

## SEP FAQs

### Frequently Asked Questions About The Stanford Executive Program

If you have any questions that are not answered below, please email us at [sep@gsb.stanford.edu](mailto:sep@gsb.stanford.edu) or call +1.866.542.2205 (toll-free, USA and Canada only) or +1.650.498.8441.

#### Academics

##### **Q. What teaching approach is used in the Stanford Executive Program (SEP)?**

A. The SEP academic experience is rigorous and research-driven. Sessions are taught by the same faculty who teach in our highly ranked, world-renowned MBA program, supplemented by special sessions featuring guest speakers, panelists, and discussion leaders with distinguished backgrounds in business, politics, and academia. Drawing on their own research as well as current trends in business thinking, SEP faculty teach frameworks that address the most critical challenges facing global business leaders. Professors are frequently available before and after their sessions to talk with participants and engage in the innovative, experiential learning for which Stanford is celebrated. During evening study-group sessions, participants can exchange ideas and perspectives from the day's learning with their fellow participants.

Many classroom sessions will be conducted by the case method of instruction. Cases represent authentic business situations requiring analysis and action choices, focusing the analytical and creative thinking of participants on specific business problems representative of widely encountered situations. The approach is intended to be much the same as that found in the situations themselves: the participant (or discussion group) reviews the essential facts of the case; analyzes those facts; sifts out the important from the unimportant; defines the major issues; explores possible solutions; and selects the most logical course of action. As an educational process, the objective is to enhance each individual's ability to address many different kinds of problems and to arrive at logical and creative answers.

After five weeks of core classes and guest speakers, which everyone attends, the sixth week of the Stanford Executive Program offers a menu of concurrent elective sessions from which participants select. The electives offer a way to "personalize" the final week of SEP and enhance the coursework with subject matter of specific interest to each participant.

Each participant is given an Apple iPad pre-loaded with course materials. The iPad is used to manage and distribute course materials, communications, exercises, and other necessities. Technicians are available to assist with set-up and use of the iPad, and an introductory session with tips and tricks for use is offered during the first week of the program.

Due to Stanford's location in the heart of Silicon Valley, there are also many opportunities to visit local firms and interact with their executives. The SEP staff facilitates these visits and incorporates them into the program whenever possible.

##### **Q. Who attends the Stanford Executive Program?**

A. SEP participants are senior level executives with 12 to 15 years of management experience, typically

working for large, global organizations, government agencies, and nonprofits.

**Q. Are any tests or grades given?**

A. There will be study group presentations for select faculty, but there are no tests or grades in SEP.

**Q. What will I receive upon completion of the program?**

A. Participants become members of the Stanford GSB Alumni Association, with access to exclusive learning and networking benefits, career services, special events, and discounts. Every participant who completes SEP receives a certificate of completion signed by the program's executive director and the dean of Stanford Graduate School of Business (GSB).

**Q. Does participation in a program provide a degree or credit toward a degree?**

A. No. SEP offers a certificate upon completion of the program; no degree credits are granted. In some cases, SEP participants have been awarded continuing professional education (CPE) credits in specific fields. Please ask the program staff for details.

**Q. Is SEP an appropriate choice if I already have an MBA?**

A. Yes, many SEP participants have received their MBAs from other universities and even Stanford GSB. The rigorous, highly focused nature of the program and the input from other participants make the SEP experience very different from a traditional MBA experience. The program is especially valuable for those who received their MBA five or more years ago.

**Application and Admission**

**Q. What are the educational requirements to attend SEP?**

A. There are no specific educational requirements. We have had successful participants in the program with a wide range of educational and professional backgrounds.

**Q. Is the GMAT or other exam required to apply to SEP?**

A. No, we do not require any testing to apply to or qualify for SEP.

**Q. Is the TOEFL exam required to apply to SEP?**

A. No, we do not require taking the TOEFL or other English test to apply to or qualify for SEP. However, participants need to be able to both understand and speak English at a level that allows them to participate fully in the fast pace of the program. Participants should be able to read large volumes of work in English; understand and participate in lectures and class discussions; and engage in study group discussions.

**Q. How long is the application?**

A. The application takes about 25 minutes to complete. In addition to the application, we request an organizational chart, a corporate photo, plus a confidential statement from the applicant's corporate sponsor.

**Q. How will I know that my application was received?**

A. Applicants will receive a confirmation of receipt by email within 72 hours of submitting an application. Please email [sep@gsb.stanford.edu](mailto:sep@gsb.stanford.edu) or call +1.866.542.2205 (toll-free, USA and Canada only) or +1.650.498.8441 with any questions about the status of your application.

**Q. How soon will I hear about my acceptance to the program?**

A. Submitting an application does not constitute acceptance to the program. Applications are reviewed by an admissions committee to determine whether the applicant will be accepted into the program. There is a rolling admission process and applications are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Applicants will generally hear back within four weeks of submitting an application. We are sensitive to applicants' need to know their admissions status and try our best to balance that with our admissions process. Applications received after the application deadline will be considered on a space-available basis.

**Q. Do I have to submit payment for the program along with my application?**

A. No. An admissions committee will review your application first to determine eligibility. Payment is due upon notification of admission.

**Q. What does tuition include?**

A. SEP tuition includes private accommodations with regular housekeeping service in the Executive Residences at the Schwab Residential Center; all meals; course materials; transportation to official off-campus program events; access to program concierge services; and an Apple iPad. Also included are entrance to the recreational and fitness facilities throughout Stanford, and early-morning fitness instruction during the program. Airport transportation is not included. Social and recreational activities outside of the program are not included. Golf course access not included (additional charges apply).

**Q. Do you offer any scholarships or grants for SEP?**

A. No, Stanford does not offer any scholarships or grants for the program.

**Q. Can I get a discount if I don't stay on campus?**

A. Accommodations are included in the cost of the program, and discounts are not available. To get the most from the SEP experience, we strongly recommend that participants stay on campus with others in their program. Stanford staff can help provide resources for off-campus accommodations for visiting family members if needed.

**Q. What if my schedule changes and I need to cancel? Are there cancellation fees?**

A. We understand that senior executives occasionally have changes in plans or schedules that will result in their not being able to attend the program as planned. Due to program demand and the volume of pre-program preparation, the following cancellation policy has been established for SEP 2016:

- For cancellations made before or on May 6, 2016, 100% of paid fees will be refunded.
- For cancellations made between May 7 and May 20, 2016, 50% of paid fees will be refunded.
- Cancellations made on or after May 21, 2016 are subject to a full tuition charge and no refund will be issued.

**Q. Do I need a visa to attend a program?**

A. The B1/B2 visa (for participation in scientific, educational, professional, or business conventions, conferences, or seminars) is the appropriate visa for entry into the United States for required countries. When applying for a visa, you should include the Stanford program admission letter with your visa application. It is important to state on any visa applications that you will be traveling on business and NOT as a student.

**Q. Can SEP accommodate multiple participants from the same organization?**

A. Yes, there are several organizations that send multiple participants to the program each year. We welcome this ongoing commitment and recognize the wider impact that multiple participants

can have in an organization after the program concludes. The SEP staff will be happy to work with your organization to help determine the ideal number of participants and how best to structure their participation.

### **Campus Accommodations**

#### **Q. What are the Executive Residences like?**

A. Each private room in the **Schwab Residential Center** accommodates a single participant and is complete with private bath and shared kitchenette (doors can be locked in kitchenette). Bed linens and bath towels are provided, as well as regular housekeeping service. Onsite laundry facilities are available. The front desk is staffed 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Free wireless access is available during your stay at the Schwab Residential Center; you will be provided with a log-in and password upon your arrival at Stanford. If you require computer access, the Schwab front desk staff will be able to provide temporary use of a computer or printer as needed. The Schwab Center epitomizes the California lifestyle, with many indoor and outdoor common areas for relaxing and socializing with other participants. The Center has its own fitness room, and all Stanford recreation facilities are also available for participants' use.

#### **Q. Do I need to stay on campus during the program?**

A. While not mandatory, a key part of the SEP experience is the opportunity to stay on campus, and accommodations are included in the cost of the program. The Schwab Residential Center is adjacent to the GSB campus and classrooms, making it easy for participants to take advantage of evening study groups, work sessions, and networking opportunities. On-campus and nearby cafes, restaurants, and workout facilities help provide a productive, carefree learning experience.

#### **Q. Can my family stay with me at the Schwab Residential Center during the program or when visiting me?**

A. Rooms at the Schwab Residential Center are intended for single occupancy. Children under 18 years old may not stay at the Center. If you will have children visiting during your time at SEP, our staff and concierge support can help with hotel reservations for family members, or if longer-term housing is needed for families, our program staff can make housing recommendations based on your needs. We do encourage all participants to stay on campus at the Schwab Residential Center each night that there are program activities (study groups, program dinners, etc.) to enable their fullest participation in the program.

#### **Q. What are the meals like?**

A. In one word: extraordinary! Our award-winning Executive Chef Raul Lacara is the #1 ranked Financial Times executive chef and it shows in every meal he prepares with his team. Our participants are treated daily to delicious, nutritious, locally-sourced food options which cater to a global palette. Our dining staff will also strive to accommodate any of your dietary needs and preferences.

#### **Q. Can my dietary restrictions be accommodated?**

A. The Schwab Residential Center's dining staff works closely with participants who have special dining requests and restrictions. Vegetarian options are offered at all meals. Our executive chef and the dining staff will ensure that you have many delicious and healthy food options. Please discuss your dietary concerns with SEP staff and they will work with you to come up with suitable options.

#### **Q. Are there opportunities for physical exercise during the program?**

A. One of the key aspects of SEP is the opportunity to focus on your health and fitness, and acquire healthy habits that you can continue after you return home. Early morning exercise classes are offered each weekday, and yoga classes are offered on the weekends. During your stay you will have full access to the onsite fitness center at the Schwab Residential Center, as well as Stanford's on campus fitness and recreation facilities.

Nutritional counseling is also available, as well as an optional health assessment at the Stanford Hospital (additional charges apply).

**Q. Are laundry services available?**

A. There are laundry facilities at the Schwab Residential Center for use by SEP participants. Dry cleaning service (contracted with a third party) offers pick-up and delivery for guests at the Center (additional charges apply).

**Q. What about transportation? Do I need a car or bicycle while on campus?**

A. Most of your daily program activities are within easy walking distance of the Schwab Residential Center, and transportation is provided for any official program event taking place off campus. Our goal is to make moving around campus as easy as possible, and our beautiful indoor-outdoor facilities make that efficient and enjoyable. Should you want to explore more of the 6.5 acres of green space near the Business School or more of the 8,000 acres of Stanford University, our concierge office can help with bike rentals, short-term car rentals, and any desired excursion or day trip.

**Q. Is health insurance or medical care offered through the program?**

A. We do not offer health insurance during the program. We recommend that participants (especially those from outside the USA) ensure they have an insurance plan in place for local medical care while on campus, in case of emergencies or urgent care needs. The SEP staff will be able to recommend health care providers but has no control over the cost or wait time for care.

**Q. Can I bring my pet?**

A. Pets are not allowed at the Schwab Residential Center or in the classrooms. Service animals are exempt from these restrictions; please ask an SEP staff member for details.

**Stanford Experience**

**Q. What is the recommended attire?**

A. Our California climate is temperate, with comfortably warm days and pleasantly cool evenings. A jacket or sweater is recommended for cool mornings, air conditioned classrooms, and cool evenings. Business casual or casual clothing is recommended for all program activities except for the closing ceremony and closing dinner, when semi-formal attire is recommended. Participants should also bring exercise clothing, footwear, and swimwear if they wish to participate in the fitness classes or utilize the recreation and fitness facilities on campus.

**Q. The program schedules look very full. Is there any leisure time?**

A. Naturally, you come to Stanford to learn; however, we appreciate the importance of life-work balance.

The amount of free time will vary during the course of SEP, but there will definitely be time when you can relax, exercise, take a walk on our beautiful campus, visit downtown Palo Alto, or venture further afield to explore the San Francisco Bay Area.

On weekends, you are free to come and go as you please; program activities each week begin with the Sunday evening dinner and week overview with the Executive Director. A free campus shuttle is available to transport you around campus or to downtown Palo Alto. Stanford is located on the Caltrain line, which offers transportation up or down the peninsula to San Francisco or San Jose. Our concierge office can assist you with travel and activity planning for you, your family, or you and your new friends in the program.

Halfway through the Stanford Executive Program, the mid-program break affords participants an extra day off. Many participants use this time to visit attractions a bit further from Stanford, such as Yosemite National Park, Lake Tahoe, or Redwood National Park in northern California, or Los Angeles or Las Vegas to the south. The break also offers a good opportunity for family members to come to Stanford for a visit.

**Q. What is there to do at Stanford and in the surrounding area?**

A. The Stanford campus is located in a beautiful setting in the middle of Silicon Valley, on the vibrant San Francisco Bay peninsula. On campus, there are numerous cultural and recreational activities: running and bicycling paths, including “The Dish,” an iconic challenging path up a hill with a working satellite dish on its summit; the Cantor Center for Visual Arts, featuring the Rodin Sculpture Garden and other important works; the beautiful and challenging Stanford Golf Course, consistently rated as one of the finest in the world; Stanford’s state-of-the-art fitness and recreational facilities; and much more.

Our hometown of Palo Alto offers a dynamic mix of restaurants, coffee houses, shops, and nightlife. A short distance from campus, University Avenue is a popular hangout for students, faculty, SEP participants, tourists, and locals. The Stanford Shopping Center offers world-class shopping in a beautiful outdoor setting.

Stanford also offers easy access to the many cultural, shopping, and recreational attractions of nearby San Francisco and the Bay Area. World-renowned museums, restaurants, sightseeing, and stores—too numerous to list here—await your exploration. Napa and Sonoma wineries, the Monterey Peninsula and Marin County are also nearby. The SEP concierge can provide you with complete information.

During the six weeks of the Stanford Executive Program, a number of sporting events will take place on campus or nearby. The concierge can arrange trips to Major League Baseball games (San Francisco Giants or Oakland A’s); professional soccer (the annual match between the San Jose Earthquakes and the Los Angeles Galaxy happens at Stanford Stadium); the Bank of the West Classic Tennis Tournament (also held at Stanford); and occasional professional golf tournaments. There is also a long tradition of SEP participants taking part in the San Francisco Marathon, Half Marathon, and other races—or cheering on those who are running.

**Q. Are there local activities for my visiting family while I am participating in the Stanford Executive Program?**

A. There are many diversions for family members during the summer in the Bay Area, including children’s enrichment camps, activities, and parks. Please see the Stanford WorkLife Office’s ‘Summer Activities and Camps’ page for helpful links and information:

<https://worklife.stanford.edu/programs/early-childhood-education-care/summer-activities-and-camps>

**Q. What about the social life?**

A. One of the things that sets the Stanford Executive Program apart from other schools' programs is a robust social life. SEP participants are expected to work hard—and are encouraged to play hard. The SEP staff and concierge will help ensure that you enjoy not only a great classroom experience, but a fun and memorable stay at Stanford.

After a week of rigorous classes, debate, and study, SEP's famous Friday night events offer an opportunity to meet new classmates, learn a little bit about the customs, cultures, and cuisine of various regions of the world—and for those who are willing, work off some of those calories on the dance floor. Meals, breaks, and weekend and evening activities offer additional, informal opportunities to socialize with your fellow participants.

**Q. What happens after the program ends?**

A. The friendships and professional relationships forged at SEP often continue long after the program is over. Participants stay connected to Stanford and to each other through a global network of SEP alumni, as well as invitations to SEP reunions and other events. SEP groups on LinkedIn and other social media sites offer additional opportunities to stay engaged with Stanford and your classmates.

During the program, a photographer and videographer will document your SEP journey and its many memorable moments. After the program, participants will receive a class video and a photo yearbook as mementos to supplement the many photos and videos participants take and share with each other.