Study Abroad Office/Student International Academic Affairs

Short-Term Faculty-Led Programs

Pre-Departure Handbook

2014-2015
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Timeline:
Pre-Departure Period: (Faculty Leader has already completed the initial program approval/planning stages and accepted students)

PLEASE NOTE: The timeline below is SAO’s model for the programs they fully assist.

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<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Summer Timeline</th>
<th>Winter Timeline</th>
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<td>Make Arrangements with Providers</td>
<td>Start as early as August</td>
<td>Start as early as April</td>
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<td>Secure reservations and submit deposits/final payments</td>
<td>January – March</td>
<td>September – November</td>
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<td>Faculty plans pre-departure/health and safety orientation</td>
<td>March/April</td>
<td>October/November</td>
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<td>Pre-Departure Workshop for program leaders hosted by SAO</td>
<td>Early March (spring break groups)</td>
<td>mid to late November (winter groups)</td>
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<td>Program Departures</td>
<td>March (spring) May/June/July (summer)</td>
<td>December/January</td>
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Make Arrangements with Providers/On-Site Support

Housing
We find it ideal if housing has been looked at prior to the group arriving on site. Students can be very critical of their housing arrangements. Some things to consider are accessibility issues for students with disabilities, proximity to classrooms, proximity to faculty housing, field trip destinations, etc.

Faculty or family members should not share accommodations with students under any circumstances. Students should also not be housed with program assistants if the assistant has academic responsibility and potential influence on the grades. If the program assistant does not hold any academic responsibility then they may room with students. Any program housing decisions made for the program/trip should be in line with the student code of conduct.

Travel
For SAO faculty-led programs, we highly encourage group airfare to be included in the program fees for winter programs. For faculty leading a Global Studies 298 course abroad, offering a group flight is required by LAS and organized by the Study Abroad Office. Arranging a group flight is the easiest way to know when your students will be arriving. Staff working on faculty-led programs in the Study Abroad Office work with a preferred travel agent of the University on coordinating group space on the best flight in regards to itinerary and price. Seats are confirmed for the group on regularly scheduled flights. The group flight is confirmed four to six months before the program departure date, and at
that time a $100 to $200 deposit, per the amount of seats requested, is paid by the Study Abroad Office. Final ticketing and payment occurs one to two months prior to the departure date and is handled by the travel agent and the Study Abroad Office.

**Documentation:** All students need to obtain a passport in order to travel outside the United States. Passports should be valid six months beyond the program end date. The Study Abroad Office requires a passport copy for all applicants, and an application will not be considered complete without a passport copy or at least a receipt as proof of passport application submission or passport renewal.

Faculty and students are strongly encouraged to leave a copy of their passport and visa with a family member back home and take additional copies in checked luggage.

In addition, depending on the location of your program, a visa may be required. It is the responsibility of the faculty leader to inquire about visa requirements for all the countries to be visited. A valid passport is required for all visa applications.

The Study Abroad Office’s policy on visa support is to encourage students to use the resources available to them through the U.S. State Department website or to contact the consulate or embassy of their host country. We have also started to encourage students to work with a visa agency. If the visa application requirements include official letters from the Study Abroad Office, then we ask students to e-mail their respective Study Abroad Advisor with the specifics of the requirement.

**Secure Reservations and Submit Deposits/Final Payments**

Make sure reservations are set, either through your direct contact or through the SAO advisor for your course. Under university regulations, new vendors abroad must complete W-8BEN or similar forms, so please make sure to take care of this early on. Payments cannot be made until it is. Submit invoices to Darcy Derr, the Finance Officer in the Study Abroad Office, if your program is being fully assisted or to your business person for study abroad if your program is being partially assisted. Once reservations with providers abroad are finalized and SAO receives invoices and reviews them for accuracy and other information, the SAO pays deposits and final payments and gets authorized official signatures on contracts as required.

**Plan Orientation Session(s) (Pre-Departure and On-site)**

**Items to Cover:**
Orientations are important to the students because it gives them a better idea of how things will go while they are abroad with you. Plan, schedule, and lead an orientation that addresses key issues and concerns for your program. It will be important to cover health and safety concerns, the program itinerary, academic requirements, common behavioral issues, group dynamics, etc. Students will look to these sessions for answers to their questions. Also, incorporate “getting to know you” activities so that students can get acquainted with their peers and with you.
Student Behaviors and Expectations:
During this experience, you will have more responsibilities than in a traditional, on-campus, course. You will be an administrator, an advisor, a facilitator, a first-responder, and of course, an educator. Most importantly, you are a traveling companion, and you need to be aware of issues that may arise and how you will handle them. How would your patience and sense of humor hold up when things do not go right, such as a bus does not arrive at the airport or the group flight is delayed a day or two?

Faculty leaders who have done this for many years say that the biggest challenges that arise are not emergency situations, fluctuating currencies or language barriers, but instead, student behavior problems. Discussing appropriate student conduct in pre-departure and on-site orientations is important.

Reinforce that studying abroad is an academic experience, and the academic responsibilities take precedent over personal interests. Inform the students that their behaviors abroad will be seen as representative of the United States, as well as the state of Illinois and the University of Illinois. Misconduct by one person abroad and can have a compound effect resulting in negative reflections on the faculty leader, the group, university, and could potentially damage potential for a repeating program in the same city.

Consider creating a student-faculty contract tailored to your program. Ask students to collaborate with you to come up with acceptable and unacceptable behaviors from which the group can agree upon, and then create a “contract” that they all can sign. You may also have the group decide consequences for a student if the contract is broken. There is no need for a unanimous agreement, but consensus is desired.

Because of liability, if a major infraction occurs, dismissal of a student can occur. Thoroughly document all events and behaviors in case a dismissal becomes necessary. Be in contact with the SAO and other university officials so that we may help in the process. Be sure to have the student sign any necessary documents in the process. If a student is dismissed, they may still require some supervision until they leave for home.

Policies on drugs and alcohol
The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign has a zero tolerance policy regarding the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students or faculty participating in UIUC study abroad programs. Faculty, staff or students who violate this policy may be disciplined in accordance with University policies. For more information, please refer to: http://www.cam.illinois.edu/ix/ix-a/ix-A-15.htm

Use of alcohol in a study abroad program can become a problem, especially for some students who have suddenly become of legal drinking age.

Violation of local laws and Illinois policies may result in: immediate dismissal from the program, academic withdrawal from the university, or disciplinary action upon return to campus.
Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to self or others. Alcohol abuse is planned, systematic misuse of alcohol.

This policy also includes program leaders. No university funds can be used to purchase alcohol. If students individually purchase alcohol at a group function then it is your responsibility to monitor responsible alcohol use by both you and the students. You are not ultimately responsible for an individual student’s drunkenness, but you can be liable if you are shown to have encouraged consumption. As the program leader, you are in a position of authority and responsibility and you must be capable of addressing an emergency should it arise.

Alcohol misuse and abuse will not be tolerated on Illinois study abroad programs.

Culture Shock
Be aware that culture shock indicators such as: helplessness, irritability, and loneliness; homesickness; extensive sleeping; homesickness; feeling depressed; stereotyping the country/culture; inexplicable crying; etc. Most students will experience some form of culture shock at some point. Some might experience it only after two days, while others may experience it later on. No two individuals will show the same indicators of culture shock. If your students’ display one or more of these symptoms, it is likely they are going through a cross-cultural adjustment. Remember that for some students, this may be their first time out of the U.S., while others may be seasoned travellers.

Utilizing your own understanding of the culture, as well as local people’s understandings, can help the students to work through frustrations and stereotypes. Having people from the local culture attend meetings and be available to students can assist in their transition to their new location.

Packing Lists
Faculty should be clear with students about what they will need to pack. There will be luggage limits on international flights, so please provide direction on what kinds of clothes will be needed (casual/dressy, weather, comfort, cultural norms, etc.)

Faculty leaders should be sure to pack the following items:

- Emergency contact information
- Intent to Divert from Plan forms
- Insurance information
- A cell phone that will work in the host country

Health and Safety Information

Health Insurance
All students, faculty and staff participating in international travel through the University of Illinois – Urbana/Champaign must be covered by CISI health insurance. The insurance covers medical expenses including mental conditions, emergency medical evacuations, emergency family reunion, and 24-hour telephone assistance.
Students must take their insurance cards with them. Most often, students pay for their medical expenses up front and will be reimbursed after filing a claim form. The policy excludes injuries resulting from alcohol abuse and injuries from excessively risky behavior such as, but not limited to extreme sports. More details about the CISI policy and claim forms can be found at http://www.culturalinsurance.com/uil0047/.

**Immunizations**
Faculty, staff, and students should check their immunization status and update it as needed. The Study Abroad Office refers students to the McKinley Health Center for questions regarding immunizations for travel abroad. Travel Immunizations are not included in the McKinley Health Center fee. Immunizations may need to be given two months prior or more before departure, so faculty, staff, and students should be aware of this timeline and schedule their shots accordingly.

For on campus resources, call 217-333-2702 for medical/travel questions. For travel consultations, call 217-333-2715. Travel consults are strongly recommended for travel to tropical regions.

Refer to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDD) at www.cdc.gov for information on immunizations and other health related issues.

**Vehicle Safety Abroad**
Use of vehicles driven by faculty and students should be reviewed very carefully. All risks present in the U.S. are present abroad, as well as difficulties navigating the language, cultural norms, laws, etc.

If and when group travel is necessary, travel should be conducted through a reputable company that has a good track record. To determine how reputable the company is, ask questions about how the drivers are selected, what training the drivers are given, and their insurance liability.

**Emergency Procedures**
- Make sure you and your students have registered with the Department of State.
- Communicate a neutral meeting space for students and faculty in the event of an emergency. Have a “plan B” meeting space in case your “plan A” meeting space is the site of the emergency.
- Give all students your contact information (i.e. cell phone number, room number, whereabouts of yourself on free days, etc.). You will be on-call to the students 24-7.

*What is an “emergency”??*  
Emergencies can be both perceived and real, and you need to be able to handle both. If a perceived emergency is ignored, this may be as detrimental to the student’s experience as a real emergency. It is important to take students’ concerns seriously and take necessary steps to address them.

*Real Emergencies*  
An emergency is a circumstance that poses a genuine risk to, or that has already disturbed the safety and wellness of program participants. Emergencies can include, but are not limited to:
- Death of a student
• Physical assault/threat/attack
• Potential suicide
• Disappearance/kidnapping/hostage taking of a student
• Robbery
• Sexual assault or rape
• Serious illness, physical or emotional
• Significant accident and/or injury
• Hospitalization for any reason or length
• Terrorist threat or attack
• Natural disaster that poses a threat to the students’ well being or safety
• Local political unrest
• Arrest or questioning by the police or other security forces
• Any legal action (lawsuit, deposition, trial, etc.) involving the student
• Anything that is beyond your capability

How to respond to emergencies
1. Ensure the safety of the participants. Do whatever is necessary to ensure this, no matter what it entails. You will be reimbursed for any emergency decisions you need to make.
2. Contact the local police
3. Contact the study abroad office at (217) 333-6322. Do this immediately after ensuring the well being and safety of the group.
   Some questions the on-duty advisor or staff member will ask you is:
   • What are the current conditions of the students?
   • Who is the main contact for this situation? What is their phone number?
   • What is the proximity of the event in relation to the students?
   • Are there any imminent risks? What are they?
   • Are adequate, food, water and medical attention available?
   • Is there adequate housing available? For how long?
   • Do the participants and you need to be evacuated?
4. Call the emergency contact/family if student is unable to.
5. Notify the local U.S. embassy or consulate. Follow whatever procedures they may recommend and ask to stay informed on what is happening.
6. If appropriate, contact the insurance provider – Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)
7. Keep the SAO informed. Telephone (217) 33-6322, fax (217) 244-0249, or e-mail (sao@illinois.edu), about the evolution of the crisis, until it has passed.
8. Keep Calm. Students will base their reactions on how you are reacting.
9. Create a log to document everything. This will help when you contact the SAO office to ensure that no details are overlooked.
10. Complete an Incident Reporting Form.

It is highly unlikely that you would ever need to evacuate students from a site abroad. However, if the situation does arise, the Study Abroad Office will work with CISI, and the U.S. Embassy to facilitate a safe return of all students and staff.
Incident Reporting FAQ

The University has tasked Student International Academic Affairs (SIAA) to coordinate responses to incidents and emergencies for all university related educational activities abroad. Leaders or coordinators of all programs abroad are required to submit this form to help us continually improve our care for students, faculty, and staff. All emergency requests should come by phone to our 24-hour hotline: 217.333.6322. Please submit this form to the Assistant Director of International Health and Safety at bowhite2@illinois.edu

1. When do I report an incident?

These incidents must be reported.
   a. Any report or allegation of a crime involving a student. This includes being a victim of a crime and perpetrating one.
   b. Any illness or injury that requires emergency care or hospitalization
   c. Any natural disaster or political incident that directly impacts University people or programs
   d. Any incident that may result in disciplinary action by the University of Illinois (obvious breach of code of conduct)
   e. Any incident that may involve the departure of the student from the program

2. What do you do with this information? Is this confidential?

We treat this information with respect and do not publicize information. It is collected for two reasons: 1) so that we can improve services and learn from our mistakes, 2) so that we can prepare and protect the people and programs involved both legally and logistically.

This form is a FERPA protected education record. As a general rule, only school officials with a legitimate educational or institutional interest will have any access to this form. Those may include professionals in the Dean of Student’s office, McKinley Health Center, University Counsel, among others.

3. What if the student does not want me to report this?

In certain cases, this may be understandable and discussions can ensue about privacy. In some cases, though, federal law requires us to collect a report. Regardless, the report should be filled out as completely as possible and any questions or concerns can be directed to the Director of SIAA or the ADIHS.

4. What happens if this is a serious emergency and I don’t have time right away to fill out the report?

In the event of a crisis, please address the emergency first and then follow up with this form as soon as is wise and possible. The primary concern is the health and well-being of students, faculty, and staff.
After Hours Emergency General Communication Plan

Summary: Like any crisis or emergency plan, this necessitates periodic review. The point of any plan is to be useful, though, and so this document serves as a reference sheet to that end. This plan, then, serves to address the three most common incident reports that we have received historically at UIUC. This is predicated on travelers having confirmed CISI insurance for travel.

After Hours Emergency Line (24 hours/7 days a week):

The 24 hour line is 217.333.1216. This is a direct link to the University Police Department and calls will be logged and forwarded to the Assistant Director for International Health and Safety.

Travel Related Emergencies:

For flight delays/cancellations: travel agent #___________ OR airline #___________

For lost documents/lost luggage: 1(800) 872-1414 (inside the USA)
                            1-609-986-1234 (outside the USA)

Medical Emergencies

Major accident: get immediate help and then contact Assistant Director of Intl Health/Safety calling either after hours # OR cell # at 217.607.6201.

Major illness: get immediate help and then contact Assistant Director of Intl Health/Safety

Health Insurance Questions:

Students
To seek to opt out after proof of U.S. insurance: contact Student Insurance Office at 1.800.767.0700 or online at: https://www.uhcsr.com/illinois; All Students must register for CISI prior to leaving

Faculty/Staff
Academic Professionals are covered by the University domestically, but should register for CISI internationally.

Major Crisis

Seek safety and then call the 24/7 after hours line immediately at 217.333.1216.

*note: the back-up people to the Assistant Director of International Health and Safety will be notified by the 24/7 number if the ADIHS is not picking up
Helpful Resources

U.S. Department of State
http://www.state.gov/travel/
download the “Smart Traveler” app!

U.S. Department of State Traveler’s Checklist
http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/go/checklist.html

U.S. Department of State Get Help in an Emergency
http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/emergencies.html

Center for Disease Control
http://www.cdc.gov/

CIA World Factbook

Currency Conversion
http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter/

NAFSA: Association of International Educators
http://www.nafsa.org/
Post Program Information

Suggestions on what to do with your students upon return
Study abroad is an incredible experience for students. Maintain contact with your students. It is essential that you help guide your students in learning how to integrate their international experience into their lives back on campus. To help wrap up the course, a debriefing meeting a few weeks after their return is recommended, where students can talk about their experiences and their feelings upon return. This could also be beneficial in assisting students with readjustment and possible reverse culture shock. Reassure them that, as difficult as it is to adapt to an entirely new culture, it can be just as challenging to come back home after being away for any period of time. What they may encounter with reverse culture shock:

- Remind them that the world at home did not stop while they were gone. Upon return home, students may find that they are not the only one who changed during their absence. Remind them to take time to readjust slowly.
- Suggest they actively participate in the International Illini, a group of students returned from study abroad experiences and international students on campus.
- Other ideas you can give them:
  - Apply to be a peer advisor in the SAO office
  - Maintain contact with other program participants
  - Attend information sessions for future participants
  - Talk about their Course Abroad experience to clubs and groups they belong to
  - Join an international organization or club
  - Continue foreign language training or take courses with an international focus
  - Enter the SAO photo contest
  - Continue studying the host country by taking related courses, reading international papers, viewing films and videos, writing research papers, etc.
  - Volunteer in the community or on campus. Help organizations that support community service and development.
  - Start thinking about how to return abroad whether it is another short-term program, semester long program, yearlong program, graduate school, PeaceCorp, etc.
Resources


University of Michigan-Flint. (2011). Study/Travel Abroad Faculty Leader Handbook. For UM-Flint Faculty and/or Staff.


Portland State University, Education Abroad. (2005). Developing Short-Term, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs. http://www.intl.pdx.edu/Faculty/PSU%20Faculty%20Handbook%20for%20Short-Term%20Programs.pdf


Spencer, S. E. & Tuma, K. (2002). The Guide to Successful Short Term Programs Abroad. NAFSA.