

Learning Abroad Program Leader Handbook



Learning Abroad
Institute for Global Engagement
University of Houston
www.uh.edu/learningabroad



Learning Abroad
Institute for Global Engagement

Letter from Learning Abroad

Dear Program Leader,

Thank you so much for your commitment to leading a learning abroad program for the University of Houston (UH). Whether this is your first or tenth program, we are grateful for the dedication and hard work that goes into developing and leading a Learning Abroad program. These programs are instrumental in developing students who are ready for success and leadership in our globally interdependent world. More than fifty percent of our Coogs prefer to participate in faculty-led programs over any other program option—your dedication and work further our mission to support global engagement at UH.

This handbook is designed to facilitate the successful development and implementation of faculty-led learning abroad programs at UH, as well as equip you for the responsibilities associated with leading a program abroad. We understand that developing and leading a program abroad is a dynamic undertaking. The resources in this handbook are meant to help guide you in the process, with specific sections on responsibilities, program development, risk management, student support, and resources for pre-departure and reentry. You are encouraged to connect with us to discuss your program throughout this journey. We want to assure you that in every aspect of the development and leading of a program, Learning Abroad is here to support you.

Sincerely,

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Definitions

Program leaders are full-time promotion-eligible faculty or staff who are leading or participating in a Learning Abroad program. Learning Abroad Programs are affiliated or approved programs by Learning Abroad in which a University of Houston student conducts international travel.

As a program leader, there is more than one type of Learning Abroad program you may participate in here at UH. The first is the most common, the faculty-led program. A faculty-led program is a for-credit program with a course taught abroad or a course associated with educational travel abroad. These can be broken down into two different models: First is the traditional faculty-led program. These are programs where the course for credit is taught 50% or more entirely abroad. Second is the embedded faculty-led program. This is where required travel is associated with a program taught at the University of Houston. In this model, courses must be taught during the same, preceding, or proceeding academic term. For example, winter travel for a fall, winter, or spring course taught at UH, or May travel for a spring, maymester, or summer course taught at UH. For embedded programs, travel must be included in the overall grade for the term.

The second type of program a leader may engage in is a global experiential opportunity, or a GEO. GEOs are non-credit faculty or staff-guided educational travel abroad that is not associated with a course taught during the same, preceding, or proceeding academic term. GEOs can come in a variety of styles, including winter travel for a course taught the previous academic year, art intensives, study tours, or faculty-guided service-learning opportunities.

Both Faculty-led and GEO programs are required to register all participants traveling with Learning Abroad and completion of a program proposal which includes detailed information on risk and safety measures taken by the program leader and the logistic provider with whom the leader is working. Faculty-led programs will require additional information concerning the academic aspects of the trip to ensure these meet the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board standards for contact hours and academic credit. Only current students at the University of Houston are permitted to attend UH Learning Abroad programs.

Faculty-led programs are required to work with a travel logistics provider. GEOs can have their travel coordinated without the use of a travel logistics provider; however, it is highly encouraged by the Office of the Provost and the Global Risk and Safety Committee to do so. In instances of travel to elevated risk destinations, GEOs may be required to work with a travel logistics provider. Furthermore, all student travel must adhere to the policies stated in the UH MAPPs and SAM student travel policies. Student group travel proposals for both faculty-led programs and GEOs are reviewed and approved by the Institute for Global Engagement.

Program leaders must be aware of the additional risk and safety requirements for travel to elevated-risk destinations. Elevated risk destinations are countries or regions that have additional safety precautions and must be reviewed by the Global Risk and Safety Committee in order to be approved. These regions are determined by several markers of safety:

- A Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 or 4
- A Center for Disease Control Advisory Level 3 or 4
- On Call International Risk & Security Assessment Rating of 4 or 5
- A country/region that has been designated restricted by the Office of the Provost or Office of the Chancellor President

Program leaders will submit additional documentation with their proposal if the country or region they plan to travel to falls under this definition.

You can find additional definitions in Appendix A or by reaching out to Learning Abroad.

Faculty-Led Program Requirements

Faculty-Led Programs must have a course associated with travel that meets the THECB standards.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is mandated by law to certify courses taught abroad. Study-abroad courses are defined in Coordinating Board Rules, Chapter 4, Subchapter E, 4.103 as “off-campus, academic credit instruction which is delivered outside the United States primarily to regular on-campus students.” These courses, when offered by public institutions of higher education, must meet the following standards:

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. Exceptions 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. For community and technical colleges, each course is on the list of approved courses in the Academic Course Guide Manual or an approved technical course.

6. Instruction will conform to all relevant academic policies. All classes will conform to workload and enrollment requirements, contact hour/credit ratio, and similar matters.
7. Courses will not offer credit for activities undertaken primarily for travel, recreation, or pleasure.
8. Minimum enrollments will conform to the same standards applicable were the class to be offered on campus.
9. Course offerings will meet the standards and criteria outlined in Section 3.b. of the Notification and Approval Procedures for Distance Education, Off-Campus, and On-Campus Extension Programs and Courses. (October 2005)
10. Advertising and marketing for study-abroad courses will emphasize the instructional nature of the classes, and not create the impression that they are primarily credit-for-travel experiences
11. Faculty and staff will not realize unusual perquisites or financial gain for teaching study-abroad courses.
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. 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). Prior post-travel class sessions will be scheduled to attain the required minimum length standard.

Responsibilities

Program Leader Responsibilities

- Develop a program that intentionally incorporates aspects of the host culture and student experiences as a focus of the academic experience
- Obtain approval from dean, department chair, department business administrator, and/or college business administrator
- Complete and submit a detailed program proposal to Learning Abroad
- Work with your Department Business Administrator to develop a program budget and ensure the program is affordable for students
- Work with a logistics provider to ensure lodging, transportation, and other aspects of the program
- Recruit students to your program, be prepared to answer questions and complete an application process to select your students
- Attend a Risk and Safety Workshop prior to your program departure to learn more about emergency preparedness and crisis management (leaders of recurring programs must attend annually)
- Maintain communication with Learning Abroad in any emergency situations
- Comply with policy procedures detailed in this handbook and in the International Travel Policy document

Assistant Director Responsibilities

- Collaborate with faculty leaders to establish programs and answer questions on designing a program, finding a logistics provider, risk and safety management, and student recruitment.
- Review Learning Abroad program proposals and process approvals, working with the Global Risk and Safety Committee and the Provost when necessary
- Host Risk and Safety workshops to prepare program leaders for emergency situations and crisis management while abroad
- Support program leaders before, during, and after the program
- Be available 24/7 to respond to emergency situations as needed
- Process program evaluations

Learning Abroad Responsibilities

- Advise students on the application process, scholarship applications, and other funding opportunities
- Facilitate student online application process through Terra Dotta
- Ensure all student forms are completed prior to travel
- Assist in marketing and recruitment opportunities for programs
- Provide mandatory pre-departure orientations for all students

Student Responsibilities are discussed further below.

Program Development

To develop a program, start early in order to ensure ample time for thorough development. You should start this in advance of your travel or your course, whichever comes first. We recommend the following:

Planning & Development – 18-10 months in advance

Marketing and Student Recruitment – 10-5 months in advance

Pre-Departure – 5-2 months in advance

Final Pre-Departure steps – 2-1 months in advance

On-Site – program dates

Re-entry & Reunion – 0-2 months after the program

The Program Development Timeline can be found in the Appendix.

AY 2024 Program Deadlines are:

- **Fall/Winter Programs – May 1, 2023**
- **Spring Programs – July 1, 2023**
- **Summer Programs – September 1, 2023**

Items to Consider Prior to Submitting a Proposal

Offering a Learning Abroad program can be an enriching and rewarding experience for both the leader and the student participants. Learning Abroad recommends beginning the planning and development process 18 months prior to leaving for a program abroad and submitting your proposal 12 months prior to your trip.

However, before deciding to lead a program, all faculty or staff should consider the following questions:

1. Is your department supportive of you being away from campus?
 - a. Consider your program length and how it fits in with your responsibilities on campus
 - b. Will your department or college sponsor you or pay your salary for the courses taught abroad
2. What is your educational purpose or learning objective?
 - a. How can you ensure this program is not an international vacation or field trip?
 - b. How does this fit with your college or department's goals?
 - c. How will you provide opportunities for cultural competency growth for students?
3. How will your intended location contribute to the educational content of your program abroad?
 - a. The program will be more impactful for students if the leader incorporates components of the location into the curriculum of the course or opportunity.
 - b. Have you been to the location before? If not, how do you plan to ensure you are prepared to lead in that location? Specifically consider the risk and safety of the students on location.
 - c. Note: Program Leaders are encouraged to complete site visits to locations they have never visited prior to leading a program to that location.
4. Is this program of interest to enough students to make?
 - a. Is the course content relevant to enough students?
 - b. Could this be considered a core course?
 - c. Will there be competition between this program and other faculty members?
 - d. Are there funding options or sponsorship available from your department?
 - e. Has this program run before and met minimum student participation requirements?
5. Do you have the time to develop the program?
 - a. Program leaders should consider the additional hours needed to plan the program, submit the proposal, market to students, attend the Learning Abroad fair, and hold pre-departure workshops.
6. Is leading a Learning Abroad program right for you currently?
 - a. Programs leaders are more than “professors” or “chaperones”; they are also a recruiter, parents, mentors, translators, emergency contact, peacekeeper, travel agent, and more. You will be responsible for students 24/7 while abroad, but this does not mean you do not have help from us back at home!

University of Houston Course Terms

Program leaders should review UH Course Terms to help determine when the best time is for their program. If the majority of your course or travel falls in one of the terms, that is the term you should apply for.

- Fall 2023 Term: August 21, 2023 – December 13, 2023
- Winter Term: December 18, 2023 – January 13, 2024
- Spring 2024 Term: January 16, 2024 – May 9, 2024
- Summer Mini: May 13, 2024 – June 1, 2024
- Summer Session I: June 3, 2024 – August 9, 2024
- Summer Session II: June 3, 2024 – July 3, 2024
- Summer Session III: June 3, 2024 – July 26, 2024
- Summer Session IV: July 8, 2024 – August 7, 2024

Examples:

- A spring class, but summer travel will fall under a **summer program**, but program leaders should start planning 18 months in advance of the start of the course in the spring
- A spring class with travel before May 13th will be considered a **spring program**
- A fall class with Thanksgiving travel is considered a **fall program**
- A fall class with travel in January will be considered a **winter program**, but program leaders should start planning 18 months in advance of the start of the course in the fall

Proposal Process

Once you have determined the program you would like to lead, you should discuss your plans with your Department Chair, Dean, and the Learning Abroad Assistant Director to ensure support is given all logistics have been considered based on department and college requirements. Program leaders will need to develop learning objectives, syllabus of the faculty-led program course, and draft program itinerary. These are required to be submitted with the program proposal.

The itinerary should be developed with assistance from your chosen logistics provider. Meet with your Department Business Administrator (DBA) to discuss how to approach the program in compliance with the UH Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP), including contracts with vendors, foreign travel requests, and approvals. Consider vendor options. Work with your DBA on an RFP for purchasing based on your itinerary requirements. There must be a signed contract in place with logistic providers. While the RFP process does not need to be completed prior to submitting your proposal, program leaders should obtain a letter of their intent to work with a sole source provider or which providers will be invited specifically in the request for proposal.

The program proposal requires detailed information about the program and the risk and safety mitigation plans. The questions asked are intentional, and they provide the Learning Abroad Assistant Director and Global Risk and Safety Committee with information needed for review and an informed approval decision. Furthermore, some questions are included to allow Learning Abroad advisors to advise properly on the program and market information.

The proposal should include the following:

- Details on who will be leading the program – include all supporting faculty, staff, and graduate assistants who will attend the program, or write TBA if additional support is expected
- Program dates, locations, terms, and minimum and maximum number of participants
- Course Information (for Faculty-Led Programs)
- The rationale for conducting the program
- Safety and security questions
 - Precautionary measures
 - Emergency procedures
- Logistic details
 - Logistics Provider Information
 - Airport Travel Plan
 - In-Country Transportation
 - Lodging

Once the program proposal is completed, it must be submitted to the Department Chair and Department Business Administrator (DBA) for signatures, then sent to the College Dean and College Business Administrator (CBA) for signatures.

The signed proposal will then go to the Learning Abroad Assistant Director and Director of Global Engagement for the Institute for Global Engagement for approval. Proposals for Elevated Risk Destinations will also be submitted to the Global Risk and Safety Committee and the Provost for additional approvals. Program leaders should anticipate a longer approval timeline when submitting to Elevated Risk Destinations. Approval must be obtained before faculty can begin program recruitment.

Post-Approval Procedures

For Faculty-Led Programs, ensure the course is created and listed in the course catalog for the specified term. Leaders should work with your DBA to ensure a fee line exists to charge students program fees. Program leaders should work with their department and college to determine the level of support provided, both financially, and based on faculty or staff responsibilities.

With the support of your logistics provider and DBA, prepare a budget and set student program costs based on a minimum number of participants. Determine what the program

fee will cover and what additional costs students will incur (i.e., airfare, additional meals, etc.). Be sure to factor in tips in either the budget or additional student costs. Encourage students to meet with financial aid and Learning Abroad to learn how their UH aid can be used for Learning Abroad Programs.

Once your program is approved, you can begin recruiting students for your program. Leaders can either create your own flyer, work with your college marketing team, request marketing support from your logistics provider if they offer this service, or request a flyer made by Learning Abroad to assist in the recruitment process. With the support of your logistic provider and DBA, determine a refund policy, including refund dates and percentages, as well as a cancellation date if enrollment is not sufficient. These dates should be made clear to students on the recruitment and program materials. Outreach materials should include program dates, course information, program cost, other cost inclusions or exclusions like airfare and tuition, application procedures, program leader contact information, and Learning Abroad contact information.

Finally, encourage students to begin the process of obtaining their passports and visas. Faculty, staff, and students can apply for their passports at the Passport Facility managed by Learning Abroad on campus. Determine if students will need visas and consult the respective consulate for visa information. Keep in mind that international students may be required to have visas for certain countries where United States citizens will not need a visa. Do not assume all students participating will be U.S. citizens.

Selecting Student Applicants

When planning a Learning Abroad program, the application and admission process is important for both. Having a well-defined screening process prior to accepting students into your program can prevent unnecessary conflict during the program. Learning Abroad requires you to develop your acceptance guidelines at the time that you submit your program proposal materials. This must ensure equal opportunities for all students regardless of the basis of race, color, sex, genetic information, religion, age, national origin, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status, gender expression, or any other legally protected status. This also includes common situations like pregnancy and other health situations. Additional information is included in the appendix of this handbook, which notes Equal Opportunities Services accommodation and anti-discrimination policies. Program Leaders should be transparent in their marketing efforts about the functional capabilities required to participate in the program.

Students must adhere to UH's process for accommodations, and thus are required to communicate accommodation needs directly to the program leader. Students are encouraged request accommodations as early as possible in the application process to ensure that the logistics provider can research the availability and cost of reasonable accommodation. However, we also encourage program leaders to indicate communication methods so that students easily see opportunities to communicate their needs.

Learning Abroad requires the following components in your program application process:

- I. *Good Academic Standing requirement.* According to the Learning Abroad policy, students must be in good academic standing and have a 2.0 or higher to attend a Learning Abroad program at the time of the application. You can also require a specific minimum GPA for your program.
- II. *Semester Completion.* Learning Abroad requires students to have completed a minimum of one semester at the University of Houston at the time of application. Students who have transferred from another institution of higher education and do not have an established UH GPA may still be eligible to go abroad. These students must complete a GPA Requirement Waiver Form with their major specific academic advisor and submit it for approval from their Dean's office. The colleges are encouraged to review their transfer GPA as a factor for approval.
- III. *Verification of disciplinary good standing.* All students should be in good standing to participate in a Learning Abroad program. Learning Abroad works with the UH Dean of Students Office to provide a process for conduct and good standing reviews. Program leaders are encouraged to submit the proposed student roster to the Dean of Students office prior to accepting a student into your program. The DOS Office can review the roster to verify if students are in good standing based on conduct and academic integrity.

Learning Abroad recommends the following practices in your program application process (these may not be applicable to all program types):

- I. *Complete an interview with potential student participants.* Personal interviews provide insights into an applicant's capabilities and commitment to learning abroad that you cannot realize by processing the student's paperwork.
- II. *Waitlist.* Create a waitlist of applications with a decision date to provide back-up opportunities in the case that a student drops from the program. This may not be possible due to course structure.
- III. *Confirmation of acceptance.* To ensure clear understanding of being accepted into the program, Learning Abroad recommends program leaders require a confirmation of acceptance from their students. In the case that a student is sent an acceptance letter/email to a program but they do not see the letter/email or change their mind, the confirmation of acceptance ensures a documented acceptance into the program, including payment deadlines and requirements.

Planning and Development

To assist in the planning and development process, this handbook hopes to present best practices in Education Abroad when designing a program set forth by the Association of International Educators (NAFSA) and the Forum on Education Abroad.

Program Structure

Timing: The timing of the program is crucial to its success. Program leaders should consider graduation timelines, length of time abroad, cost of travel, busy seasons, and weather seasons. There are several options to consider when planning your program:

- Summer Programs
 - If students can take six credit hours through the program, they will be able to apply for financial aid to the program and apply for additional scholarships and aid
- January Term (J-Term) Programs
 - Consider the timing of the semester starting back up and the holiday times
- Maymester Term
 - Considering the finals schedule, students may need to request special accommodation from their spring courses. Also, consider graduation times and ensure seniors are back in time to graduate.
- Break Programs (Thanksgiving or Spring)
 - Attempt earlier flights or direct flights to ensure the most out of the students' time while abroad

Duration: The duration of the program could also determine program success. If the program is too short, students may struggle with taking courses or the quick nature of travel in the quick travel. Students may even decide not to travel due to the short term not being worth the cost of the ticket. However, if the program is too long, students may be unable to commit due to other courses, working/internship hours, or family commitments.

Program Types: There are several program types leaders can consider when designing their programs.

- Traditional Programs teach 50% or more of the course completely abroad
- Embedded Programs involve faculty teaching the program at UH during a normal term with a required travel element. Leaders should consider when designing the syllabus how to ensure academic requirements can still be met if a student is unable to travel. Some examples include additional presentations, posters, group projects, or reflection essays.
- Service-Learning Programs are programs abroad focused on service learning. Leaders should consider how the service component will be completed by students. Are students able to complete the required elements? The program leader should seek to ensure these programs are not “voluntourism,” which takes away from the true service and learning elements and can hurt the program seeks to help.

Cost: There are strategies to design a program to help reduce costs for students, including considerations of location, time of year, and expected activities. Leaders should work with their logistics provider to find affordable options for day trips, the best hotel rates for the hotel quality, or changing the time for less expensive flights. Program leaders should also take into consideration the current exchange rates and how this will further affect the cost. Finally, for-credit faculty-led programs during the summer should consider if the structure of the course and program enable students to use their financial aid toward the program and/or course.

Components of a Program

Airport Transportation: It is not required for all students to fly on the same flight, but for undergraduate students, Learning Abroad recommends this format. For graduate students, many have their own flight points or ways to book cheaper flights. Either way, program leaders should ensure an airport meet-up or an alternative location for all students to meet up prior to the start of the trip.

Lodging: There are many options when considering lodging accommodations in-country. Program leaders should make decisions based on cost and accessibility for students. All locations should ensure rooms are separated by gender, separated by leader and student, and all locations have appropriate bathrooms with doors. Some lodging options are:

- Hotels
- Hostels
- Host Families
- University Residence Halls
- Conference Facilities
- Apartments
- Bed and Breakfasts
 - Note: Air BnBs/VRBOs are not appropriate for housing students due to liability reasons

In-Country Transportation: When moving around in-country, program leaders should consider the safest and most affordable options for students. Program leaders should take into context the University Policy set by the SAMM and MAPP requirements for van or bus transportation. Logistic providers should ensure appropriate insurance and training for any transportation they book. Some options for moving around in-country are:

- Train
- Private Bus
- Ferry
- Public Transportation
- Walking

Meals: Program leaders should discuss with logistics providers which meals can be included. Learning Abroad recommends hosting group meal options, but these do not need to be every meal or every night. For Elevated Risk Locations, it is safer to ensure everyone eats together rather than allowing students to find their own restaurant options.

Additionally, leaders can request restaurant lists from logistics providers to ensure safe locations. Staying at hotels or with host families, which includes breakfast, can help with the affordability of the program. It is good to include in a budget the potential cost of meals while abroad.

Classroom or Meeting Space: Program Leaders should plan to have a meeting spot where the group can get together to discuss the program, reflect on experiences, or gather in case of an emergency. Furthermore, faculty should consider appropriate classroom space if teaching while abroad. Hotels usually have bars or lounges, but these may not be the easiest place to meet for a group discussion or if directions need to be given. Leaders or logistics providers should meet with the manager of the lodging accommodation to see about reserving space for meetings.

Excursions: Program leaders should consider cost and time when deciding additional excursions for students on their programs. Daytrips, company tours, culture tours, and others may provide additional growth opportunities for students, but program leaders should consider appropriate accommodations for some students. An example may be a chocolate tour, but the student is unable to eat chocolate due to an allergy.

- ***Special Considerations:***
 - Visa requirements
 - Vaccine requirements
 - Illegal Medications at the location
 - Translator or guide services

While this list may not be extensive of everything to consider when planning a program, it is best practice to check in with the logistics provider and Assistant Director of Learning Abroad when planning a program.

Logistics Provider

Logistics providers are third-party organizations that provide local knowledge and resources to support programs abroad. UH Learning Abroad requires all faculty-led program leaders to work with a logistics provider for their travel, lodging, transportation, excursions, and other logistics. Logistics providers can come in different formats, including small travel companies, language institutes, university partners, or large study abroad travel organizations. In addition to managing the logistics of the program, these organizations can assist with the design and development of the program, academic planning, and recruitment efforts. Logistics providers allow flexibility for what the program leader needs; some providers are all-encompassing, planning every aspect of the program, while others can be primarily hands-off, just booking accommodations, travel, and reserving excursions based on the leader's requirements.

The logistics provider for your program abroad should either be from our pre-approved list on our website, or it should be vetted by Learning Abroad prior to signing a contract with the program leader. This ensures the company provides adequate supports for the program.

Requirements of logistics providers include:

- 24/7 in-country risk and safety support
- On-site support staff
- Crisis management plans
- Equitable housing and changes able to be made if necessary
- Vetted transportation specifically for insurance and safety

Program leaders can work with multiple logistic providers initially to find the best provider and cost for their envisioned program. At this time, program leaders must work with their DBAs to start the RFP and bidding process in order to secure the logistics provider. The sooner, the better for the start of this process. Alternatively, if the provider is chosen due to very specific qualifications, DBAs may submit a Sole Source request for that partner. Examples of this include specialty location services, translation services, excursions, or accommodations.

Recommended Logistic Providers by Learning Abroad

- Millennium Tours - www.mltours.com
- WorldStrides Custom Programs - <https://worldstrides.com/higher-ed-custom>
- SIT Study Abroad Custom and Faculty-Led Programs - <https://studyabroad.sit.edu/advisors-faculty/custom-faculty-led-programs>
- EF College Study Tours - www.efcollegestudytours.com
- American Institute for Foreign Study (AIFS) Customized faculty-led programs - <https://www.aifsabroad.com/customized-faculty-led>
- CEA Study Abroad Custom Programs - www.ceastudyabroad.com/custom-programs
- CIEE Custom Programs - www.ciee.org/go-abroad/for-educators/custom-programs
- Kuoni Tumlare - www.kuonitumlare.com
- *Region-specific providers can be requested from the Learning Abroad office*

Working with your Business Office

Once a logistics provider has been chosen, it is time to start the conversation with your business office. The Department Business Administrators (DBA) are available to help process your request for a program, bill students and ensure you receive your pay. Staying in contact with your DBA while developing your program can assist in your success. When submitting the proposal request, many programs are required go to bid for a logistics provider. If your DBA is unfamiliar with this process for Learning Abroad, they can reach out to our office for support, and we can help put them in contact with other DBAs. This process can take a long time, so start early.

Some program logistic providers can be considered “sole source” requests. This means that this is the only logistics provider that will fit with what you need for your specific program. This can be due to a variety of reasons, including location-specific, academic content-specific, or special programming, such as business visits or volunteer opportunities. Sole

sources can help speed the process along, but the reasoning must be sufficient for the UH Purchasing Department to approve it. Please note, a sole source cannot be used in case of the Program Leader, as the leader you can be the main tour guide, but you cannot be the logistic provider.

Once your contract is signed, we request that you send that completed contract to Learning Abroad. Contracts must be signed prior to your program travel.

Risk Management

The University of Houston (UH) is committed to providing a learning environment that not only promotes the safety and wellbeing of its students but also an environment conducive for students to develop to their fullest potential. UH and Learning Abroad risk management protocols must be followed in the coordination, planning, and leading of a program abroad. UH cannot ensure the absolute safety of participants or eliminate all risks. However, with the partnership of UH faculty and program leaders, who are critical to setting student expectations and creating a culture of safety, best practices and resources are set to create a culture of safety and to mitigate program risk.

Leader Responsibilities for Risk Management

Learning Abroad works to ensure that partner institutions and program providers are of reasonable quality with effective crisis response plans in place. However, it is imperative that program leaders understand their responsibilities to support the program while abroad by providing 24/7 emergency support for the duration of the program. Furthermore, it is also essential that faculty understand and communicate with their program's students about their own responsibility to ensure their safety and security while participating in the program. This is highlighted by Learning Abroad during pre-departure orientations; however it should also be emphasized by faculty during the application, pre-departure orientation, on-site orientation, and throughout the program.

Student Conduct

The Student International Travel Policy (Appendix G) outlines requirements and expectations for student conduct abroad, including transportation, alcohol, drugs, dismissal, and compliance to the policy. Please see this policy for further information. Highlights of this policy include:

- Transportation
 - Students are not permitted to drive motor vehicles while on a Learning Abroad program
- Alcohol
 - Drinking alcohol abroad is not encouraged on UH international programs
 - All participants must adhere to the legal drinking age of the country they are in

- Drugs
 - Zero tolerance on use of controlled substances and/or illegal substances in the US regardless of what is legal in the country
- Dismissal
 - Program leaders must work with the Assistant Director of Learning Abroad and the Office of the Dean of Students to determine steps for dismissal from the program abroad

Program Leader Conduct

Program leaders are subject to all university policies while abroad. Program leaders are encouraged to conduct themselves in a positive, professional manner while abroad. Drinking while with students is highly discouraged. Leaders should review the relevant university policies concerning alcohol, illegal drugs, consensual relationships, Title IX, FERPA, and sexual misconduct.

Emergency Procedures

Program leaders should review the Emergency Protocol document (Appendix H) in preparation for their program. This document recommends the creation of a communication plan for students and with emergency contacts both within the university and with the in-country contacts, including the local U.S. embassy or consulate. Learning Abroad will assist faculty in developing emergency response and communication plans while abroad. This guidance is found in the Emergency Protocol Document in Appendix H and on the Learning Abroad website.

Health & Emergency Insurance

All students participating in a Learning Abroad program are required to have international medical and emergency insurance through the UH System-wide On Call International policy, regardless of if the travel logistics provider includes health and/or emergency insurance with their program fees. UH has partnered with On Call International to offer the most cost-effective and robust international insurance package available to our students and faculty leaders. For more details, please visit the Learning Abroad Health Insurance webpage.

Mental Health Abroad

The mental health of students should be an area of intentional focus and concern for program leaders while abroad. Program leaders should be aware of the mental health resources available to students while abroad, including tele-health counseling with the On Call International insurance program. Students are encouraged to share accommodation needs and concerns with their program leaders and Learning Abroad in their pre-departure process, including information on the Voluntary Health Disclosure form. While

accommodations can be sought out, the degree of access to counseling and mental health services in the many countries and communities a student may be a consideration for a student's learning abroad experience. Many students have successfully studied abroad with existing mental health conditions.

Program leaders can also prepare to support situations of mental health concern while abroad by attending various UH workshops before their program, including QPR, or "Question, Persuade, Refer." Hosted by UH Counseling and Psychological Services, QPR is a nationally recognized suicide prevention program designed to educate persons to recognize and respond to the signs of suicidal thinking or behavior. Research has shown that persons who ultimately attempt suicide often provide numerous direct or indirect clues as to their intentions, and the goal of this training is to recognize these verbal, behavioral, or situational clues and take steps to get the person professional help. The presentation helps persons learn how to ask the suicide question, how to persuade the person to contact appropriate assistance, and how to identify referral options. Once trained, these persons act as gatekeepers for the campus community, informed and ready to intervene on behalf of individuals considering suicide. To view the QPR session schedule, visit the UH CAPS website at www.uh.edu/caps/outreach.

Diversity & Identity Abroad

Diversity and identity considerations of our students and program participants is a consideration of both holistic student support as well as an intentional focus on risk and safety support. A student or participant's perceptions of belonging and support are both a matter of holistic student support and student/group safety. Program leaders are asked to be aware of and considering of how race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, and other individual identities may be interpreted/accepted while abroad. In some countries, identities may not be accepted or even legal. Leaders are encouraged to do their own research into these areas of diversity and identity and to talk with Learning Abroad and other UH representatives who support these specific student groups. Efforts should be made to support participants holistically and safely while abroad.

Program Leader Training

Learning Abroad requires all program leaders to attend a program leader risk workshop annually. In addition, we also strongly encourage leaders to attend additional trainings that will assist in leading a successful program abroad. Being a program leader for a group of students abroad requires the leader to fill many roles on the program, including a professor, cultural informant, disciplinarian, confidante, community builder, health care supporter, and required campus & Clery Act reporter.

For a holistic preparation for this dynamic leadership role, we strongly recommend leaders participate in the following trainings offered at the University of Houston.

[Mental Health First Aid Training](#)

[QPR Suicide Prevention Training](#)
[Helping Students of Concern](#)
[Cougar Ally training](#)
[Diversity 101](#)
[Power and Privilege](#)
[Intent vs. Impact](#)
[Supporting Today's Student: Faculty and Staff Track](#)
[Compass: Sexual Misconduct Response Training](#)

Program leaders can also prepare to support intentional inclusion efforts for all students on their programs by attending UH Committed Coog Faculty and Staff Certificate Program. This program is hosted by the UH Division of Student Affairs and provides engaging workshops and programs aimed at increasing staff and faculty's awareness and understanding of their own culture and the culture of others. Improvement in these areas enhances participants' ability to effectively support our diverse student population and work in an inclusive team. For more information, visit their website at https://uh.edu/cdi/diversity_education/committed-coog.

Student Support & Outreach

Student Profile

There are many different types of students you may encounter when planning to lead a Learning Abroad program. Some examples might be:

- The “When Do We Leave?” Student
- The “This Isn’t for Me” Student
- First-Generation or At-Risk Students
- First-Time Travelers
- Non-Traditional Students
- Students with Disabilities

Each type of student needs something a little different when working to recruit them to your program. You cannot view every student the same when recruiting them onto your program; some need more information, more time, and more energy in order to get them to commit. The challenge is to remove the perceived barriers to your program abroad. Once you have an idea of who will apply, you may also have to provide more guidance after they are accepted as well. We encourage program leaders to talk to the students before they are accepted into the program and make sure they know what to expect while on the program.

Marketing and Recruitment

When marketing your course to students, program leaders should do all they can to promote the program as academically, or experiential learning focused. These programs

should never come across as a vacation, which will give the student unrealistic expectations or make them uninterested due to not having the time or money to participate. Instead, market these programs as a valuable part of their curriculum; it is an opportunity to enhance their studies by going beyond the classroom. You can still promote the exciting places you may go or the incredible people you meet, but above all, you should promote the amazing things they will learn.

If these courses can fulfill a major or minor requirement for the student, program leaders should include that information in all marketing efforts. Furthermore, promote other learning opportunities, such as meeting with companies abroad, shadowing professionals, or participating in a service experience while abroad.

It is only through the Faculty Leader that students can see the full range of benefits when considering study abroad options. Strong marketing materials are essential to successful recruitment. Faculty Program Leaders are encouraged to design and create their own flyers, brochures, posters, emails, web announcements, etc. Some fantastic marketing avenues on campus include:

- Learning Abroad Terra Dotta Brochure
 - The Learning Abroad (LA) office will provide a brief introduction to the upcoming Faculty-led and GEO programs on the LA website. This brief overview will include the name of the program leader, with a link to their email, the term that the program will take place, the classes it will cover, the major it is under, and the country it plans to go to. A link will also be included that connects to the online travel software Terra Dotta. A brochure will be listed that contains all the relevant information, including an overview of the program provided by the program leader. The brochure will also include more information regarding cost, funding, academics, eligibility, and terms.
- Attend the Learning Abroad Fair
 - Learning Abroad Fairs will take place once a semester at the beginning of the term. These fairs will give students the opportunity to learn about learning abroad, meet advisors and faculty members, and gather materials. Program leaders are invited to attend these fairs and speak to students about their program.
- Classroom Visits
 - Learning Abroad can visit relevant classes to promote programs, either directly in program leaders' courses or to relevant department courses. These visits are coordinated by the advisors in partnership with the program leaders. They present for 5 or more minutes on the program, scholarships and funding, and the Learning Abroad application and registration process. These presentations are a good resource for recruiting more students and making connections with students who have already applied for the upcoming program.
- Department Information sessions
 - After gathering names of interested students during classroom visits, information sessions may also be a good recruiting tool for attracting new

program participants and making connections with students who have already applied to the program. The more personal connections the Program Leader can make with students, the less likely they are to withdraw from the program.

- Brochures or Flyers around campus
 - Digital Screens
 - Residence Halls
 - Student Centers
 - Libraries
 - Dining Halls
- Emails to student populations or through listservs
- Post on your department or college social media
- Navigate messages through your advising office

If you are having trouble marketing or recruiting for your program, please reach out to Learning Abroad. Our advisors are happy to help complete outreach events, present at classroom visits, or make graphics and flyers for your program

Identity Abroad

Learning Abroad welcomes all students who meet eligibility requirements to pursue a program abroad during their time at the University of Houston. Some students feel that Learning Abroad is not available to them because of their identity; however, Learning Abroad works with all students to support their goals. We encourage students to plan ahead in an effort to learn about and utilize all resources available, as well as have time to request any additional support needed.

As a program leader, you play an important role in your students' safety and well-being while abroad. Encouraging students to speak with you about any aspects of their identity, seen or unseen, that may make them feel uncomfortable while abroad is very important. Program leaders are often confidants for students when stepping outside of their comfort zone. Please respect these aspects of students' personal lives and help them navigate the resources available to them.

LGBTQIA+ Students Abroad

Learning Abroad is a UH campus Pride Partner and supports LGBTQIA+ students going abroad. Students can talk with our advisors in addition to the UH LGBTQ Resource Center for more information or support. LGBTQIA+ individuals may face unique challenges when traveling abroad. To prepare students for travel, you can refer to the information provided by the State Department.

Helpful Resources:

[Diversity Abroad](#) provides information and resources specifically for students traveling abroad, including travel tips and destination guides.

For additional country-specific resources, please refer to [IES Abroad](#). A map of sexual orientation laws around the world can be found on ILGA. [GoAbroad.com](#) has created a free and comprehensive eBook for students abroad that features a world map of LGBTQIA+ acceptance and covers topics such as how to come out to your host family.

Race and Ethnicity Abroad

Learning Abroad supports students of all races and ethnicities in going abroad. While many students of color study abroad without incident, perceptions of their identity may be different from what students are used to in the U.S. They may experience unexpected or more intense instances of discrimination. Understanding your host country's cultural and social climate can better prepare students and yourself for such experiences and provide all with appropriate response strategies.

In addition to meeting with Learning Abroad, it is important that students do their own research and consider the following:

- **Research the historical and cultural climate of your destination.** Remember that cultural norms vary by destination. Researching the local culture and history can provide valuable insights into what to expect. As an example, locals may engage you in political discussions in some countries because politics is a less 'taboo' topic to bring up with strangers than in the U.S.
- **Be aware that locals may make assumptions based on physical appearance.** In some destinations, locals assume that Americans are white and, therefore may incorrectly identify your ethnicity based solely on your physical appearance. For example, people in Spanish-speaking countries may assume that Latinx students speak Spanish fluently.
- **Build a support network.** Before and while abroad, identify individuals that you can talk to about your experiences abroad. This may include your peers, faculty member, onsite staff, or friends and family in the U.S. Writing a journal or blog may also be helpful in sharing your story.

Additional Resources:

- [Diversity Abroad](#) provides information and resources specifically for students traveling abroad, including diversity guides for most countries and health and safety tips.
- For additional country-specific resources, please refer to [IES Abroad](#).
- A world map of laws regarding sexual orientation can be found online at [ILGA](#).
- [All Abroad](#) provides resources for all students, including information about discrimination issues, group-specific advice, and student mentor advice.

Accessibility Abroad

Learning Abroad supports students of all abilities in going abroad. While we cannot guarantee that any or all of the program sites can accommodate your unique needs or interests, we will do our best to inform you of your options. The checklist below outlines the process to find the right program for your goals and needs in addition to how you will work with Learning Abroad and the Center for Students with DisABILITIES.

Just as cultures are unique, so are accommodations for and perceptions of students with disabilities. The key for any learning abroad program participant is flexibility. In addition to meeting with Learning Abroad, it is important that students do their own research and consider the following:

- What are the physical environments like in your host country?
- How are people with my disability viewed in your host country?
- Is learning mainly from lectures, readings, independent research, etc.?
- How are the assignments different?
- What housing options exist?
- Do you need to do their own cooking? Laundry?
- How will my accommodations be funded?
- Is transportation available and accessible?

Helpful Resources:

- Mobility International <http://www.miusa.org/>
- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\): Travelers with Disabilities](#)

Student Advising

The Learning Abroad office requires that all interested students attend a Learning Abroad 101 session to learn about the application process, timelines, financial aid, and registration prior to scheduling a Learning Abroad advising appointment. Students can find the most current information on where and when they are offered on the Learning Abroad website. After completing the LA 101, students can make individual appointments with Learning Abroad advisors to further garner information on available programs.

If the Program Leader is uncertain about the information requested by a student, they should refer the student to their academic advisor or Learning Abroad for assistance. Guidance on how program courses fit into a student's degree plan are best handled by the student's department.

The information provided by the faculty member concerning their program better prepares the Learning Abroad advisors to recruit and market to students who stop by the office. We encourage you to provide as much information as you can either through the Program Proposal or through your marketing information and flyers.

Registration

The registration process goes through Learning Abroad to ensure students have filled out all appropriate documentation to go abroad and sign off on the Student Conduct Agreement. This process happens after you have chosen your roster for the program.

- Once you send us the roster of students for your faculty-led program, we then send an email inviting those students to create an account on Terra Dotta, our online traveler software.
- Their Terra Dotta account is connected to their PeopleSoft/Cougarnet credentials. On Terra Dotta, they will then apply for their faculty-led program.
- Once they submit their application, we change their program application status from “Submitted” to “Approved.”
- It is only after we approve them that they have access to the mandatory forms for their trip.
- We will then send them a message on Terra Dotta that they now have access to their required forms, along with the form deadline. They should receive an email saying that they received this message on Terra Dotta.
- Once the form deadline has passed, we will then change their form status from “Submitted” to “Accepted.”
- Once all forms are accepted, we change their overall application status from “Approved” to “Committed.” This is the last step, and no further action is required from the student besides attending the mandatory Pre-departure Orientation.

Notes on Student Application & Acceptance Process

Please let your students know that they will have to fill out a separate application on Terra Dotta from the one they submitted to be accepted by you. Many students are unaware there are two applications involved and assume they do not have to complete these steps.

We typically give students about one week to submit their application from the time we sent the invite email. It is encouraged for students to submit them as soon as possible so they have more time to complete their forms. We usually assign the deadlines, but if you have separate deadlines, you would like them to meet, we can factor those in as well.

Students will have to fill out the following forms:

- Academic Agreement
- Faculty-Led Travel Acknowledgement
- Image Release Authorization
- Passport Information
- Release and Indemnification Form
- Student Conduct Abroad Agreement
- Voluntary Health Disclosure Form

Learning Abroad typically gives students three weeks to submit all their forms. Many of the forms only require their digital signatures. A form that may require a bit more time are the Passport Information, only if they need to obtain or renew a passport.

If students are unable to submit their application or forms on time, we can temporarily extend the deadline, but the student will have to contact us for us to do so.

Financial Assistance

There are many financial assistance programs and opportunities for students interested in Learning Abroad. We try to encourage students to review all of their options before they decide that going abroad is not for them. Some options frequently used by students on Learning Abroad programs are:

- The International Education Scholarship
 - The IES is used as financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate UH students to participate in an approved Learning abroad program. It is the only scholarship that is executed by the Institute for Global Engagement. Students apply for the IES completely on Terra Dotta, the online traveler software. This includes student and program information, uploading the IES essay requirement as a PDF, and requesting a letter of recommendation digitally through the IES online application. Letter of recommendations cannot be written by any faculty or staff attending the program abroad. The total number of recipients and amount awarded to individual recipients will be based on the student's application score and total funds available to Learning Abroad for each application cycle.
- National Scholarships
 - Nationally competitive scholarships including the Gilman and Fund for Education Abroad are typically geared towards semester study abroad programs, however shorter programs are eligible for some. Program Leaders may find that professional organizations and honor societies offer discipline-specific awards to promote to students. These opportunities may be added to the program brochure as a resource for students
 - The Gilman Scholarship is available to students who receive a Pell Grant and are a U.S. citizen. Learning Abroad has specific supports for this nationally competitive scholarship, including information sessions, webinars, writing workshops, specialized advising, and other digital resources.
- Financial Aid
 - Learning Abroad Faculty-led programs are eligible for federal financial aid due to students receiving UH credit. Students should speak with financial aid to see how their scholarships, grants, and loans can be applied to their program.

Pre-departure

Pre-departure Orientation

Learning Abroad will host a pre-departure orientation to cover many aspects of safe travel while abroad. This usually takes an hour and a half and touches on logistical information, academic policies, health and safety abroad, identity abroad, and cultural awareness. Your pre-departure should further discuss these topics in greater detail depending on your location, your academic activities, or experiential opportunities. Furthermore, it is vital to start building comfort within your group with each other and establish a healthy group dynamic early. Group building exercises are a fun way for students to get to know each other and you can introduce emergency scenarios early to start creating a culture of safety among your program participants.

Important topics discussed at the Learning Abroad Pre-departure include:

- Logistics
 - Passport, visas, and other important document use
 - Finances, cash, and currency exchange
 - Packing recommendations
 - Cell phones and service abroad
 - Parental contact
- Academic Policies
 - Class expectations
 - Grading policies
- Health and Safety
 - Vaccines
 - Transporting prescriptions
 - Medical emergencies
 - Healthy habits
 - Mental health abroad
 - Sex and dating abroad
 - Sexual assault or harassment
 - Alcohol and drug policies
- Other Topics
 - Student Code of Conduct
 - Cultural Awareness
 - Accessing insurance abroad
 - Enrolling in STEP

On-Site Orientation

Once on-site program leaders and logistic providers should host an on-site orientation. Many Faculty-Led or GEO programs are short-term and thus do not provide students with time to get acquainted with the location when they first arrive. Instead, program leaders should make the most of the time while abroad and prepare students in advance. Pre-

departure orientations may not mean much to students when they first hear it, but after learning from Learning Abroad and their leader, they will take this into consideration when they have landed.

Good orientation meetings ensure students are prepared for any potential problems or emergency situations. Orientations should discuss important cultural aspects of the location, your agenda, and any additional logistical aspects of your trip. These orientations set the foundation and the tone for the rest of your time abroad. Furthermore, a good orientation program can help reduce institutional liability and keep UH in a better position legally.

On-site orientations should include a conversation of your program's communication and emergency response plan. This information is found in the Emergency Protocol document in Appendix H and on the Learning Abroad website. Ensure students know how to contact you and who to talk to if they cannot get ahold of you. For emergencies, ensure students know the appropriate channels of communication including local authorities, the UH insurance provider, and you and other UH contacts on the program. Please **do not share the Learning Abroad emergency contact phone number with students or parents**. All program leaders should clearly describe the muster point/meeting place in case of an emergency situation and walk students through several emergency scenarios.

This is also a time to discuss mental health and wellbeing while abroad. Again, these are topics that have been introduced to the student back in the United States, but they are worth repeating once students are in the new environment.

Finally, the onsite orientation is another opportunity to work on the group's overall dynamic. Help students get to know each other and yourself for ease of communication and create a comfortable environment for the students in a new country.

Other important aspects of onsite orientations:

- Provide information on lodging, transportation, medical facilities, local authorities, and embassies or consulates if available
- Discuss any requirements for hotel accommodations or residence halls, pass out keys if applicable, and set curfew if necessary
- Review not only the travel agenda but the course syllabus and academic aspects of the travel
- Touch on money and currency exchange, provide information on ATM machines nearby
- Food in host culture, what meals are on own and what meals will be completed as a group
- Always encourage students to travel in pairs or in groups

International Health & Emergency Insurance

All students participating in a Learning Abroad program are required to have international medical and emergency insurance. UH has partnered with On Call International to offer the most cost-effective and robust international insurance package available to our students and faculty leaders. This is a blanket coverage policy that automatically covers UH students, faculty, or staff traveling abroad for university purposes. Students participating in a Learning Abroad program will have their insurance fee assessed to their student account by Learning Abroad based on the number of days they are abroad, at a rate of \$1.54/day. Fees will be assessed once a student has committed to their program abroad.

Once students have committed to their program, they can access their insurance coverage through On Call International with a simple 2-step process without needing to login or share personal information. Students (and faculty and staff participants) should visit the On Call International Insurance Resources link, found on the Learning Abroad website, and follow the prompts to save it to their smart phone. This provides a resource hub that includes information about the program and how to use it, as well as a click-to-dial phone number and chat links.

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP)

Learning Abroad requires all students to enroll in the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) <https://step.state.gov/step>. Registration enrolls students in the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate abroad. It also allows students to receive safety and security information for the country and gives the embassy emergency contact information for the students. This is also useful for program leaders and parents of students if they would like to be kept informed on the location of their student.

Re-entry and Reunion

Grades

Upon return, faculty should input grades based on the grade deadlines for the term. If given an incomplete for a prior-term course, faculty should be mindful to input grades in a timely manner as well.

Reflection

Reflection after a high-impact practice like a learning abroad program has been shown to increase program effectiveness (Kuh, G., O'Donnell, K., & Reed, S., 2013). Program leaders are encouraged to facilitate a group and/or individual reflection activity or assignment as part of the program. These reflections can be a graded component or an additional activity, and previous program leaders have facilitated these reflections in many creative ways, including through writing, art, music, service, or research projects. Examples of reflection questions can be found in in the appendix.

Program Assessment

Program evaluations will be distributed to students by Learning Abroad within several weeks of the conclusion of each program, after students have had some time to process their Learning abroad experience. Program Leaders are asked to encourage students to complete Learning Abroad online program evaluation. The results of these evaluations will be shared by Learning Abroad with the Program Leader on request and may also be shared with their department chair and dean.

Appendix

- A. Definitions
- B. Relevant University Policies MM
- C. Checklist for a Program
- D. Development Timeline
- E. Constructing a Budget
- F. Example Reflection Questions
- G. Letter of Intent – Travel Logistics Provider MM
- H. Emergency Protocol Document

Appendix A - Definitions

- I. **UH International Travel** – any UH-related travel abroad
- II. **Abroad** – for this policy, abroad includes travel to U.S. territories
- III. **UH Student** – defined per the UH Student Code of conduct as a person who is:
 - a. is currently enrolled at the University
 - b. is accepted for admission or readmission to the University
 - c. has been enrolled at the University in a prior semester or summer term and is eligible to continue enrollment in the semester or summer term that immediately follows
 - d. is attending an additional program sponsored by the University while that person is on campus
 - e. has engaged in prohibited conduct at a time when that person met the criteria of (a), (b), (c), or (d).
 - f. This definition does not include alumni of the University
- IV. **Program Leader** – Full-time, promotion eligible faculty or staff
- V. **Student International Travel** – travel on faculty led programs, affiliated, REEP, national/international fellowships, and any Learning Abroad portfolio programs, as well as travel registry engagement (GEOs)
- VI. **Faculty-Led Program** – for credit program that has a course taught abroad or associated with travel

- a. **Traditional faculty-led program** – course for credit is taught 50% or more abroad
 - b. **Embedded faculty-led program** – required travel associated with a course taught at UH
 - i. Course associated must be taught during the same, preceding, or proceeding academic term
 - 1. Ex. Winter travel for a fall, winter, or spring course
 - 2. Ex. Maymester/summer travel for a spring course
- VII. **Global Experiential Opportunities (GEOs)** – previously referred to as Non-credit faculty-led program are Faculty/Staff guided group travel not associated with a course taught during the same, preceding, or proceeding academic term. Examples include:
- a. Travel for a course taught the previous academic year
 - b. Choir competition
 - c. Study-tours
 - d. Service learning led by a faculty or staff member (not student service learning)
 - e. Other examples include research, subject-area intensive travel, service learning with a UH group, internships, non-affiliated travel, and any study abroad programs outside of the Learning Abroad designated program portfolio
 - f. **Student Service Learning** – travel abroad by a UH registered student organization for service purposes. These programs must be submitted to Learning Abroad and must adhere to registration and participation requirements.
- VIII. **Travel Registry** – Online registry where all students, faculty, and staff must register their travel for all non-credit programs or student engagement abroad. See the Learning Abroad website for the link.
- IX. **Elevated Risk Country or Region** – A country or region is defined as follows:
- a. Current DOS level 3 or 4
 - b. Current CDC level 3 or 4
 - c. Destination has a current Security Assessment rating of 4/5 based on intel from On Call International risk assessment
 - d. UH travel to that country/region has been designated as restricted by the Office of the Provost or Office of the President or UHS

Appendix B - Relevant University Policies

[UH System Travel Policy 05.C.03](#)

[UH MAPP Policy – Student Travel](#)

[UH Student International Travel Policy](#)

[UH Student Code of Conduct](#)

[UH EOS Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)

[UH Accommodation/ADA Policies](#)

Appendix C - Checklist for a Program

Program Development

- Contact department and introduce trip proposal
- Meet with Assistant Director for Learning Abroad to help get started
- Determine program type: Faculty-Led or GEO
- Decide on program term, duration, and location
- Create global and academic learning objectives
- Talk with the DBA or CBA of department or college to review business office steps
- Contact logistics providers to determine program inclusions - discuss:
 - Airfare details
 - Housing/Lodging accommodations
 - In-country transportation logistics
 - Meals
 - Translator or guide services
 - Cultural visits (including museums and other cultural sites)
 - Excursions (including day trips, business visits, and other off-site trips)
 - Classroom or meeting space
 - Visa requirements
 - Vaccine requirements
- Complete tentative itinerary for program
- Review cost of attendance for students
- Research risk and safety in location
- Submit completed Proposal to Learning Abroad

Student Recruitment

- Determine student population to recruit
- Provide all needed information to Learning Abroad for brochure and advising support
- Create a flyer to market program
- Attend the Learning Abroad Fair
- Host Information Sessions for interested students
- Open application process and make selections
- Ensure good academic and disciplinary standing of student participants
- Hold accommodation and identity conversations with students, provide appropriate resources

Pre-Departure

- Obtain city logistics and places to avoid from OnCall Security
- Collect location of hospitals or urgent care facilities
- Review emergency phone numbers onsite and at home
- Know the location of the nearest US embassy or consulate
- Review local laws on drugs, alcohol, dress, and presentation abroad
- Brief students on program rules and policies
- Prepare to have a great trip!

Appendix D - Faculty-Led Program Development Timeline

Planning and Development

(18 - 10 months in advance)

1. Research and assess student interest, program viability, and academic purpose of location.
2. Discuss plans with your Department Chair and Dean and Learning Abroad Assistant Director.
3. Develop a course syllabus and itinerary, which will meet course objectives, including rationale for conducting the courses abroad, and submit the Learning Abroad Proposal to your Department Chair and DBA for approval. The form must then be sent to the College Dean and CBA for approval.
4. Meet with potential logistics providers (if applicable) to find the best one for you needs
5. Once Department/Dean approval is obtained, send a signed proposal form to the Assistant Director of Learning Abroad for UH Global approval. Approval must be obtained before faculty can begin program recruitment. Include a letter of intent from the logistic provider you plan to work with, a contract does not need to be initiated with them yet.
6. Meet with your Department Business Administrator (DBA) to discuss how to approach the program in compliance with the UH Manual of Administrative Policies and Procedures (MAPP), including contracts with providers, foreign travel requests and approvals. Consider vendor options. Work with your DBA on an RFP for purchasing based on your itinerary requirements. There must be a signed contract in place with providers before travel.
7. With the support of your provider, prepare a budget and set student program costs based on a minimum number of participants. Determine what the program fee will cover and what additional costs students will incur (i.e. airfare, additional meals, etc.). Be sure to factor in tips in either the budget or additional student costs.
8. With support of your vendor and DBA, determine a refund policy, including refund dates and percentages, as well as a cancellation date if enrollment is not sufficient.
9. Determine if students will need visas and consult the respective consulate for visa information. Keep in mind that international students may be required to have visas for certain countries where United States citizens will not need a visa. Do not assume all students participating will be U.S. citizens.
10. Ensure course is created in course catalog and listing for the specified term.
11. Create application forms and determine criteria for students to participate.

Marketing and Student Recruitment

(10 - 5 months in advance)

1. Work with your college or Learning Abroad to create program brochures. Per THECB guidelines, “Advertising and marketing for study-abroad courses will emphasize the instructional nature of the classes and not create the impression that they are credit-for-travel experiences.”
2. Post information about the program on the college website and send information to Learning Abroad to be posted on Learning Abroad’s traveler software, Terra Dotta.
3. Schedule a series of information sessions to create awareness and answer student questions. Invite Learning Abroad staff to talk about scholarship opportunities and the Passport for Coogs program. Host a table at Learning Abroad Fall and Spring Fairs. If desired, meet with students to interview them before accepted.
4. Formally accept students into the program via email. Prepare post-acceptance materials and ensure students are sent instructions for payment. Send student roster to Learning Abroad and inform students to apply on Terra Dotta with Learning Abroad.

Pre-Departure

(5 - 2 months in advance)

1. Attend a Risk Management Workshop required by the Office of the Provost to and determine in-country safety plan (sessions offered in the fall and spring).
2. Continue recruitment activities as necessary.
3. Ensure all program participants register on the Learning Abroad Terra Dotta portal and complete all necessary documentation: student conduct abroad agreement, release and indemnification, health disclosure form, passport information and travel policy waiver if necessary.
4. Check with DBA or provider regarding status of student payments if applicable.
5. Ensure students are registered for the course if applicable.
6. Schedule a minimum of one pre-departure orientation which includes academic requirements as well as emergency and safety information and the culture and customs of the destination country. Invite Learning Abroad to at least one orientation to explain document requirements and emergency and safety procedures, and to answer any questions.

Pre-Departure Continued

(2 - 1 months in advance)

1. Reconfirm all travel arrangements abroad and payments to vendors.
2. Send Learning Abroad a final copy of program itinerary and faculty leader contact information in country.
3. Contact Learning Abroad to confirm all students have complied with document requirements.
4. Send Learning Abroad final roster of students.
5. Organize emergency contact information on all students for your records while traveling.
6. Prepare emergency contact and detailed itinerary information sheet for students that can also be shared with parents.
7. Review in-country safety plan and prepare an on-site, in-country orientation for students after arrival.

On-Site Orientation

1. Once in-country, conduct an on-site orientation with students to cover emergency and communication plans and emergency meeting point. Make sure students carry emergency card on their person at all times.

Appendix E - Constructing a Budget

Below is an example for creating a budget for your Learning Abroad program. To work with the interactive, excel sheet, please go to: <https://www.uh.edu/learningabroad/faculty-staff-resources/>

Faculty-Led Learning Abroad Program Budget Worksheet

This worksheet will help determine breakeven points based on the number of students and overall program price.

Instructions: Add or subtract line items based on your particular program and vendor(s). Enter cost amounts into the cells in green.

| | | NUMBER OF STUDENTS | | | | | |
|---|----------------|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| | | 10 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 18 | 20 |
| FIXED COSTS | | | | | | | |
| Program Leader Airfare | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 | \$1,200 |
| Program Leader Lodging/Meals/Transportation, etc. | \$1,520 | \$1,520 | \$1,520 | \$1,520 | \$1,520 | \$1,520 | \$1,520 |
| Program Leader Misc. Add'l Expenses | \$200 | \$200 | \$200 | \$200 | \$200 | \$200 | \$200 |
| TOTAL FIXED COSTS | \$2,920 | \$2,920 | \$2,920 | \$2,920 | \$2,920 | \$2,920 | \$2,920 |
| VARIABLE COSTS | | | | | | | |
| Airfare Houston - Country One - Houston | \$1,200 | \$12,000 | \$14,400 | \$16,800 | \$19,200 | \$21,600 | \$24,000 |
| City One (Stay, Museums, and Excursions) | \$500 | \$5,000 | \$6,000 | \$7,000 | \$8,000 | \$9,000 | \$10,000 |
| Lodging | \$420 | \$4,200 | \$5,040 | \$5,880 | \$6,720 | \$7,560 | \$8,400 |
| Meals | \$300 | \$3,000 | \$3,600 | \$4,200 | \$4,800 | \$5,400 | \$6,000 |
| Local Transportation | \$50 | \$500 | \$600 | \$700 | \$800 | \$900 | \$1,000 |
| Excursions and Field Trips | \$50 | \$500 | \$600 | \$700 | \$800 | \$900 | \$1,000 |
| Incidental Expenses | \$200 | \$2,000 | \$2,400 | \$2,800 | \$3,200 | \$3,600 | \$4,000 |
| TOTAL VARIABLE COSTS | \$2,720 | \$27,200 | \$32,640 | \$38,080 | \$43,520 | \$48,960 | \$54,400 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM COST | | \$30,120 | \$35,560 | \$41,000 | \$46,440 | \$51,880 | \$57,320 |
| TOTAL PROGRAM COST PER STUDENT | | \$3,012 | \$2,963 | \$2,929 | \$2,903 | \$2,882 | \$2,866 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| PROGRAM PRICE | \$3,000 | \$30,000 | \$36,000 | \$42,000 | \$48,000 | \$54,000 | \$60,000 |
| | | | | | | | |
| TOTAL REVENUE | | \$30,000 | \$36,000 | \$42,000 | \$48,000 | \$54,000 | \$60,000 |
| | | | | | | | |
| CONTRIBUTION MARGIN* | | \$2,800 | \$3,360 | \$3,920 | \$4,480 | \$5,040 | \$5,600 |
| <i>*Contribution Margin = Total Revenue - Total Variable Cost</i> | | | | | | | |
| PROFITS/LOSSES | | -\$120 | \$440 | \$1,000 | \$1,560 | \$2,120 | \$2,680 |

Appendix F - Reflection Prompts for Learning Abroad

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.” — John Dewey

Learning Abroad encourages program leaders to include intentional reflection into their academic and co-curricular programs, including during pre-departure, while abroad, and upon return. These reflection questions can be done as part of assignments, or as additional activities before, during, or after the program.

Pre-Departure:

- Why did I want to go abroad, and why did I pick this program?
- What will I miss most while I’m abroad?
- Do I expect to experience culture shock and what’s my plan if I do?
- What am I most excited to do?
- What am I most nervous about?
- What are my goals?
- Who do I want to be at the end of this experience?

Reflection About Culture:

- In what ways is this culture different than my own?
- How is this culture the same as my own?
- What has “shocked” or “confused” you about this culture?
- How have cultural differences made you more aware of your own culture---of its benefits, limitations, strengths, or biases?
- In what ways might your own culture/society benefit by learning from that of others, specifically from the one in which you studied?
- How do cultural differences allow others to view you differently than you view yourself?
- What advice do you have for others immersing themselves in a new culture?

Reflection About Yourself:

- What did I learn from today’s experiences (both positive and negative)?
- How did I adapt to new situations? How did I interact with others today?
- What challenges and opportunities faced me today? How did I handle them? Did I seek solutions to problems?
- How will these experiences strengthen me personally and prepare me professionally?
- What is one thing you learned about yourself by being abroad?
- How are you different now after going abroad?
What personal values remain steadfast after your experience abroad?

Reflection About Academics & Community Engagement:

- How were your classes different abroad than in Houston?
- Which lesson was your favorite, and why?
- How did language play a part in your learning abroad?
- How did you engage with the local community?

Re-Entry:

- What do you miss about being abroad?
- What do you not miss about being abroad?
- What can you now do that you couldn't do before you went abroad?
- What's something you want more of in your life?
- What is something new you tried?
- Did you meet the goals you set before going abroad?
- What do you think of the length of your program? Was it a good amount of time to be abroad, and why?
- What is one thing you would change about your experience abroad?

Activities to help facilitate:

- One Minute or One Sentence Journals
- Mindfulness Walking
- Daily blog entry activity/assignment
- Letter Writing
- Group Reflection Meal

Appendix G – Travel Logistics Provider Letter of Intent Template

Program leaders can use a letter of intent from their travel logistics provider, or they can use this template to submit with their program proposal.

Faculty-led programs are required to work with a travel logistics provider. Global Experiential Opportunity programs can have their travel coordinated without the use of a travel logistics provider; however, it is highly encouraged by the Office of the Provost and the Global Risk and Safety Committee to do so. In instances of travel to elevated risk destinations, GEOs may be required to work with a travel logistics provider. Travel logistics provider recommendations can be found on the Learning Abroad website, or leaders can contact Learning Abroad for more information.

Please indicate your program's information and intentions to work with a travel logistics provider:

Today's date:

Program Leader Name:

Program Title:

Program dates (approximate):

Destination(s):

The program leader will work with a travel logistics provider in the following way:

- Submit an RFP with our department business administrator to request bids for the program. We will request bids from the following companies:

- Submit a sole-source justification to work with _____

- For GEOs only: Coordinate travel through the following university department:

Once the contract has been completed, please send the signed contract to the Learning Abroad Assistant Director.

Appendix H – Emergency Protocol Document