

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION
STUDY ABROAD PLANNING

Timeline

The process of developing a study abroad program should begin early enough so that the paperwork contained in this packet may be submitted to the International Education department approximately ***one year*** prior to departure (therefore planning may begin as early as 15-24 months prior to the course offering). This is to ensure that faculty and staff have ample time to advertise and implement the program.

Step 1: Ascertain Need

The first step in developing an overseas academic experience is to determine if a need exists. To help you determine need, ask yourself the following questions:

What, specifically, are my goals for internationalization?

What, specifically, would I like my students to gain from a study abroad experience?

What will the purpose(s) for the study abroad program be (check all that apply)?

- Learn a foreign language
 - Learn about another culture
 - Gain a better understanding of US culture
 - Gain a better understanding of world affairs
 - Gain a better understanding of international issues involving a specific field
 - Personal growth
 - Program activity/objective
 - Other (please describe):
-

Who is my target audience (check all that apply)?

- All NWTC students
- NWTC students in _____ program
- Community members
- Professional adults
- Traditional students
- Non-traditional students

How many students do I anticipate would be interested in participating? If I cannot attract a large enough group, can I reexamine my target audience?

What, specifically, are my Division's goals for internationalization?

Will this study abroad program fulfill program requirements or a need within my discipline?

Has a course similar to the one I am considering been offered before? Was it successful?

What is my personal motivation for wanting to develop a study abroad program? Does my motivation address the needs outlined above?

Step 2: Develop Support

If you believe that the program you are considering would fulfill a need, you should introduce your ideas to your divisional leadership and the International Education department. Begin by discussing your plans with colleagues who have already taught or worked abroad. If appropriate, use their advice to refine your concept before completing a proposal.

Step 3: Site Visit

If you haven't already visited the proposed study abroad location, or if further visits are warranted before the program can be fully developed, you should consider making a site visit.

Step 4: Application for Travel Course Program

Now that you have support from your division leadership and the International Education department, it is time to formally develop your program. To do so, complete the application, and return it to the division and International Education department approximately one-year prior to the date you plan to depart the United States. Late submission of the Travel Course Application may result in your proposal being denied.

Step 5: Marketing and Recruitment

Once your travel course is approved by the International Education department and your Dean, it is time to begin advertising. As the faculty leader, you are primarily responsible for the promotion of your program as you have a great deal of contact with students in your discipline. Some suggestions for recruitment include:

- Speak to your classes about the program you plan to lead
- Ask other faculty within your division to discuss your program in their courses, and to encourage students to study abroad
- Talk to academic advisors about possible ways in which your program can fit into academic plans
- Mail students a letter inviting them to apply to your program
- Hang posters around campus
- Hold information meetings in high traffic areas like the cafeteria
- Reserve display cases/tables around campus to advertise your program
- Contact NWTC publications and ask that they run an article about your program
- Determine if a brochure should be developed

Be sure to address some of the reasons why students may choose NOT to participate including:

- **Money**-Students should know what if any fund-raising options there are available to them
- **Credit**-Students should know how a study abroad experience will affect their academic plan and which credits (if possible) they will receive for the experience
- **Foreign Language**-Students should know what level of fluency they need to attain before participating in your Travel Course
- **Benefit**-Students should hear from you, the faculty, why your particular program is necessary or beneficial to them in the long-run (impressive to future employers, help them define career objectives; deepen their understanding of a particular topic, etc.

Students from other institutions and community members are eligible to apply; however, preference is given to degree-seeking NWTC students.

Step 6: Planning Student Orientations

The International Education department requires that the faculty leader meet with his/her group of students a minimum of three times prior to departure. We suggest this is done 6 months, 2 months, and 1 month prior to departure.

The first orientation (approximately 6 months prior to departure) should be motivational in nature to get students excited about the trip and to have them become comfortable with each other and with you, the group leader. Participants should be informed about itinerary, academic expectations and the awarding of credit and grades. Participants should be instructed on how to apply for a U.S. passport and foreign visa (if applicable). Participants should also be informed about health requirements e.g. physicals and immunizations.

The second orientation (approximately 2 months prior to departure) should build upon the solidarity established in the first meeting and motivate students to take responsibility for the success of the trip.

Work on having students talk about their goals for the experience, and assist them in clarifying their visions with in-depth discussions. Help students work through their fears and anxieties. Confront any stereotypes they may have, and possibly ask a student or faculty who is a native of the country to speak. Discuss the geography, educational system, language, laws and customs, gender/diversity issues, political structure, culture shock, etc.

The second orientation should also address some specific program requirements including standards of conduct, health and safety considerations, and medical insurance (These topics will be covered in the participant waiver, as well).

The third orientation (approximately 1 month prior to departure) should address course/trip expectations, packing, etiquette issues, U.S. customs regulations, money (including traveler's checks, using ATM machines, credit cards, debit cards, exchanging money), prescription and non-prescription drugs, contacts and glasses, forms of identification (including student identification), driving while abroad (and why it isn't a good idea), making phone calls, emailing, and sending mail. You should also reinforce components of previous meetings and answer any remaining student questions.

Step 7: Confirming the Itinerary

In an attempt to safeguard student funds and minimize the need for program leaders to carry large travel advances, it is preferred that you book and pay for as many expenses as possible prior to departure. Ultimately, the Bursar office will need invoices or signed contracts from service providers to make payment.

Step 8: Faculty check-lists

Topics to be covered include:

- o Crisis Management
- o Contingency Plans
- o Liability Issues
- o Rights and Responsibilities
- o Travel Documents
- o University and System Documents
- o Visas
- o Accounting Procedures
- o Insurance
- o Medial Safety
- o Vaccinations
- o Group Management
- o Communicating with Campus
- o Special Needs Students (where appropriate)
- o Other Questions or Concerns

Step 9: Grades

Posting grades for Travel Courses follows the same procedures as on-campus courses.

Step 10: Post-Study Abroad Reentry and Program Evaluation

Shortly after returning to the United States, the International Education department will ask students to submit program evaluations. Responses will be compiled and shared with you approximately 1 month following your return to the United States. If you would like to include a supplementary course evaluation, you may either include it with the International Education department evaluation or disseminate it on your own.

You may also consider offering your students a forum through which they can readjust to the United States, reflect on their experiences, and then translate those experiences into academic or career plans.

You can accomplish this by organizing a series of formal or informal meetings, offering a post-study abroad course which deals with reentry, or by planning occasional events for students interested in international issues.

PROGRAM CANCELLATION

Safety is the College's paramount concern. The International Education department will monitor State Department Bulletins and Centers for Disease Control guidelines and will cancel a trip if safety concerns warrant. This is a VERY rare occurrence.

There are a minimum number of participants required to assure program viability. In order to be fair to participants, contacts, and agents, and not to lose deposits, a deadline date may be set whether or not to run a program. Assuming that a program is academically well-designed, the decision to go ahead with a program is generally numbers driven.

INSURANCE

As a program leader you will be provided with health insurance. Additionally, as an agent of the College, you will have access to coverage which can assist in arranging medical treatment. Please note that this insurance does not cover immediate family members accompanying the program, unless they are covered by the College's insurance plan. You should check with your private insurer about coverage terms and pay careful attention to medical evacuation and repatriation coverage.