

Shipboard Employment Opportunities with Semester at Sea

What All CSU Employees and Their Supervisors Need to Know

Effective January 1, 2026

IMPORTANT–MUST READ

- This document is intended for CSU employees interested in pursuing a temporary full-time shipboard opportunity with Semester at Sea and their respective supervisors.
- It is imperative that all CSU employees secure approval from their respective unit **and** college/division **before** applying for a position with Semester at Sea by completing the required forms to include in their application as specified in this guidance.
- NOTE: The default employment status of CSU employees who have chosen to accept a shipboard position, and have documented CSU approval per this guidance, will be “Leave Without Pay or LWOP.” Exceptions to this note include CSU employees with an active assignment (i.e., not retired from CSU) serving in the roles of Academic Deans as well as Global Teaching Scholars (GTSs).
- CSU (i.e., colleges/divisions, departments, units, etc.) is under *no obligation* to pay the employee’s salary while the employee is on LWOP and working for Semester at Sea. Current exceptions to this policy include active CSU employees serving as Academic Dean or Global Teaching Scholar (or otherwise specified in the CSU-ISE affiliation agreement) who maintain their current CSU pay.

1) What do all CSU employees need to know about the Institute for Shipboard Education (ISE), Semester at Sea®, and Colorado State University (CSU)?

ISE, a private 501c3 educational non-profit organization, is the entity that runs and operates the academic program known as Semester at Sea® in affiliation with CSU, its academic partner, since 2015-2016.

2) What is the mission of Semester at Sea?

The Semester at Sea mission is *Journeys of Discovery that Spark Bold Solutions to Global Challenges*.

3) What does the Semester at Sea program entail?

Semester at Sea is a multi-country study abroad experience that takes place on board a ship over the course of one fall or spring semester. (There are no summer voyages.)

The Semester at Sea program is intended for individuals with a strong interest in global issues wishing to develop/nurture their global competence for exercising global citizenship to tackle global challenges. With undergraduate students as the primary audience, Semester at Sea offers voyage participants the opportunity to be part of a full-time living and learning community that prioritizes comparative experiential learning across countries around the globe. The program also welcomes gap-year and post-graduate college students as well as non-student participants, such as lifelong learners, the families, and/or companions of faculty and staff with shipboard appointments.

4) What role does CSU play as the academic partner for Semester at Sea?

As the academic partner of ISE, CSU has the sole responsibility for delivering the academic curriculum that Semester at Sea offers to student participants. As an accredited institution of higher learning, CSU grants academic credit to students who participate in this study abroad program.

For information on academics and/or the student experience, please visit the [Semester at Sea](#) website.

5) How often is the Semester at Sea program delivered?

The Semester at Sea program offers two voyages a year. These run almost in parallel to the Fall and Spring semesters in the US university context. For information on the program and future itineraries, please visit the [Semester at Sea](#) website.

6) What shipboard opportunities with Semester at Sea are available to CSU employees?

Since the start of the affiliation between ISE and CSU (2016-2017), each year CSU personnel have been selected to serve in a variety of temporary full-time administrative and academic roles. Most opportunities are available through external searches conducted by ISE. These employment opportunities are advertised via the ISE open pool for employment located on the Semester at Sea website, as well as other public venues (e.g., social media). A few employment opportunities are exclusively dedicated to CSU personnel. These internal and exclusive opportunities to CSU personnel are communicated and disseminated to the campus community through the same channels that all other internal searches are announced (e.g., including emails to the university community, e-lists, social media, etc.). Below are two lists of employment opportunities that are hired for each voyage. These opportunities are either administrative or academic.

Administrative roles on each voyage include:

- Executive Dean
- Dean of Program Operations (formerly known as Assistant Executive Dean)
- Dean of Student Life
- Assistant Dean of Student Life
- Field Director

- Field Programs Coordinator
- Care Team Director
- Medical Team
- Counseling Team
- Student Life Team (Resident Directors, etc.)
- Videographer
- Social Media Coordinator
- Lifelong Learning Coordinator

Note: Per institutional agreement, some of the shipboard positions under the purview of Student Life are nominated by the CSU Division of Student Affairs. These nominations are subject to ISE's final confirmation and correspond to the following roles:

- One member of Student Life Team Leadership (i.e., Dean of Student Life or Assistant Dean of Student Life)
- One member of the Counselor Team
- One member of the Medical Team

Academic roles on each voyage include:

- One Academic Dean and, on average, three to four Global Teaching Scholars (GTSs) (via internal CSU searches per institutional agreement). The number of GTSs is subject to change, based on financial factors, expertise needed to meet academic needs of the program, etc.
- One Academic Advisor/Registrar
- Approximately 25 faculty (including a Writing Center Director)
- One Shipboard Librarian
- One Faculty-Led Programs Coordinator
- One Instructional Coordinator (Teaching Assistant)

For a full listing of current opportunities at any given time, interested applicants should visit the [Semester at Sea](#) website.

7) Under which section of the Semester at Sea website, is the current listing of shipboard employment opportunities listed?

All current available faculty and staff positions, together with their full position descriptions, are listed in the section of the Semester at Sea website, titled '[Work With Us](#)'. Here, prospective applicants will find all the information necessary to prepare and submit a complete application for ISE's consideration, including application deadlines. This site also offers information concerning:

- ISE
- Shipboard benefits
- The living-learning shipboard experience
- The hiring process

- Testimonials
- Other FAQs and lots more

Eligible applicants interested in being considered for a shipboard position with Semester at Sea from the ISE open pool must submit their completed applications through the ISE’s ADP portal, which can be accessed from the [Semester at Sea](#) website or [here](#).

- For any ISE voyage position-specific questions or questions about the application process, applicants should contact Human Resources (HR) at ISE via email at hr@isevoyages.org.
- For any CSU voyage positions or process- specific questions, including academic roles that are both appointed and funded by ISE, applicants should email the ISE | CSU Senior Academic Officer for Semester at Sea, Professor Ehlers-Zavala, at fehlers-zavala@isevoyages.org.

8) What entity appoints and funds the various administrative and academic shipboard positions for each voyage?

Most Semester at Sea administrative and academic personnel are appointed and funded by ISE. Exceptions include the appointment and funding of the Academic Dean (when not in an emeritus status) and faculty who hold the designation of CSU GTSS.

CSU applicants who enjoy emeritus status and are selected for an Academic Dean role are compensated directly by ISE as noted on the position description.

All CSU appointments for academic deans (whether or not on active employment status from CSU) and those for GTSS are made in consultation with ISE.

9) What level of pre-voyage commitment is expected of a CSU employee who accepts a shipboard position with Semester at Sea?

CSU employees who accept a temporary full-time shipboard position must be willing to commit a significant amount of effort to participate in and complete all the required pre-voyage preparation and training for their respective voyage. All candidates should be informed that their work goes above and beyond their regular full-time or part-time job with CSU. Much of this pre-voyage training unfolds during regular business hours not only during the regular academic year, but also in summer, and during times in which CSU may be on breaks or recess. Depending on the role, for some positions, this involvement and training may start 18-12 months prior to the voyage, and it will significantly increase approaching the start of the voyage. Applicants should consider this expectation and disclose it to their supervisors. Additionally, all CSU voyage participants with shipboard appointments are expected to contribute back to the CSU community post-voyage. That is, upon their return to campus, in the two regular semesters that immediately follow their Semester at Sea appointment, they will be expected to deploy their proposed enrichment plan for the university community as articulated in their justification for receiving CSU endorsement to

apply. Failure to deliver on this post-voyage expectation may jeopardize future CSU endorsements to apply for the same or different shipboard position with Semester at Sea.

10) If CSU personnel apply for, are offered, and accept an ISE shipboard position through the ISE open pool for employment, do they continue to receive their CSU salary and benefits during the time away with Semester at Sea?

Since the start of the CSU | ISE affiliation, there has been no contractual expectation, or otherwise, for CSU (as the employer of record) to maintain the salary of CSU employees who have applied for, been offered, and chosen to accept an ISE shipboard position through the ISE open pool of employment.

Effective January 1, 2026, to ensure consistent practices, the default employment status of CSU employees who have chosen to accept a shipboard position available via the ISE open pool, and have documented CSU approval per this guidance, is “Leave Without Pay or LWOP.” Exceptions to this status include CSU employees with an active assignment (i.e., not retired from CSU) serving in the roles of Academic Deans as well as Global Teaching Scholars (GTSs).

Therefore, CSU employees should consult the Administrative Professionals and Faculty to learn what being in an approved “Leave Without Pa or LWOP” entails.

For questions about ISE compensation and associated benefits pertaining to shipboard positions funded by ISE, CSU employees should contact the ISE HR representative at hr@isevoyages.org.

Additionally, even when considering positions funded by ISE, CSU employees are also strongly encouraged to do their due diligence in understanding the full commitment (before, during, and after the voyage) and to talk to their respective CSU HR representative about their ISE offer when under consideration.

Finally, when both applicable and determined by CSU HR, all CSU employees who accept a temporary full-time shipboard position with Semester at Sea must follow all required processes and procedures mandated by CSU HR in preparation to be away from their regular CSU duties.

11) What actions should CSU employees take before applying for a shipboard position?

CSU employees would be well advised to consider both informal and formal actions when considering applying for a shipboard position with Semester at Sea.

Informally, as a way of engaging in best practices, CSU employees interested in applying for a shipboard position would be well advised to inform their immediate supervisor of their desire to apply for a role with Semester at Sea and plan ahead. This initial conversation should seek to explore the opportunity, as well as the impact on the unit if the employee were to be successful in securing an offer.

CSU employees pursuing shipboard positions not funded by CSU, but funded by ISE available via the ISE open pool, and who are seeking approval to go on Leave Without Pay, or LWOP, should become familiarized with the [CSU Benefits-Faculty, Administrative Professional and Other Non-Classified Staff information](#).

Supervisors are encouraged to give full and proper consideration to the employee's request. However, they are at no obligation to endorse the request if it is determined that such extended absence creates an undue burden (human, financial, or otherwise) on the unit and when no reasonable and mutually satisfactory agreement is reached that meets the needs of both the employee and those of the unit itself. Then, it is up to the individual to determine whether to pursue or not the vacancy with ISE for a temporary shipboard position.

Formally, all CSU employees (except for those on emeritus status), whether seeking a shipboard appointment through an external ISE search or internal CSU search, must secure the supervisor's endorsement of their application before applying for a shipboard position. This formal endorsement requires the signatures of several higher-level authorities from the employee's department, college, or division. To accomplish this approval process, prospective applicants must obtain and complete the following 2 files:

1. **FILE #1: CSU Employee Request to Obtain CSU Approval and Endorsement to Apply for a Shipboard Position with Semester at Sea.** The purpose of this three-part document is to:
 - Outline the employee workload arrangements agreed with the supervisor(s) and all parties involved.
 - Provide a justification for seeking endorsement to participate in the experience.
 - Commit to (2) supervisor(s)-approved enrichment activities or events the applicant will organize or deliver for the CSU community within 12 months of having returned to campus from the assignment at sea.
2. **The CSU Endorsement and Approval Form for Workload Arrangements and Financial Terms for CSU Employees Applying for a Temporary, Full-time Shipboard Position with Semester at Sea.** This form requires several signatures, including that of the Division or College Business Officer, and it must accompany the application submitted to ISE for the specified job and voyage. **Note:** If the employee has more than one direct supervisor, please, add another page with signatures to account for all relevant individuals who need to consider this request.

Both applicants and supervisor(s) should keep a copy of these forms for their records.

12) If a CSU employee accepts a shipboard position with Semester at Sea, is that employee able to continue to work for CSU while at sea even if in a part-time situation?

No, they may not. Anyone who accepts a shipboard position with Semester at Sea is expected to be fully dedicated to their temporary full-time role during the voyage.

All shipboard positions are highly demanding. Employees with a shipboard role must significantly adjust to living and working on a ship in motion, which may tax and challenge employees even further in the fulfillment of their duties on the voyage.

Besides, acceptance of a shipboard position with Semester at Sea is predicated under the premise that the employee with a temporary full-time shipboard assignment *will not be expected* to engage in the fulfillment of any duties associated with their regular CSU appointment in any capacity or to any extent while at sea.

By having secured all relevant signatures that affirm the CSU endorsement and approval for workload arrangements, by signing the required form, CSU employees with a temporary shipboard assignment and their supervisors have confirmed their understanding of this expectation and commit to oblige by all the expectations outlined before, during, and after the voyage.

13) What else should CSU personnel know when considering a shipboard position?

Applying for a shipboard position requires advanced planning. Therefore, interested applicants are well advised to plan with, ideally, with advanced notice (ideally two years) – which is deemed as the best approach.

14) Are there additional considerations that an interested individual should consider and assess beyond what is listed on a job description for a shipboard appointment with Semester at Sea?

Yes. There are both personal and professional considerations that all prospective applicants should assess prior to working on an application for a shipboard position with Semester at Sea.

First, individuals should plan to dedicate time to learn about what the full commitment of the shipboard position they seek entails pre-voyage, during-voyage, and post-voyage.

A careful reading of the position description and exploration of the ISE website for [Semester at Sea](#) are great starting points.

If prospective applicants have any questions whose answers are not evident from the position description or the website for Semester at Sea, they should proceed as follows:

- a) When it comes to positions advertised via the ISE open pool, they should contact ISE HR via email (not phone calls) at hr@isevoyages.org. This way, they can better assess whether their target voyage will unfold at the right time relative to their personal and professional circumstances.
- b) For questions related to the roles of Academic Deans or Global Teaching Scholars the point of contact is Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala also via email at fehlers-zavala@isevoyages.org.

Second, individuals should consider how well a particular assignment aligns with their past, present, and future professional endeavors/career goals. Assuming a successful outcome in pursuing a shipboard position, they should also think about their contribution back to the CSU community or community at large post-voyage. After all, this information will need to be properly articulated to supervisors in the process of making their case while seeking their endorsement and approval to apply for a shipboard position with Semester at Sea.

Third, all prospective applicants should be fully aware that there will be additional out-of-pocket expenses associated with becoming voyage-ready and that are neither reimbursed by ISE or CSU (e.g., cost of travel documents, vaccinations, personal supplies for several months, and so forth). They should also think about the resources needed if wishing to explore the various countries when the ship is at port. Therefore, obtaining a current copy of the *Estimated Cost of Attendance Worksheet* and the *Semester at Sea Companion Policy* from the Semester at Sea website (or by contacting ISE HR at hr@isevoyages.org) may prove particularly helpful for prospective applicants before finalizing their decision to apply for a shipboard appointment with Semester at Sea.

15) Will CSU employees who have previously held a shipboard assignment be allowed to repeat the experience with Semester at Sea?

Opportunities to apply for a shipboard assignment with Semester at Sea are open to all interested and qualified applicants for the positions they are seeking, whether applying for the first time or as returners. In fact, all voyages have a mix of new and returning participants hired for administrative or academic roles.

It is preferred and recommended that individuals who wish to sail again, holding a shipboard appointment with Semester at Sea, observe a wait period between voyages. Sailing in back-to-back voyages is not encouraged for several reasons, including (but not limited to) extending opportunities to those who have not sailed yet and who are also highly qualified for the experience. Other important considerations include minimizing the potential stress on CSU units, colleges, or divisions that could result from the employee being away from the regular call of duty at CSU.

At times, however, due to unanticipated/unforeseeable challenges or emergencies that unfold on short notice (before a voyage is about to start, or while in progress and at any stage), a recent returning voyager (from CSU or not) may be allowed to join the voyage in need. Being cleared to join a voyage on short notice requires that the individual under consideration meet all the criteria needed to swiftly step into the assignment on board the ship, including being voyage-ready (i.e., with all medical clearances issued, up-to-date travel documents, and so forth). There may be other reasons why an individual may be allowed to return on a shipboard assignment sooner than the expected timeframe. For instance, this case may happen when there are no other qualified individuals who are part of the faculty pool needed to deliver courses with high enrollment demands. As relevant and appropriate to the shipboard position, prior to issuing an appointment under special circumstances that merit exceptions, ISE will consult with CSU to determine the best course of action to meet the needs of the voyage.

16) If CSU supervisors have questions regarding any of the information contained in this document, who should they email?

They should email the ISE Senior Academic Officer for Semester at Sea, CSU Professor Fabiola Ehlers-Zavala at fehlers-zavala@isevoyages.org.