rican cultures through homestays and interviews
- Communication in Spanish

*Psychomotor Foci*

- Rainforest navigation, travel and survival
- Whitewater raft captaining and rescue
- Minimal impact camping
- Scuba diving
- Rainforest canopy ziplining
- Farming in tropical landscapes
- Rappelling and backpacking

*Affective Development (Personal Growth)*

- Completing seemingly insurmountable tasks
- Contributing personal skills to group efforts
- Developing leadership skills
- Communicating effectively



There are currently two options to earn academic credit through our programs:

## **Option 1: Western State Colorado University (WSCU)**

Our partnership with Western State Colorado University is recommended for high school graduates and enrolled college students. It provides an alternative for students whose academic institution will not accept an independent study to obtain transfer credits.

This option provides schools an official transcript from a US accredited university. The transcript is on a 4.0 grade scale, and credit is earned for Recreation and Outdoor Education 397 (ROE), Outward Bound School.

This option is attractive for students whose insurance requires them to be enrolled in a university full-time. WSCU accepts financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

## **Option 2: Independent Study**

If you choose this option, start early! Not all institutions accept this option.

This option is available to all Outward Bound Costa Rica students. If you are currently enrolled, we highly suggest you consult with your academic advisor to ensure that independent study credits will transfer before arriving on course. If you are not currently enrolled, you may request a transcript and written review of your performance if you notify your instructor at the beginning of course.

This option is attractive to students who want to define the college courses they receive credit for. Usually students work with their advisor to create a project or decide the parameters of a paper to be completed after our course in exchange for credit. This is an opportunity that requires you to show initiative and work with your academic advisor. We can help you by providing guidance and course information, but you are responsible for arranging the necessities for receiving academic credit. We recommend getting all requirements and details in writing.

Use the information contained in this packet to help plan your independent study with your academic advisor.

*We want to help you along the way!  
Let us know which option you choose.*

## Option 1: Western State Colorado University (WSCU)

Many US schools do not accept transfer credits from non-US institutions. Receiving academic credit from Western State Colorado University provides these schools with an official transcript from a US accredited university. The transcript will show up to 12 credits (Depending on which course you participate in) on a 4.0 grade scale under course Recreation and Outdoor Education 397 (ROE), Outward Bound School. It is not guaranteed that your school will accept these credits. Before registering with WSCU, we strongly recommend that you confirm in writing with your academic advisor that these credits will transfer.

### Additional Costs

Western State Colorado University charges \$125 per credit. It also accepts financial aid through the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). For questions about WSCU's program, please contact the university's Extended Studies department by calling 970.943.2885 or emailing [extendedstudies@western.edu](mailto:extendedstudies@western.edu).

This option is attractive for students whose insurance requires them to be enrolled in a university full-time.

### Applying

Once you have enrolled in an Outward Bound Costa Rica course, you can register for credits through Extended Studies at Western State Colorado University by filling out their registration packet available at:

[www.western.edu/academics/extended-studies/files/obpacket%20Sep%201-%202009.pdf](http://www.western.edu/academics/extended-studies/files/obpacket%20Sep%201-%202009.pdf)

### Mail the completed paperwork to:

Extended Studies  
600 N. Adams, Taylor Hall 303  
Western State Colorado University  
Gunnison, CO 81231

Fax: (970) 943-7068

## Option 2: Independent Study

Work with your academic advisor to design a project to learn more about topics that are intriguing to you and that are relevant during your Outward Bound course. We encourage students to be creative and original in choosing a topic, research methods and final presentation.

The receipt and transfer of all academic credit is at the discretion of the school, college or university you attend (or plan to attend). Making arrangements for academic credit is your responsibility and should be arranged prior to course. We highly recommend that you document all visits to the your academic advisor, registrar or head of school and secure any agreements that are made regarding credit transfer in writing.

### Academic Transcript from Outward Bound Costa Rica

As a registered academic institution in Costa Rica, by the end of course, students pursuing independent study will receive an official pass/fail transcript issued by Outward Bound Costa Rica for 12 credits in Spanish Language, Cultural Anthropology, Natural History, and Recreational Leadership, as well as a written review of their performance on course.

### Suggested Steps to Creating Your Independent Study

1. Consider subjects you will enjoy discovering more about while on the course.
2. Present these specific topics to professors from your home university, particularly professors who can give you feedback about those topics and who can help you get university credit for the course.
3. For university credit, you often need a sponsor (usually a professor or advisor). Discuss with the sponsor the basic principles of Outward Bound, the course, and the independent project that you want to pursue. Use this packet as a resource! It is best to have your ideas and plans well developed but flexible enough to accommodate suggestions and/or requirements from your sponsor.
4. Before starting the course, establish a contract containing the type and number of credits that will be awarded. The contract should include your sponsor's and institution's expectations regarding project presentation and evaluation.

### Topics of Course Study, Research Methods and Final Project Ideas

The information on the following pages is meant to help you through the process as you develop your independent study. Feel free to take a look at sample topics of course study as well as suggested research methods and final project ideas to use as a reference as you design your curriculum with your academic advisor.

## Sample Topics for Course Study

### **Anthropology**

Personally observe and interview people from Costa Rican rainforest cultures, rural Nicaraguan cultures, and Panamanian Afro-Caribbean and indigenous culture.

### **Art**

Study local arts and find the correlation between artistic expression and cultural beliefs.

### **Biology**

Document ways that local people use traditional plants in the rainforest. Keep a journal of different species seen in course areas. Identify them in field or upon return.

### **Communication**

Analyze communication styles within the group and their results. Explore how communication styles vary according to environment, stress, sense of urgency, time of day, or other factors and the impacts of the different communication styles. Track the four stages of group development.

### **Economics**

Compare the advantages and disadvantages of a diverse local economy, such as Nicaragua's, versus a more export-based economy like that of Costa Rica.

### **Environmental Studies**

Research local environmental conservation efforts.

### **Folklore**

Record and compare the local folklore of Costa Rica, Panama, and Nicaragua.

### **Geography**

Learn about El Niño and its climatological, societal and economic consequences. Discover the physical geography's effects on ecology or human geography.

### **History**

Interview modern day indigenous persons and experts in the field of indigenous history.

### **Literature**

Read and analyze literature by local writers. Read the works of adventurers that came to these areas before you.

### **Medicine**

Compare the concept of health and healing in indigenous cultures with Western medicine. Study medicinal values of the forest. Research Travel/Mountaineering Medicine, First-Aid, or local tropical diseases.

### **Nutrition**

Keep a journal of your daily food intake and how your body reacts to it. Compare the diets of the different cultures you visit.

### **Physical Education/Exercise Science**

Keep a log of your training before the course and a log of activities and responses your body has to activities during the course.

### **Philosophy**

Experience how the course's and modern Outward Bound philosophies correspond to principles in Plato's Republic. Discuss nature as an educator in its own right.

### **Political Science**

Compare and contrast Costa Rican, Panamanian and Nicaraguan political systems. Consider government and community action regarding environmental laws or economic development.

### **Recreation Management & Safety**

Discuss forms of risk management used in this course and benefits surrounding activities with perceived high risk and low actual risk such as rock climbing and rafting.

## Obtaining & Recording Data

### Artwork

Art is a powerful means of expression. Study local art or produce your own. Carry watercolors or other transportable art supplies with you to express your experiences.

### Interviewing

Daily contact with local cultures will allow interviews in both English and Spanish. For non-Spanish speakers, an interpreter will generally be available. Bringing a small tape recorder may be helpful.

### Journal Writing

Record your thoughts, ideas, experiences and perceptions in your journal. This documents what you're learning and gives you the opportunity to expand upon those ideas.

### Photography

Pictures are an excellent way to capture and present people, places, and events. If you choose to use photographs, please use consideration and sensitivity toward individuals you are taking pictures of, as taking photographs may sometimes be inappropriate. Also be aware that many of the areas we travel through are rainforests, so you will need a water-proof camera case. Insurance is also recommended for your valuables.

### Reading

Find out about relevant print resources before and during the course.

## Sample Topics for Final Presentations & Projects

### Indigenous Peoples of the Rainforest

How do they live, what do they eat, unique threats to their communities, sustainable products in the rainforest

### Communication & Conflict Resolution

Study of passive aggressive and assertive behaviors, conflict definition and why it happens, how to deal with conflict within a group, four stages of group development

### History of Outward Bound

Founder Kurt Hahn, Kurt Hahn's teaching philosophy, birth of Outward Bound, purpose of Outward Bound, Outward Bound Costa Rica history

### Health & Well-being

Importance of good health in the field, illnesses that occur in the jungle and how to prevent them, nutrition, stress, reality therapy

### Navigation

Map reading, compass parts and reading the compass, orienteering lesson, shooting and reading bearings, magnetic variation and measuring distances, living without a watch

### Rainforest Conservation & the Environment

What is conservation, what part does Outward Bound Costa Rica play to protect the rainforest, rainforest destruction (both natural and human impact), how plantations affect the environment, endangered animals such as the titi monkey and leatherback turtle

### History of Costa Rica

Economy, ethnicity and identity, environmental sustainability, and ecotourism

### Meteorology

Climates in Costa Rica, high and low pressure fronts, cloud identification, forecasting, storms, lightning and danger in the jungle

### Rainforest biology

Plants, mammals, birds, rainforest layers