

**SITE VISIT GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDELINES
FOR FACULTY-LED STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS**

The WTAMU Office of Executive Vice-president for Academic Affairs (EVPAA) and the Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships annually make available site visit grants to faculty who want to develop a faculty-led study abroad program but who also want to make a site visit to determine if the site is appropriate for the program. Grants of up to \$3,000 allow faculty members to visit a study abroad destination of their choice for the purposes of planning and arranging for a faculty-led program to the selected destination. The purposes of the site visit are to:

- ✓ Assess the site for safety
- ✓ Connect with institutional partners
- ✓ Make logistical arrangements (engaging a 3rd party provider is encouraged)
- ✓ Establish a program budget
- ✓ Assess the availability of health services
- ✓ Assess the quality of the site and the available infrastructure
- ✓ Assess the quality of the facilities as appropriate to student learning
- ✓ Assess the effectiveness of the host locations(s) for structured experiential learning.

WTAMU is a member of The Forum on Education Abroad and subscribes to the [Standards of Good Practice for Short-term Education Abroad Programs](#). Grant applicants are encouraged to review the standards when completing the site visit grant proposal. Only faculty members with serious intent in leading a program abroad should apply for this funding. Grants are awarded when there is a strong probability that there is sufficient student interest to make the program viable.

The program you are proposing should be designed to fulfill a graduation, general education or major requirement. You will need to explain how the learning outcomes of the study abroad experience map to the learning outcomes of the courses. Your proposal should anticipate how the program is academically rigorous and provides an inter-culturally enriching learning experience.

Proposals that appear to be well-conceived, for which there is expected sufficient demand based on the evidence submitted, and which clearly map learner objects to programs outcomes will receive priority. This is especially important for programs originating from the same department or college.

STIPULATIONS OF THE GRANT

Eligibility

- ✓ The Site Visit Grant is available **only** to full-time faculty.
- ✓ The faculty member **must** have completed one year of service with WT at the time the proposal is submitted.
- ✓ Recipients of a site visit grant are eligible to apply for another award three years after the date of completion of the previous site visit.
- ✓ Members of the Study Abroad Rules & Procedures Committee (SARPC) **may not** submit site visit grant proposals while serving on the SARPC.
- ✓ All proposals **must** be accompanied by two letters indicating support and approval of the proposal: one from the College Dean and the other from the Department Head. Letters as appropriate should identify and explain:

1. How the proposed program relates to the education abroad mission of the organization,
2. That the program does not conflict with other faculty-led study abroad programs from the college and/or department,
3. How the proposed program enhances academic learning opportunities for students as appropriate to the college's and department's mission.

Proposals that do not include these two letters of support will not be considered.

Successful Applicants

- ✓ Will perform a site visit within twelve months from date of award notification.
- ✓ Will submit a summary report of the site visit within 60 days of return.
- ✓ Will submit a proposal to lead a program to the site within 18 months of the initial site visit. If extenuating circumstances arise, making this time frame impossible, an explanation detailing the relevant issues must be submitted to the OSA&NCS with a copy to the Provost's Office. Explanations must be signed off by the department head and college dean.
- ✓ Will obtain a travel card through the Business Office to pay for expenses. The recipient is responsible for providing all receipts of expenses while abroad.
- ✓ If applicant is unable to conduct the proposed site visit within the stipulated time frame, an explanation must be provided. The Committee will determine if an extension is appropriate or if the grant will be revoked. The applicant is welcome to re-apply in the future.

Limitation of the Grant

The Site Visit Grant will cover up to \$3,000 in travel expenses including accommodations, air and ground transportation, meals, media, books, and excursions that are potential student

activities. The grant does not cover salary, personal items, souvenirs, and the like. If you have questions regarding specifically which expenses are covered, contact the OSA&NCS. If expenses should exceed the award amount the faculty member will need to secure other means to cover those in excess of \$3000.

ELIGIBLE SITE VISIT PROPOSAL TYPES

Site visit grants are generally awarded to first-time programs. However, existing programs may also qualify for awards. It is recognized that existing sites may require a change in location. Such a justification may be warranted for the following reasons:

- ✓ A change in status by the [U.S. State Department](#), placing the country on their 3 or 4 risk level;
- ✓ A change in status by the [CDC](#), placing the country on their 3 health risk level
- ✓ A loss of or change in partner institution;
- ✓ A loss of resources;
- ✓ Other conditions have arisen making it difficult to return such as a natural disaster, disease, economic, and/or social instability.

When a program changes locations, it presents a new set of health and safety issues that will need to be addressed as well as evaluating the new site for a learning effectiveness. Merely moving a site for the sake of moving is not sufficient reason to relocate. Program stability increases as the Academic Program Leader establishes connections with the study abroad site over a period of time of repeated visits. Such connectivity is invaluable. Thus, location stability is important when considering and establishing an effective and safe learning environment for students.

To Change an Existing Site Location

Applicants will need to justify and document reasons to change from an existing site to another. Documentation will include State Department reports, World Health Organization updates, etc. Letters from existing entities indicating that the current arrangement is no longer valid should be included in the proposal if they apply.

To Expand an Existing Site

Sometimes programs are provided opportunities to expand their existing program such that the opportunity permits further integration and stronger ties to an existing institution or to the region and/or to another institution. Letters of introduction and past program enrollment numbers are evidence to build and enhance proposals.

SCHOLARLY PURSUITS FOR STUDENTS

Faculty-led programs abroad may, in some instances, present an ideal venue that allow some students the opportunity, either individually or as a group, to pursue appropriate research activities. If you believe that your proposal site and program lends itself to research and scholarly pursuits, address that in your proposal. These opportunities permit students to expand their experience once they return and for some to become viable candidates for scholarship opportunities such as Fulbright and Boren.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS FOR STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE

The OSA&NCS subscribes to The Forum on Education Abroad Standards of Good Practice for Short-term Education Abroad Programs. Proposals should reflect these standards as much as possible. Site visit grants permit faculty members the opportunity to more closely examine the proposed site from a “hands-on” point-of-view such that, when the program departs with students, you have clearer knowledge of the location. This advantage helps to ensure that your program satisfactorily supports mission, goals, student learning, and the health and safety due diligence that the site visit affords.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

All proposals will be evaluated by the Study Abroad Rules and Procedures Committee. The criteria used are taken from The Forum on Education Abroad Standards of Good Practice for Short-Term Education Abroad Programs, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board Standards for Study Abroad, and WTAMU and TAMUS Risk Management Guidelines.

Appendix A

TEXAS HIGHER EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD

Standards for New Out-of-State and Out-of-Country Courses

1. All students enrolled will meet institutional standards for admission and will be actually admitted to the institution, or one of the participating institutions in an approved Texas Consortium.
2. All students enrolled will pay the appropriate tuition and fees for their residency category. Financial aid will be available to students registering in foreign classes on the same basis as for on-campus students.
3. Instruction will be provided by faculty of the institution or a consortium institution and will be supervised and evaluated according to institutional policies. Exception will be made only to take advantage of uniquely qualified personnel at the out-of-state location.
4. Each course is on the approved main course inventory of the institution, is a part of an approved degree or certification program, and is justified in terms of academic, cultural, or other resources available at the specified location.
5. Instruction will conform to all relevant academic policies. All classes will conform to workload and enrollment requirements, contact hour/credit ratio, and similar matters.
6. Courses will not offer credit for activities undertaken primarily for travel, recreation, or pleasure.
7. Minimum enrollments will conform to the same standards applicable were the class to be offered on campus.
8. Multi-course offerings will meet the standards and criteria outlined in Notification and Approval Procedures Distance Education and Off-Campus Programs and Courses approved by the Coordinating Board in October 1999.
9. Advertising and marketing for out-of-state and foreign classes will emphasize the instructional nature of the classes, and not create the impression that they are primarily credit-for-travel experiences.
10. Faculty and staff will not realize unusual perquisites or financial gain for teaching out-of-state or foreign classes.
11. Except for funds specifically appropriated for international activities (e.g., state incentive programs, scholarships, etc.), state funds will not be used for faculty or student travel, meals and lodging, or other incidental expenses.
12. Free tickets for travel, accommodations, or other expenses provided by travel agents, carriers, or hotels will be used in direct support of the instructional program and will not be used as gifts to faculty, staff, or their families.
13. State funds will not be used to offer courses or credits by instructional telecommunications to reception sites outside state boundaries and will not be submitted for formula funding.
14. All courses offered in a shortened format will consist of the same number of contact hours, normally 45-48, as courses offered in a regular or summer session. Students will not carry more courses at a time in a shortened format than will give them total credit of one semester credit hour per week of instruction. (CB Rules 4.6). Pre- or post-travel class sessions will be scheduled to attain the required minimum length standard.

Appendix B

SITE VISIT EVALUATION SHEET

At the conclusion of the preliminary site visit, the faculty leader should be able to answer all or most of the questions below.

General Travel:

1. What are the dates of group travel? Consideration: Is there a more economical time to travel based on low season?
2. What places do I plan to visit (universities, museums, historic sights, organizations, etc.)?
3. What are the airline choices for this trip? Consideration: Safety and Cost.
4. What documents are required to enter and exit the country? What are the immigration and customs procedures?
5. What transportation methods are available from the airport to the hotel/hostel/homestays?
6. Do I have the name, address, and telephone numbers for all lodging, vendors, and other trip contacts?
7. What kind of lodging is available? Considerations: homestays/hotels/dorms/hostels? How many students per room? Male/Female ratio?
8. What are the hotel/hostel check in procedures/requirements for a group?
9. Are there language challenges? How do I intend to manage these language difficulties?
10. Is internet access available for faculty and students? How do I access the internet? Cost?
11. Are toilets readily accessible? Is there a cost?
12. Are there specific clothing requirements associated with the itinerary?
13. Does the itinerary present challenges/obstacles to disabled travelers?
14. Are there logistical limitations on the amount of luggage that can be effectively managed?
15. Are there issues related to pedestrian traffic? Who has the right of way?
16. Are meals included with hotel? What meals will be included and which ones will students pay?
17. Are there restaurants/convenience stores/markets near the housing where students could access food if needed?

Risk Information and Procedures:

1. What is my plan for flight delays, cancellations, and missed connections? Do I have or can I access adequate financial resources to manage these unexpected issues?
2. What is my plan for managing lost luggage?
3. Do I have "24/7" contact information for local service providers?
4. Who are the primary sources of "in-country" contact in the event of emergencies, etc.? Contact information?
5. What is my plan if the guide/ground transportation fails to appear? How do I arrange alternative group transportation?

6. Are there significant climate issues for which students need to be prepared, such as extreme heat or cold, rain, etc.?
7. Are there environmental or health issues for which students need to be prepared? Smog? Insects?
8. Are there hospitals, clinics, pharmacies with English-speaking doctors or staff near the housing?
9. What is the emergency (911) phone number in the destination country?
10. What is my plan if a student is unable to continue to travel due to health reasons? How/by whom will unexpected medical expenses be paid?
11. What crime issues exist (theft, etc.)? How do I secure police assistance?
12. Where is the closest US embassy/consulate?

Budget:

1. Cost Considerations: Airfare, Accommodations, Meals, Field trips/tours, ground transportation, health and accident insurance (required), cost for faculty (divided by total number of students, cost of pre-trip expenses, trip promotion, miscellaneous). Other student costs include: WTAMU tuition and fees, books/materials, optional tours, passport, visa (if applicable), personal spending money, additional meals or food, miscellaneous.
2. What form of payment is accepted by each service provider (e.g., cash only, credit card, university check)? What amount of cash should I travel with to meet group expenses?
3. Considerations: Vendor prepared (e.g., travel agent, tour provider or on-site assistant) or faculty prepared trip assistance? Costs are generally higher when you use a tour provider.
4. When are gratuities expected? In what amount?
5. How will I manage "group gratuities" for guides, drivers, etc.?
6. What is the average cost of meals? Is food and water available throughout each travel day? Can special dietary requirements be met?

Course:

1. Course or courses involved in the travel (students must be registered in the course to participate in the trip). Course descriptions. Will the course have both on campus and travel options? Will it be online or face-to-face?
2. What other organizations, schools, or government institutions will be involved? Are these credible entities?
3. What readings or other preparation would be beneficial for students?
4. What optional student activities should be included in the itinerary (e.g., cooking school, specialty side tours, and cultural excursions)?