

Guidelines for Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

(adopted 10/25/2011; revised 9/26/14, 2/1/16, 2/17)

Faculty proposing short-term study abroad programs must focus on both the academic integrity of the course being delivered and the quality of the international travel experience. The following guidelines must be considered in the planning process.

A. Academic Component

Contact Hours

Faculty leading a study abroad program must ensure that the course being taught has an acceptable level of academic rigor. Faculty members must complete the minimum contact hours in the discipline as required by SACSCOC (45 contact hours required for a 3-credit course which translates into 37.5 full hours of contact). Generally accepted definitions of contact hours employed by other universities suggest that these are hours where a) students are in contact with the professor or b) students are in contact with instructional content delivered by you and which meet the accepted norms of the discipline of the course being offered. These contact hours might include:

- Lectures (face to face, Echo capture, via Power Point)
- Viewing of a film
- Formal group discussion led by faculty member or guest presenter
- Guided educational tours
- Practicum activities
- Supervised studio work
- Exams/quizzes which will contribute to grades and/or for which they will receive meaningful feedback (ex: detailed comments on a practice essay)

In an online environment (for study abroad courses taught in hybrid fashion), contact hours might also include blogging and journaling, but only if there is significant contact between professor and student. Simply checking off work for completion does not constitute contact hours.

Note that you are required to assess students, as you would in a traditional classroom. Many types of assessments do not contribute toward contact hours. The following section helps to clarify this.

Assessment

Faculty members are required to have assessment activities that may include papers, tests, projects, performances, and presentations. The assessment activities must be consistent with the academic credits being earned. The goal is to have continuity between classes taught in the traditional face to face manner, online, and in a study abroad context.

The following items would NOT be considered contact hours, and instead would be viewed as homework (part of the assessment of students):

- Writing papers or short essays
- Reading articles or books (even if they are linked to Canvas for an online course)
- Journaling or blogging where interaction is between students
- Journaling or blogging where there is minimal interaction between students and faculty
- Web quest, worksheets, problem sets, etc.

Other Things That Cannot Be Counted as Contact Hours

Also note that the following things do NOT count as contact hours in any way:

- Pre-departure orientations prior to travel or on-site orientations aimed at logistics, safety, itinerary, etc.
- Required risk sessions
- Transportation to/from locations
- Unsupervised activities (ex: time spent at a museum where students are not guided, free time to explore a national park, etc.) but please note that a homework activity can be based around types of things
- Events which, however necessary for a successful study abroad course, lean more to the travel and tourism side of your program than its primary educational purpose

Student Taking More Than One Course

If more than one class is offered during a study abroad and students are enrolled in multiple classes, contact hours may not double count. For example, a guided tour of a museum that lasts for 2 hours **MAY NOT** count towards both their ECON 111 and ENGL 400 course if students are enrolled in both classes. Each class must have a minimum of 37.5 independent contact hours in the discipline. There must also be significant homework/assessment activities for both courses.

Planning Your Contact Hours

As part of the short-term program proposal, faculty members are asked to outline a plan for meeting the required contact hours as part of the proposal development process. Faculty members are also reminded that guidelines concerning out of class work (2 hours per hour of class) still apply. International Affairs will reject proposals for programs that do not meet expectations for the academic component. Each instructor may teach a maximum of 3.0 credit hours per two weeks abroad.

Some of the current practices used by faculty members to ensure contact hours are met include:

1. Teaching a spring course and building in summer travel as part of the course's requirements. In this way, a large portion (or all) of the required contact hours are completed prior to departure.
2. Teaching a hybrid course where students take an online course prior to departure that is then followed up with travel.

3. Having an intensive course (for example, 3 days in the classroom) prior to departure and completing remaining contact hours in the destination country.
4. Organizing mandatory meetings throughout the spring semester and using the time for lecture. Remaining contact hours are completed in the destination country.
5. Arranging for formal studio or classroom time in the destination country.

B. Travel Experience:

In addition to considering the academic rigor of the course being taught, faculty members must think about the quality of the international experience being offered.

General Education Goal 9

Since student participation in an approved study abroad program waives Goal 9, it is important that the objective associated with Goal 9 be considered. The most relevant element of this goal is as follows:

The students will

- Differentiate between personal discomfort and intellectual disagreement in situations where cultures may conflict. Distinguish between facts and cultural assumptions relating to issues of diversity.

Suggested mechanisms for achieving these goals may include:

- Home stays with local families in order to experience everyday life
- Interacting with citizens at organized meetings or informal gatherings
- Exploring historical sites and learning about their significance
- Visiting places of worship and learning about the country's religion
- Shopping in local markets (especially in developing countries) and interacting with locals
- Visiting a local school and speaking with students and faculty
- Attending exhibitions or shows that highlight local customs, traditions, art, etc.
- Using local transportation and dining at restaurants frequented by locals

Study abroad program leaders are expected to give students as much exposure to the culture, traditions, and lifestyles associated with the destination as possible. As part of the short-term program proposal, faculty members will demonstrate how the international experience connects to the course content.

Length of Stay

For short-term study abroad programs that fulfill a significant portion of contact hours before and/or after return (at least 1/3 of required hours), itineraries must build in a minimum of 3 full days within country per academic credit (not including travel to/from the destination country). This means that a 3-credit study abroad program must incorporate a minimum of 9 full days within the country (after arrival). For programs that do not fulfill a significant portion of contact hours before departure/after

return, itineraries must incorporate 4 days within country per academic credit. Exceptions to this rule may only be granted by the Director of Study Abroad, in consultation with the Executive Director of International Affairs.

C. Staffing and Group Sizes

In most cases, short-term faculty-led programs must have two Longwood faculty/staff members serving as chaperones for the trip. The second adult will be responsible for taking over the program in the event that the lead faculty program leader becomes incapacitated. Both must be employees of Longwood University. Therefore, it is important that this individual be able to manage the academic components of the program (as much as possible) and be fully informed about the itinerary, emergency plan, etc. A second chaperone may not be required when a) the program is being fully organized by a tour company and includes an company chaperone on the ground, or b) when a program is offered in connection with one of Longwood's partner institutions, for example, a program that goes to Anhui University in China. The Provost's office will contribute funds to help offset the costs of the second faculty/staff chaperone based on the payment scale provided on the study abroad website (Instructions for Faculty Leaders page).

There must be no more than a 14:1 ratio between students and faculty/staff chaperones. A program with two faculty/staff chaperones is limited to 28 participants. Larger programs must incorporate a third faculty or staff chaperone.