

# **Buffs Abroad**

Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program Planning  
Handbook



**WEST TEXAS A&M**  
U N I V E R S I T Y <sup>TM</sup>

A member of the Texas A&M University System

This handbook includes all pertinent information related to the policies and procedures of Faculty-Led Study Abroad programs offered by West Texas A&M University’s Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships. This handbook was prepared on the basis of policies in place at the time of publication. Therefore, all information is subject to change without notice or obligation. This publication is for informational purposes only.

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## **I. Introduction**

Among the several varieties of study abroad programming offered by the University, Faculty-led programs are of particular importance to West Texas A&M University's mission and goals for the future. Not only do these programs provide excellent international study opportunities for students, but they also provide developmental experiences for faculty as well. Faculty-led study abroad programs are developed and offered through a partnership between academic departments, colleges, and the Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships.

Developing a faculty-led study abroad program is more demanding than, and involves a great deal more responsibility than, planning and developing on-campus courses. An Academic Program Leader (APL) is expected to serve as a travel agent, parent, friend, mentor, teacher, guide, and even police officer, often in a space of a day. An APL acts as bookkeeper, ensures learning outcomes, administers first aid, provides care, disciplines students, makes on-the-spot decisions, and is on duty twenty-four hours a day for the duration of the program. Leading an academic program abroad entails great responsibility that begins long before the group departs for the international destination.

Although planning and implementing a faculty-led program will take a lot of effort on the part of the APL, it is also a rewarding experience for the APL and the students who join faculty-led programs. In order to help guide APLs in developing faculty-led study abroad programs, this faculty-led handbook has been created to offer assistance to APLs in various areas.

### **Definitions**

Our office - Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships

APL – Academic Program Leader

IEFS – International Education Fee Scholarship

CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International) – a private provider of insurance coverage

THECB – The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board

SAPPC – Study Abroad Program & Planning Committee

### **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to Texas State University, the University of North Texas, and Texas A&M University for lending their ideas and content from their faculty-led study abroad handbooks in assembling this handbook for faculty-led programs at West Texas A&M University.

## **II. Planning**

### **A. Concept**

Study abroad is not meant to replicate the classroom, but rather to provide a unique opportunity for students to experience firsthand what it is like to live and learn in another culture. Many times, the opportunity for students to immerse themselves in another culture and language provides a unique experience not available on campus. For example, if the purpose of the program is to study art history, what better place to do so than Rome, Florence, Paris or another international location known for its art.

When planning your program subject and course content, the first thing that you should do is to consider how the program's location will complement the content. Obviously, there are some locations and content that fit together naturally, however, there are some programs that stretch the academic connections with a particular location. Take care that any planned academic, cultural site visits, tours, lectures or interviews are relevant to the program. Ask yourself, do the programs and courses selected fit in with the department and Colleges goals and mission? How does the foreign culture enhance the course material? How will the program contribute to student learning and enhance the student's competitive edge for employment or acceptance into graduate school?

### **B. Obtaining Approval**

Any faculty member may propose and develop a study abroad program. Before doing so, however, you should consult with your department head and college dean to discuss the appropriateness and feasibility of the program. In addition, you will work closely with our office to help create the faculty-led program that you wish to lead.

Sufficient lead time is essential to allow detailed review of the proposed program, including needed study facilities, student and faculty accommodations, transportation, and all other arrangements. This development process, from initial inquiries through approval, promotion, participant selection, orientation, program operation, and evaluation, typically requires **up to a full year** of effort by the APL, department head, and our office.

All faculty-led study abroad programs must undergo an approval process to lead a course abroad. This approval process involves your department head, your college dean, the Study Abroad Program and Policy Committee (SAPPC), and lastly the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.

After you have met with and discussed the faculty-led program with your department head, college dean and our office, you will complete the following documents for review by the Study Abroad Program and Policy Committee (SAPPC).

#### **i. Faculty-Led Course Proposal Form.**

The course proposal form allows you to justify the course that you will teach abroad including your course objectives, rationale for travel, and assigned texts and/or readings. You will also include a tentative itinerary for your proposed travel. For more information, please refer to the Faculty-led Program Proposal form.

You must obtain approval letters from your department head and college dean before this form can be submitted to our office for review by the SAPPC.

## **ii. Faculty-led Program budget**

The budget is a very important component of the planning for your faculty-led program. A miscalculated budget can be problematic. Price your program too high and you risk students not enrolling and your program not making. Price your program too low and you risk running out of funds. The budget worksheet will help you plan on what expenses to expect. Keep in mind that our office has no funds available to make up shortages for expenses. All funds and expenses must be covered through the student charges. Please remember, once you begin to advertise your program and state the program's costs, it will be very difficult, if not impossible to increase your program costs above what has been approved for your program. Consider making arrangements based on U.S. dollars rather than in the local currency. You could run the risk of the exchange rate being lower at the time of payment but the amount to be paid will be the same as what is budgeted. As a suggestion, you may want to use a third-party provider to help plan your program. Third-party providers will take the stress out of finding the best rates as they will take the responsibility of currency fluctuations upon themselves.

The following items should be included in your budget:

- WTAMU tuition and fees for the course
- Transportation to and from the study abroad site, and other required excursions in country
- Meals and accommodation
- Travel Health and Accident Insurance (required by WTAMU study abroad policy)
- Any admission fees to museums, etc. that are required
- Course books and materials

## **C. Working with the Business Office**

After your faculty-led study abroad program has been approved by the SAPPC and the VPAA you will work closely with the Business Office to manage your study abroad budget. Please see the attached document entitled 'Procedures for Faculty-Led Study Abroad Accounts' for full detail on managing your program account with the Business Office.

Please keep in mind that your account with the Business Office is your responsibility to manage and maintain. Our office will not check to make sure that the students' deposits are posting or that your payments to vendors have gone through. Our office will help guide you in the process of working with the Business Office.

### **i. Steps to setting up account and receiving/making payments:**

1. Complete the 'Establishment of New Account' form
2. Set up student payment deadlines (with the assistance of our office).
3. Students will make payments to the account by completing a deposit slip (provided by our office) with the account number, date of deposit, amount of deposit and the APL's signature to be submitted with payment to the Business Office.
4. When making payments to overseas vendors, you may use a purchase order, check, credit card or a wire transfer. Please refer to our office's Business Office Guidelines.

5. If a travel advance is needed, you must notify the Business Office a minimum of three weeks prior to departure. You will be responsible for determining the most efficient and safest way to handle these funds: traveler's checks, deposit the funds in a personal account, or purchase foreign currency.
6. Be sure to complete an NOA for your time abroad as well as completing a Request for Foreign travel which must be approved by the university president.
7. While abroad be sure to keep ALL RECEIPTS as you will need to submit these in a travel voucher after your program is complete.

#### **D. Faculty Pay**

Faculty salaries and benefits are the responsibility of the faculty member's academic department or college. Faculty transport, accommodation and per diem are provided by the individual program at the same level provided by the program for students. These expenses are covered through pro-rata student payments included in the program fee.

#### **E. Designing Your Program**

##### **i. Contact Hours**

When planning your program, keep in mind that courses offered abroad must adhere to the same minimum requirement for number of contact hours as on-campus courses. According to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board rules, chapter 4, subchapter A, section 4.6, the following indicates the number of contact hours needed to meet minimum standards and is considered applicable to all faculty-led programs abroad.

(A three credit-hour course should contain) 45 to 48 contact hours depending on whether there is a final exam. Every college course is assumed to involve a significant amount of non-contact hour time for out-of-class student learning and reflection. To ensure the quality of student learning, institutions should not allow students to carry more courses in any term (that is, regular or shortened semester), which would allow them to earn more than one semester credit hour per week over the course of the term. For example, in a five and a half week summer term, students should not generally be allowed to enroll for more than six semester credit hours.

Part of the contact hours may be completed on campus as required orientation or preparation for the study abroad program. However, the required orientation should not detract from the time needed to cover appropriate content or course outcomes.

##### **ii. Academic Integrity**

All West Texas A&M University Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs must adhere to the same standards of development, content, and approval by the department, Board of Regents, and Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board as courses taught on campus. A copy of the course syllabus for courses offered abroad must be included with the Study Abroad Faculty-Led Proposal and updated each time the course is taught abroad.

To ensure the academic integrity of Study abroad programs, each program will undergo a variety of assessments; among these are student evaluations.

##### **iii. Attendance Policy**

It is essential that student participants attend class as they normally would classes taught at the WTAMU campus. It is expected that students will attend every scheduled class meeting, both before the travel component of the class commences as well as during the program and post travel. General requirements include the following:

- Establishing mandatory requirements for attendance for each course
- Informing students of the course attendance policy at the initial orientation

#### **iv. Pre- and Post- Travel Meetings**

Carefully planning the meetings that you have with student participants before and after the program is critical. Pre- and post-travel meetings can add to the learning experience as well as set the stage for the experience. You will use the time during pre-travel meetings to inform the students of the many aspects of travel and course work involved in the faculty-led program. Our office will assist in these pre-travel meetings as needed and provide information pertaining to safety while abroad.

Although pre-travel meetings will largely focus on coursework and preparation for the time abroad, pre-travel meetings also allow you to better know your student participants prior to travel. In the past some APLs have organized informal gatherings such as barbeques in which students' family members have been welcomed to participate. Another idea is to have former student participants come speak with your current faculty-led group about their experiences while abroad and after their return. De-briefing sessions upon return to campus help students assimilate what they have experienced abroad into their academic and personal future as well.

### **F. Logistics**

#### **i. Customized Program Providers**

In most cases, the advisable method for developing your program is to use a third-party provider. Third-party providers develop tailor-made study abroad programs in which WTAMU retains the academic control of the program, but the provider makes all the logistical arrangements, including housing, classroom space, day trips, cultural and academic visits, and service-learning and volunteering opportunities if they are requested.

You may think that working with a program provider limits your control of the program. In actuality they design a program around your desires for the program. They also assume the strain and responsibility of making detailed arrangements for the group. You will determine which services you wish the third-party provider to provide and request a bid from the provider. Services might include group flight arrangements, room and board, on-site logistics, classroom space, library access, computer access, local travel or tour arrangements, guides, guest lecturers, etc.

The per-student cost is a bit higher when using a program provider, but the cost might be worth the time you save, the peace of mind having one organization responsible for the program (and one contact), and benefit of having the services of an on-site coordinator provided by the organization. This process does take time, so please contact our office as early as eighteen months in advance of your intended departure. Our office has a list of customized program providers, although the office does not endorse any particular provider.

#### **ii. Alternate Leaders**

Our office requires that each program have at least two APLs traveling on each approved faculty-led course (with no more than two being funded by the student participants unless approved by the SAPPC), with the exception of an APL working with an approved program provider. Currently, International Studies Abroad (ISA), Arcos Learning Abroad, CEA CAPA Education Abroad, and American Institute For Foreign Study (AIFS) are approved providers by WTAMU.

On programs that are not using an approved provider, one of the APLs will take the role as lead APL, as the faculty-led course will be instructed by this APL. The second APL may be a fellow faculty member who is SACS approved to teach the course should the lead APL not be able, or a WTAMU staff member who has a tie to the course, department and/or college. APLs must be on the WTAMU payroll, be involved in the basics of the program and have attended all orientation sessions and prior meetings with study abroad personnel.

Having two APLs traveling with the faculty-led program is needed should an event occur where one of the APLs assumes responsibility of the group, such as in the event that the other APL must return early, stay with a student while the group carries on, brings a student to get medical attention, etc. Students must never be left alone while the program is in progress.

### **iii. Contingency Planning**

In the event that you and/or the other APL are unable to participate in the program, you should have a contingency plan for providing students the opportunity to take the course that the absent faculty member is assigned to teach. Such a plan may provide that the course(s) be offered on campus.

### **iv. Program Assistants**

Many APLs find that hiring a program assistant to help with the details of program management is beneficial. This assistant can be a WTAMU student, a WTAMU faculty member or staff member. Planning such a program takes a lot of time and energy so having someone to help with the details will take much of the strain off of you. Please speak with your department head and college dean about hiring a program assistant.

### **v. Guidelines on Dependents**

A successful faculty-led study abroad program depends on the full attention and leadership of the APLs. The primary responsibility of program faculty is to ensure a safe and high-quality educational experience for all students enrolled in the faculty-led program. Our office recognizes that in some instance family or friends may be beneficial to the faculty-led program but family must not interfere with the function of the study abroad program in any way. The following guidelines are provided to assist faculty in making informed decisions related to guests and family members on all or part of a study abroad program.

#### **Dependents**

##### **a. Spouse/partner**

- i. A “partner” will be used to refer to either the spouse or the domestic partner of a faculty member, including the domestic partners of unmarried faculty irrespective of sexual orientation.
- ii. A spouse/partner may accompany the faculty member for the duration of the program or a significant portion of the program as long as it does not interfere



with the faculty member's duties to the program and the study abroad students.

- iii. Spouses/partners should understand that their primary role on the study abroad program is that of spouse/partner. For liability purposes, it is important that spouses/partners do not have responsibilities related to the academic program (e.g. taking roll, monitoring tests, managing working funds).
- b. Children
    - i. The faculty member's children or legal dependents over the age of 16 may accompany the faculty member for the duration of the program or for a significant portion of the program as long as it does not interfere with the faculty member's duties to the program and the study abroad students.
    - ii. Grandchildren, nephews, and nieces who are not a faculty member's legal dependents are not considered dependents but rather extended family and are therefore not permitted to stay for the duration of the program unless they are enrolled as students in the program.
  - c. Extended Family Members and Acquaintances
    - i. Extended family members and acquaintances may participate in travel opportunities under the same terms and conditions as spouse/partners and children with the approval of the faculty member's Dean and the Provost/VPAA. Please be aware that often non-students permitted on faculty-led programs present a liability as you will have no authority over their behavior or control over potential interaction with students. From a risk standpoint, it is not recommended that non-students participants be allowed to accompany a faculty-led program.
  - d. Financial Considerations
    - i. State regulations require that faculty members pay all expenses of their spouse/partners and dependents. Current Texas A&M fiscal policies do not allow such expenses to be paid by student program fees or monies mixed into student program fee accounts. This means that separate payments directly from the faculty member will be required for dependent expenses. This information must be made transparent for all those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student program fees are, in any way, subsidizing non-participants. Please contact Study Abroad Programs for questions about this information.
    - ii. Dependents are not guaranteed potential "group discount" prices due to restrictions on such rates (e.g. age limits, student only prices, etc.)
    - iii. In cases where a faculty member requires a logistical arrangement for a dependent or spouse/partner that costs more than the price paid by a student, the faculty member is responsible for the cost difference (e.g. if paying for a double room instead of a single room in a hotel, the faculty member would pay the difference between the single and the double to accommodate an accompanying spouse/partner)
  - e. Logistical Arrangements

- i. Program arrangements are not primarily made to accommodate the needs of dependents and spouse/partner. All program accommodations are made with the understanding that this is an academic program designed to meet the needs of the students and the faculty members.
- ii. Faculty members are responsible for obtaining passports and visas for their spouse/partner and dependents.
- iii. Faculty members are responsible for obtaining health insurance for their spouse/partner and dependents.
- iv. Faculty members must organize spouse/partner and dependents' travel arrangements whenever these arrangements deviate from those made for the planned study abroad program, such as (but not limited to)
  - 1. Transportation to and from the study abroad location
  - 2. Excursions in the host country
  - 3. Hotels
  - 4. Meals

When travel arrangements exactly coincide with the planned study abroad program, these will be coordinated with the Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships, using the same program deadlines that apply for students engaged in the program.

- v. Spouse/partner and dependents may room with the faculty member if accommodations allow, but, as already mentioned, the faculty member must pay the difference for any room upgrade.
  - vi. Spouse/partner and dependents are strongly discouraged not to share accommodations with students.
  - vii. Spouse/partner and dependents should not compromise the planned academic program in any way, such as (but not limited to)
    - 1. preventing the faculty member from attending or leading field trips or other academic elements of the program.
    - 2. disrupting class or field trips.
    - 3. preventing students or other faculty members from engaging fully in the academic program.
- f. Required Documents.
- i. Spouse/partners and adult children are required to execute all documents (for example, Terms of Participation, Releases of Liability, Proof of Health Insurance, etc.) associated with the travel opportunity and required of student participants by the Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships. The faculty member is required to execute said documents on behalf of any minor children accompanying the faculty member. Spouse/partners and children accompanying the faculty member are expected to comply with all Study Abroad Program requirements and regulations associated with the travel opportunity.

#### **vi. Enrollment Minimums and Maximums**

Faculty-led study abroad courses must have at least ten students enrolled in the course if the faculty member wishes to be compensated for his or her time spent teaching the course. It is possible for a faculty member to teach and lead a program abroad with under 10 students but the faculty member

must get approval from his/her department and college to do so. In such case, the faculty leader would likely forfeit WTAMU salary while teaching a class under the required minimum of 10 students to have the course “make” unless other arrangements have been made through the college and/or department.

Should a faculty leader decide to lead a course abroad with fewer than 10 students, our office should be notified as soon as possible. APLs leading courses abroad with fewer than 10 students should be aware that the budget submitted in the program proposal process is based on a minimum of 10 students included in the study abroad program. To ensure that the students committed to joining the faculty-led program are not charged additional money for the lack of the 10 student participants, the faculty leader must find the additional funding for his/her personal costs through the department and/or college in which the course originates.

Enrollment for a faculty-led program should be no greater than ten students per faculty member. An exception to this guideline is possible if you can demonstrate that there is sufficient ground support provided at the site by another institution or third-party provider to alleviate your program-management responsibilities.

#### **vii. Selecting Student Participants**

When planning a faculty-led program abroad one of the most difficult parts of planning is deciding which student participants you will allow to join the program abroad. Having a well-defined screening process prior to accepting students into your program can prevent unnecessary conflict during the program. Remember, the members of your study abroad program will be spending almost every waking moment together for the duration of the program abroad, so having a group that works well together and has similar academic goals for the program will be of benefit to you.

Our office requires that you develop your acceptance guidelines at the time that you submit your program proposal materials. Our office recommends including the following components in your program screening criteria:

- *Good Academic Standing requirement.* According to the WTAMU policy on study abroad, students must be in good academic standing; however, you may want to have a specific GPA requirement for your program.
- *Semester completion:* Must have completed a minimum of one semester of study at WTAMU, and be making successful progress toward academic degree requirements as determined by the Dean of their college.
- *Recommendations or references.* Our office recommends requiring at least two to three references who may be contacted for recommendations.
- *Verification of the academic record and disciplinary history.* Investigation into any previous misconduct is an essential step in preventing incidents of misconduct in your program.

- *Interview with potential student participants.* Personal interview provide insights into an applicant's capabilities and commitment to study abroad that you cannot realize by processing the students paperwork.
- *No restrictions on registration.*

Whatever criteria you choose to include in the screening process, you must make this criteria for acceptance into a program known to ALL students at the time they apply.

### **viii. Orientations**

Orientation sessions are required of all study abroad programs, including faculty-led programs. Students must be prepared for the study abroad program prior to departure and upon arrival at the study abroad site to ensure they are best prepared for the experience.

Orientations set the program's tone, assist in developing cooperative relationships, and help build the knowledge and attitude that will make the program an unforgettable, positive experience for the students and you. Not only do orientations focus on the cultural components of study abroad but also provide students with information about health and safety practices while they are abroad. Participant attendance is strictly mandatory to convey to students that faculty members are serious about the program, to diminish disciplinary problems, emphasize faculty expectations, and reduce liability.

Each orientation session should be scheduled for a specific date, with documented attendance (signatures of all participants, and notes of those who did not attend) submitted to our office.

During the orientation you will need to address housing, behavior and academic expectations, program logistics, health and safety issues, and crisis management issues. The following is a list of topics that must be covered in orientations (although not exclusive).

- Academic requirements at WTAMU and abroad
- Required travel documents such as visas and passports
- Travel information such as coping with international flights (jet lag), vaccinations, time differences
- Financial Aid and Scholarship information
- Packing tips such as how large of suitcase can bring, what type of travel arrangements will be used, and type of clothing to bring for the climate and culture.
- Culture shock and adjusting to a new environment, including dietary changes
- Explanation of living conditions
- Medical and health issues
- The requirement of travel insurance and the importance of students being familiar with the particulars of their individual policies, including how to file a claim, coverage, and exclusions
- The importance of trip cancellation insurance should something come up that prevents the student in participating in the program
- Accessing funds while abroad
- Drug and alcohol issues

- Embassy assistance and what the embassy and/or consular' s office can provide for US travelers
- Contingency plans, such as an emergency meeting place; a communication tree for getting word that you and program participants are safe back to International SOS, families, and our office; and the potential need to remain in the hotel or dorm for an extended period of time in unstable conditions
- Country specific information
- Returning home
- The need to be flexible!

Most importantly, caution students that they are subject to local – not U.S. – laws while abroad and that little can be done by WTAMU or the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to help those caught breaking the law. Be prepared to tell them how an arrest will be handled: their parents will be informed, possibly by the U.S. Department of State and not by the university, and the university will not be responsible for seeing that legal advice is provided beyond that given by International SOS representatives. Such an unfortunate situation is the responsibility of the student, parents, and to the extent permitted, of the U.S. Consulate in that country.

Our office will be happy to help share some of the above information with your students. Another suggestion is to include a former student participant in the orientations. Students tend to pay more attention to their peers. Photos or videos help students visualize the program and can make them relate more to their upcoming experience.

Our office also recommends that you invite the Judicial Officer to address any issue related to student conduct and its consequences. Doing so builds a stronger connection for the program with WTAMU.

## **G. Health and Safety**

### **i. U.S. Embassies and Consulates**

Our office requires that a list of all program participants and staff, including contact information, is provided to the U.S. Embassy or Consulate located in the country where your program is held. our office will assist in getting this information to the appropriate consular office. In addition, each individual on the program must complete the Department of State travel registration online by going to <https://step.state.gov/step/>.

You must also identify and provide our office with the following information prior to

- departure
  - local police telephone number
  - U.S. Embassy and/or Consulate telephone number
  - Telephone where you can be reached

Prior to departure you should also monitor travel advisories and consular information sheets available at the U.S. Department of State website at <http://travel.state.gov/>.

### **ii. Travel Assistance**

The health and the safety of study abroad program participants are of utmost importance to West Texas A&M University and the Texas A&M System. To provide travel assistance to all study abroad

participants, the Texas A&M System has engaged CISI, to provide coverage for all WTAMU participants while studying abroad. A list of some of the benefits to WTAMU study abroad participants includes the following:

- Pre-trip information on travel health issues
- Emergency and routine medical services
- Medical expense guarantee and payment (to be repaid later by recipient of medical care)
- Medically-supervised repatriation
- Emergency Evacuation
- Repatriation of mortal remains
- Legal referrals
- Emergency message transmission
- Lost document advice
- Emergency personal cash advances
- Security evacuation assistance
- Online travel security information
- Access to security crisis center

CISI is set up to assist you in a variety of travel related emergency situations. WTAMU travelers should maintain their own personal health insurance that covers them while they are abroad. To obtain a CISI membership card, please see our office. You can find information on what is covered through CISI at their website at <http://www.culturalinsurance.com/>

### **iii. Emergency Action Plan**

Our office and WTAMU consider the safety and security of our students, faculty, and staff to be of primary importance in developing and administering study abroad programs. To ensure the best practices in handling an emergency our office has developed Emergency Protocol should an emergency occur while students, faculty or staff are studying abroad. Please contact our office for the Emergency Protocol.

Please be aware that the our office and WTAMU prohibits students from participating in study abroad programs in which the country of destination is under a travel warning by the Department of State. This list can be found at: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings.html>

### **iv. Health Insurance**

Health insurance is extremely important for students participating in WTAMU study abroad programs. It is required that all faculty and student participants on study abroad programs provide proof that they have obtained health and accident insurance prior to departure.

As an APL, be sure that the student participants are aware of the WTAMU requirement of providing proof of health and accident insurance. You do not want to be abroad when you find out that a student in a medical crisis does not have insurance.

Please be sure that you and your students are familiar with how to file a claim, what is covered by the individuals insurance, and what exclusions there may be. This information should be covered in your pre-departure orientation.

## **v. Cell Phones**

Our office requires cell phone access to APLs for the duration of the faculty-led study abroad program. To accomplish this APLs must purchase a cell phone plan or have coverage through their local cell phone carrier that allows international calls.

There are a few options in obtaining cell coverage while abroad.

1. Many times you can get international service on you personal cell phone while abroad. Please be sure to find out the cost of using such a service as they can be quite high.
2. Check with your contact abroad as he or she may be able to assist you with renting an international cell phone in country during your stay. Please keep in mind that the cell phone must work locally and internationally.
3. You may be able to bring your personal cell phone and buy a SIM card that you can use in your phone for the duration of your time abroad. These SIM cards have prepaid minutes so you don't have to worry about over spending on calls.
4. If you are using a third-party provider, many times, they will provide a cell phone for you that is included in the program costs.

Please be sure to provide our office with your phone number. Upon arrival at your study abroad destination, call our office and let us know that you've arrived so we know that your phone is working. Our office will call you back to confirm that international calls are going through to your phone. Also, please provide your students with this number so they can contact you in case of separation or an emergency in country.

## **III. On-site Program Administration**

### **A. APL Program Administration Responsibilities**

In taking on the responsibility of being an APL, you must understand and agree to accept responsibility to do the following:

- Remain accessible to students for the duration of the study abroad program.
- Serve as the point of contact for the students, the host country provider, for our office, and for parents and/or spouses of program participants.
- Organize and provide leadership on field trips away from the host site.
- Ensure that students know when and where they are to meet upon arrival at the program destination.
- Have an emergency action plan in place for any reason that a student may become separated from the group.
- Resolve problems or conflicts that may arise among program participants in accordance with the West Texas A&M University Student Handbook, and notify our office of any student behavior problems.
- Provide our office and student participants with the phone and fax numbers, mailing address, and/or email address where you can be contacted during the program within twenty-four hours of arrival at destination.
- Know and provide our office with the local police telephone number and the U.S. Embassy and/or Consulate Office telephone number.
- Monitor travel advisories and consular information sheets.

- Know the evacuation procedures for the destination country ([www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov))
- Provide leadership and model behavior to student participants.
- Keep originals of all receipts and keep a log of expenditures for reimbursement purposes.
- Maintain contact with our office for the duration of the program.
- Carry a functioning cell phone for the duration of the program.
- Remain with the student group unless leaving the group in the charge of the alternate APL.
- Distribute evaluations among all participants at the end of the program, and ensure that these evaluations are returned to our office in a sealed envelope immediately upon return. Procedures for collecting evaluations should be finalized with our office prior to departure.
- Meet with the Director of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships upon return to discuss the program.

### **B. Student Evaluations**

Evaluations enable our office to better plan future faculty-led programs as well as providing feedback to the APLs. Our office will provide a manila envelope with the faculty-led program evaluations prior to program departure. These evaluations are anonymous to encourage honest feedback. It is best to have students complete these evaluations on the return portion of the program, preferably on the flight home. Upon completion, the APLs will collect the evaluations and return them in the sealed manila envelope to our office.

APLs will receive a compilation of rankings and comments provided by the student participants to serve the APLs in planning their next faculty-led study abroad program.

### **C. Student Behavior**

Appropriate student behavior is paramount to learning and health and safety throughout the program. Though the students may be over eighteen, they are still subject to your program rules and regulations and to those set by the university. It is unacceptable for any student to disregard your authority as the APL because they are of “legal age.” As you are responsible for them, so are they responsible to adhere to the rules and regulation that you have set.

Violations of any of the conditions set forth by the West Texas A&M University Study Abroad Program may result in expulsion from the program and forfeiture of program fees. Students may be dismissed from the program for a violation of the *Terms of Participation, West Texas A&M University Student Handbook* and/or the laws of the United States and the host country/institution. If for just reason the APL considers the student to be disruptive, in violation of university rules and regulations, as listed in *West Texas A&M University Student Handbook*, or otherwise unfit for continuation in the program, disciplinary action will be taken (as appropriate) and the student may be dismissed from the program. In accordance with *West Texas A&M University Student Handbook*, students will be afforded due process, which includes an opportunity to respond to charges against them. The Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships will notify the student’s guardian, in accordance with FERPA guidelines (Family Educational Rights & Privacy Act), if the student is dismissed from the program.

Prior to taking action which adversely impacts a student’s participation or status in the Study Abroad Program:

- The faculty member must provide notice to the student about the nature of the problem;
- Give the student an opportunity to respond (explain) and correct the problem;



- Communicate the consequences of failing to correct the problem, i.e. dismissal from the program.

Arrests for violations of host country laws may result in student participant's immediate dismissal from the program. West Texas A&M will assume no responsibility for obtaining the student legal counsel. The APL should contact West Texas A&M University so the family may be contacted. They should also alert the U. S. Embassy and the student's family of the unrest, in accordance with FERPA guidelines.

#### **D. Alcohol Use**

Students who choose to drink alcohol should be aware that laws about the possession and consumption of alcoholic beverages vary in different countries and in some, such as Muslim countries, alcoholic beverages are illegal. Students should also be aware that public intoxication is not understood or tolerated in most cultures. Remember, if a student is arrested, they may be subject to dismissal from the program. Furthermore, any alcohol-related disruptive behavior could result in dismissal from the Study Abroad Program. Please remember that students are ambassadors of the United States and West Texas A&M University and the impressions they make will be lasting. Last, and most important, inebriation can seriously compromise personal safety by making students seem open to unwanted intimate advances and easy targets for theft or physical assault.

As an APL the consequences of alcohol misuse should be addressed in pre-departure orientations. Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to self or others. As the APL, you have the ability to determine what level of alcohol consumption will be allowed on your program, keeping in mind that alcohol misuse can seriously disrupt your program.

Alcohol misuse is present when a student

- Misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption
- Becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption
- Is disrespectful of others sharing the same housing, and congregates with loud groups for social purposes
- Engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals as a result of alcohol consumption
- Engages in destructive behavior toward property as a result of alcohol consumption
- Does not abide by the laws of the country due to alcohol consumption
- Engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the faculty members or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption
- Transports quantities of alcohol to a program site with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group.

You may choose to report a student for any of the above reasons to Student Affairs and if found responsible for violating university policy, the complaint and resolution will become a formal part of the student's WTAMU record. **Alcohol misuse and abuse will not be tolerated on West Texas A&M University study abroad programs.**

As an APL you should be aware that if you participate in consumption of alcohol with students you can be held liable if shown to encourage consumption. As the APL, you are in a position of authority

and responsibility, and you must be capable of addressing any emergency should it arise. It is strongly advised that you do not consume alcohol at group functions.

### **E. Illegal Drugs**

West Texas A&M University can assume NO responsibility for any student apprehended for possession of drugs. Bear in mind that laws concerning drugs are much more severe in many other countries than in the United States, and even though students may be U.S. citizens, they are still subject to the laws of the host country. WTAMU will not tolerate use or possession of illegal drugs. Any student caught with illegal drugs will be subject to ***immediate*** dismissal from the Study Abroad Program.

## **IV. Students**

### **A. Application Process**

Faculty-led study abroad participants must complete and return the following information which will be housed in our office. The APL who is leading the study abroad program may collect this information from participants to ensure that all documentation is complete but the APL will ultimately send this information to our office for safekeeping and use should an emergency occur while the group is abroad.

1. Study Abroad Program Application & Withdrawal Policy
2. Terms of Participation
3. Medical Consent Form
4. Passport Copy

Students are also encouraged to apply for the International Education Fee Scholarship. Application process and scholarship guidelines can be found at <http://www.wtamu.edu/academics/study-abroad-funding.aspx>

Students will register themselves in the WTAMU faculty-led study abroad course.

### **B. Financial Assistance for Students**

Students may receive financial assistance to study abroad through financial aid and/or the International Education Fee Scholarship (IEFS). The eligibility requirements for IEFS funding are as follows:

1. Currently enrolled WTAMU student who has completed a minimum of one semester of study at WTAMU, and who are making successful progress toward academic degree requirements as determined by the Dean of their College.
2. Students must be in good academic standing; students on academic or disciplinary probation are ineligible to study abroad or receive IEFS funding.
3. Students must be participating in a Study Abroad Program & Policy Committee approved program.
4. If the total cost of the trip is funded from other University sources, the student shall receive no IEFS funding.
5. Academic Program leaders are ineligible for IEFS funding.

Upon completion of the faculty-led study abroad program, IEFS recipients are required to complete a Study Abroad Affidavit of Participation and program survey. If this form and survey are not completed prior to the beginning of the following semester, our office will place a hold on the student's account until this form is completed and returned.

Students may also apply for financial aid should the student need further assistance to cover the cost of the faculty-led program. To do so, the APL must request that our office will submit an increase in budget form to the Financial Aid office. Our office will base program cost estimates on the program budget that the APL submitted for SAPPC review and approval in the proposal process.

Students participating in summer faculty-led study abroad programs who wish to be eligible for financial aid must be enrolled in a minimum of six credit hours during the summer sessions.

## **V. Contact Information**

While abroad it is likely that you will be in a time zone considerably different than Canyon. In such cases, depending on the nature of your call, it may be better for you to contact the University Police Department or International SOS directly if our office is closed after business hours.

West Texas A&M University  
Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships  
WTAMU Box 60868  
Student Success Center (SSC) CC115A & CC115B  
Canyon, TX 79016

Phone: (806) 651-5309 or (806) 651-2587 (Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Central Time)

Fax: (806) 651-5274

Email: [calloway@wtamu.edu](mailto:calloway@wtamu.edu) or [studyabroad@wtamu.edu](mailto:studyabroad@wtamu.edu)

URL: <http://www.wtamu.edu/studyabroad>

West Texas A&M University Police Department: (806) 651-2300

The University Police Department has a list of all student participants in your faculty-led program along with their emergency contact information. Please be sure to tell the UPD the nature of your call and provide telephone number where you can be reached. If possible, leave an additional number should the other number not work.

Below is the cell phones of both the Director of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships and Program Coordinator. Please use these numbers only in an emergency, outside of normal business hours.

Carolina Galloway  
Director of Study Abroad  
Cell: (806) 282-0156

Jonathan Cordova  
Program Coordinator  
Cell: (915) 691-8905

## **CISI EMERGENCY OVERSEAS CONTACT INFORMATION**

Emergency Assistance Provider: AXA ASSISTANCE

Phone (calling toll-free from within the US): 855.327.1411

Phone (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted): 312.935.1703  
Email: medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us

- Be prepared to give your name and your Team Assist ID (located in your Insurance card)
- URL: [http://www.culturalinsurance.com/about\\_us.asp](http://www.culturalinsurance.com/about_us.asp)