

THE VIRGINIA UNION UNIVERSITY



*CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES*

HENDERSON CENTER, ROOM 1013

**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM MANUAL  
FOR  
PROGRAM DIRECTORS**



*"Connecting VUU students, faculty and staff to various parts of the world"*

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## **I. General Program Design**

Faculty who wish to offer an VUU-approved study abroad program should work closely with the Center for International Studies, which will assist them in designing a program that meets VUU requirements. The procedure for obtaining approval to offer a study abroad program follows:

### **A. Approval Process and Deadlines**

Proposals for summer study abroad must be approved by August of the year before the study abroad program is to occur. Thus, a summer 2015 program must be approved by August 2014. Spring Break or semester interim programs must be approved prior to the beginning of the academic year in which the programs are to take place. The following persons must approve study abroad proposals:

1. Chairs of departments in which courses are to be offered
2. Deans of schools in which courses are to be offered
3. Director of the Center for International Studies
4. The Vice President for Academic Affairs

### **B. Procedures to Follow**

Faculty interested in developing a study abroad proposal should follow these steps:

1. Describe program to department chair(s) that would be involved and seek approval
2. Meet with the Director of the Center for International Studies to discuss the proposal and clarify the procedures for developing a proposal
3. Develop a draft proposal, including all the components described in section “D”
4. Have the Director and department chairs review the draft proposal, and then make any revisions that are required
5. Submit the final proposal, along with the completed signature approval form

Information on locations overseas, travel arrangements, budgeting, and general study abroad arrangements are available in the Center for International Studies. The Center will help faculty with designing programs and proposals.

### **C. Program Design Checklist**

The checklist below is meant to help assure that you address the most important tasks in designing a study abroad program. The Center staff is prepared to assist you in planning how to handle each of these issues.

#### Thinking About a Program:

Meet with department chair, dean, and Director of the Center to confirm that there is:

- No other program at VUU that duplicates your proposed program
- Sufficient student interest to generate minimum program enrollment
- Support for this program at the department and school levels
- Permission for faculty to participate in the program
- A possibility of compensation for participating
- A preliminary program design

#### Deciding on a Host Institution:

Before deciding on a host institution, do the following:

- Contact host/sponsor institution to discuss program design
- Develop a timetable for program implementation
- Make a site visit to assess accommodations, classrooms, academic facilities and resources, dining options, in-country transportation, health care centers, and security
- Contact OIP and obtain site visit guidelines
- Negotiate costs with in-country service providers
- Find out about payment deadlines and refund policies

#### Contacting the Center at VUU:

When you determine the host institution, then:

- Prepare “Request for Approval” form (Appendix) and budget and submit to the Center for review and comments before submitting for final approval
- Develop and implement a recruiting plan with the Center for review and comments before submitting for final approval

- ❑ Contact Director of the Center to register for the VUU STUDY ABROAD FAIR in October and discuss participation in other study abroad fairs around the United States

#### Publicizing the Program:

- ❑ Meet with publications and design staff in Ms. Coombs office to plan publicity materials
- ❑ Submit text (disk and hard copy), photos/graphics, and a work order for posters, flyers, brochures, forms, etc. to publications and design staff
- ❑ Print sufficient copies of promotional materials
- ❑ Submit program information to the Center for publication

#### Preparing for Travel:

- ❑ Book flights - Begin this process about one year before your planned departure (Contact the Center for recommended travel agents and or third-party providers)
- ❑ Submit a “Request to Establish an Agency Account” form (Appendix) to the office of Financial Affairs and request that you receive monthly ledger reports
- ❑ Send a memorandum to Financial Affairs stating the name of your program and the account number so they will be prepared to accept credit card payment.
- ❑ Process applications
- ❑ File applications and record information in a database
- ❑ Send letter to accepted students informing them of payment deadlines, missing documents, and passport/visa application procedures
- ❑ Direct students to the Financial Aid Office to make sure their financial aid will apply to program costs if they qualify
- ❑ Send regret letters to unqualified students
- ❑ Send letter notifying students about the day, time, and location of orientation (very likely inside the Center)
- ❑ Record deposits and payments on your own ledger and make copies of all checks
- ❑ Encourage students to apply for available study abroad scholarships like Boren and Gilman. They may contact the Center for more information.

- ❑ Inform students with financial aid that they may take out a short-term loan against their expected aid
- ❑ Work with department(s) to have Academic Affairs create study abroad sections of courses offered
- ❑ Make sure the courses are set up so that they do NOT carry health, activity, or athletic fees
- ❑ Refer transient students to the Office of Enrollment Management so they may apply for admission to ASU
- ❑ Advise transient students to meet with study abroad and financial aid advisors at their home institutions to determine how credit will be transferred and financial aid disbursed
- ❑ Register ALL student participants
- ❑ Send a memorandum to Financial Affairs listing all out-of-state students participating in the program and request that non-resident tuition for these students be waived
- ❑ Make all payments to service providers
- ❑ Plan and conduct pre-departure orientation
- ❑ Distribute syllabi and course materials
- ❑ Review travel itinerary with students including when and where the group will meet for departure
- ❑ Design procedure to obtain and distribute airline and any other necessary tickets
- ❑ Inform students about the International Student Identification Card and its insurance benefits

Before departure:

- Collect emergency contact name(s), and emergency contact phone number(s) of all participating students
- Submit to the Center student roster including name, Social Security Number, phone number, address, etc
- Submit to the Center each student participant's signed Statement of Responsibility Form

- Submit to the Center your overseas contact information
- Contact Financial Affairs and confirm that all students participants are registered and have paid tuition fees
- Confirm that all students have passports and visas (if necessary)
- Confirm that all students have paid program fees
- Pack Study Abroad Program Manual and use crisis protocols in case of emergency

#### **D. Format for Study Abroad Proposals**

In preparing the proposal, use the guidelines enumerated in the REQUEST FOR APPROVAL FORM (see Appendix):

1. Nature and purpose of the program
2. Description of the academic component including type and number of credit hours to be rewarded, eligibility requirements, number of contact hours, method of evaluation, course title(s), and number(s), and examples of course-related activities/excursions outside the classroom
3. Projected number of students and faculty
4. Program budget including projected cost for each student
5. Room and board arrangements
6. Amount and source of faculty compensation
7. Description of program affiliations, host institutions, and service providers
8. Travel arrangements including all countries and cities to be visited
9. Security arrangements
10. Recruitment plans

#### **E. Types of Study Abroad Programs**

Programs are classified by type of program and sponsorship. The type of program affects the nature of the educational experience and the level of the student's interaction with the culture of the host country. The source of sponsorship affects the type of credit students earn. There are island, reciprocal, hybrid, consortium-sponsored and home institution-sponsored field/experiential studies programs.

## 1. Island Programs

- Island programs transplant the educational system of a US sponsoring institution to a foreign setting.
- These programs resemble islands because they “are largely separate from foreign institutions” (Soneson, Lochner-Wright, & Navari, 1997, p. 280). Such programs are self-contained and under the close supervision of the sponsoring institution. They tend to enroll high numbers of American students who are taught by American faculty. During the program, students usually spend most of their time both in and out of class with other Americans. This structure can limit American students’ opportunities for meaningful interaction with host country nationals.
- Island programs are sometimes referred to as “study center programs,” because the sponsoring institution may actually establish and maintain a central office (and other facilities) in the foreign country. The center manages the daily operations of the program, and is usually staffed with a resident director and other resident staff who are fluent in English, can speak the language of the foreign country, are familiar with the US system of higher education, and understand the expectations of US students.
- Courses are selected from the regular curriculum of the sponsoring institution and are usually taught in English. If language courses are offered, they are taught in the language of the host country. Some programs for advanced students may teach all courses in the language of the host country.
- Students register for the program’s classes through the sponsoring institution.
- Students pay tuition and program fees to the sponsoring institution.
- Students whose home institution is the sponsoring institution can earn resident credit.
- Students from institutions other than the sponsoring institution are usually considered as transient, visiting, guest, or non-degree-seeking students at the sponsoring institution. In addition to applying for acceptance to the study abroad program, these students must apply for admission at the sponsoring institution.
- Students from institutions other than the sponsoring institution usually earn transfer credit at their home institutions. These students may need to secure permission from their home institutions to participate and transfer credit from the study abroad program.
- Faculties who teach on the program are usually from the sponsoring institution.
- However the sponsoring institution may hire faculty from other US or foreign institutions.
- The program usually arranges housing for students and faculty. US students are usually housed with other US students in dormitories, hotels, pensions, or hostels. Sometimes, US students may have the option to live with a family. This is referred to as a home stay.
- Duration of the program is for one or more semesters.

### Advantages:

- ⇒ Sponsoring institution has a large amount of control over program quality and curriculum.
- ⇒ Sponsoring institution can send a large numbers of its students abroad at one time.
- ⇒ Students from the sponsoring institution have fewer obstacles related to the use of student



financial aid, and they have a clearer understanding of whether study abroad courses satisfy degree requirements.

⇒ This type of program is appropriate for students who feel that they need a great deal of structure and support in a study abroad program.

Disadvantages:

⇒ Students can become isolated from the culture of the host country.

⇒ Depending on the program, this type of program may not be sufficiently challenging for highly self-motivated and mature students or for students with advanced language skills.

⇒ The sponsoring institution assumes all direct and indirect costs of operating the program and all of the liability associated with conducting a study abroad program.

## **2. Reciprocal Exchange Programs**

- These programs involve establishment of a formal relationship, through written agreement, between a US college or university for the “trading” of an equal number of students of like academic status (i.e., undergraduates for undergraduates), for equal periods of time. Reciprocal exchanges usually must be kept “in balance.”
- Frequently, the terms of an exchange will limit student participation to degree-seeking students of the institutions that are parties to the agreement. Under such circumstances, students whose home institutions are not parties to the agreement may not participate in the exchange program. Additionally, some exchange programs are open only to students enrolled in particular academic majors. This type of agreement usually transpires when the exchange is between two academic departments.
- Students from the US institution are not required to pay the foreign institution’s tuition and fees, and students from the foreign institution are not required to pay the US institution’s tuition and fees.
- Students from the US institution pay tuition and fees to their home institution at its regular rate. Then, these funds are used by the US institution to pay for the costs of enrolling the incoming student from the foreign university.
- Students from the US institution register for classes at the foreign university. The foreign university issues a grade report and students normally earn international transfer credit.
- Sometimes, US institutions will also register their students in special exchange courses at the US institution, so that their students can earn resident credit.
- Students from the foreign institution register for classes at the US institution and transfer credit back to the foreign institution.
- Regular faculties at each institution provide instruction.
- The institutions that are parties to the agreement usually make housing arrangements. In some cases, students may be left on their own to locate housing. Dormitories, apartments, and home stays are possible accommodations, depending upon circumstances and options at the institutions.
- Duration of the program is usually one academic year or one semester.

### Advantages:

- ⇒ It can be very cost effective for students.
- ⇒ Students are immersed in the culture of the host country and institution.
- ⇒ Institutions involved in the agreement have identified each other as having mutual interests and compatible standards.

### Disadvantages:

- ⇒ Only a few students participate each academic year.
- ⇒ Students must be able to do average to above-average, college level work in the language of the foreign country. Usually, this means that students must have already completed intermediate-level course work in the appropriate language.
- ⇒ Requires students to be highly motivated, independent, and self-confident. This type of program may be too challenging and intimidating for some students.

### **3. Hybrid Programs (A.K.A. Mixed Model)**

- Hybrid programs combine characteristics of direct enrollment in a foreign university with characteristics of island programs. For example, a US institution may establish an island or study center program at, or near a foreign university with which it has established a formal relationship.
- Like island programs, hybrid programs offer the sponsoring institution's courses with full support facilities. Like direct enrollment programs, hybrid programs offer advanced students direct access to courses at the affiliated foreign university. US students can have direct contact with students from the foreign country, yet also take some classes in English, if necessary. The structure permits the sponsoring institution to simultaneously address the needs of students with different class standings (i.e., freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduate), language skills (i.e., beginning, intermediate or advanced), and curricular interests (i.e., language study, enrollment in classes to satisfy the core curriculum, or enrollment in classes to satisfy requirements for the major or minor).
- Students whose home institution is the sponsoring institution may earn two types of credit: resident credit and/or international transfer credit. This depends upon the registration process at the sponsoring institution, and whether students register for classes at the home and/or foreign institution.

### **4. Consortium-Sponsored Programs**

- A consortium is a group of institutions that agree to collaborate to share limited resources (e.g., students, staff, funding, connections, and knowledge). Usually one institution in the consortium agrees to perform the program's administrative functions. Examples are the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP), the College Consortium for International Studies (CCIS), and the University System of Georgia's European Council.
  - Students who attend institutions that belong to the consortium usually register at their home institutions for classes, earn resident credit, obtain financial aid from their home institution, and apply to the program through their home institution.

- These programs may have characteristics similar to island, hybrid, or exchange programs.

Advantages:

- ⇒ It expands the number of programs at the home institution without the home institution incurring additional costs and responsibilities of direct sponsorship.

Disadvantages:

- ⇒ It requires considerable coordination, cooperation, and communication among all member institutions of the consortium.
- ⇒ Sometimes institutions belong to the consortium, but fail to take full advantage of the program. For example, some member institutions may not grant resident credit for consortium-sponsored programs.

## **5. Home Institution-Sponsored Field/Experiential/Internship Studies Program**

- Field studies/internships are “organized out-of-classroom projects that enable students to deepen their understanding of another culture by living and working in it for a period of time” (Soneson, et. Al. 1997, p. 293). The home institution, a foreign university, a study abroad organization, or the student may organize such programs themselves.

- Depending on the nature of the project, the length of the program varies from a few weeks to several months.

- Programs may be group-led or resemble independent study. Students often pursue independent projects or internship experiences.

- Programs may or may not be affiliated with a foreign institution or study abroad organization.

- A faculty member at the student’s home institution may supervise independent pursuits. A faculty member at a foreign university or a foreign supervisor may oversee the student’s work. Sometimes internship coordinators are involved as well.

- The home institution, a foreign university, or a study abroad organization may facilitate registration.

- Students may earn resident or transfer credit depending upon how registration is handled.

- Academic or work tasks and expectations, including deadlines for completing tasks and submitting reports, must be clearly outlined.

- The type of facilities, accommodations, program services, and costs will vary depending upon the structure of the program.

## **II. Academic Integrity**

If the program is credit bearing, Faculty must assure that it is academically substantive and that credit awards are in line with the program curriculum, contact hours, and assignments.

The Center will assist, where appropriate, in articulating policies and interpreting non-traditional aspects of study abroad settings, but the responsibility for assuring academic credit rests with the Deans and Department Chairs. Course plans should both take advantage of the international setting and assure academic rigor.

To be considered:

- Contact hours  
When calculating contact hours, incorporate field experiences led by faculty with classroom instruction. It is standard practice to reduce the number of classroom contact hours required for credit when the learning is taking place abroad.
- Class attendance-Usually fewer absences (or no absences) should be allowed on short-term study abroad programs.
- Syllabus should be prepared in initial planning stage.  
You may want to give reading assignments to students before the excursion so they may take maximum advantage of the overseas experience. Replace the electronic media you normally use on campus with experiential fieldwork.
- Evaluations  
Evaluation forms should be prepared and distributed to students. The forms should address accommodations, meals, field trips, class facilities, course materials, texts, and quality of instruction and program administration (See Appendix). Student journals may be employed as part of the evaluation process.

### III. Fiscal Matters and Procedures

A key element of study abroad programming is making sure that there is enough money in the program budget to pay for all program costs. Management of funds should follow federal, state, and institutional guidelines. This section will provide you with a procedural framework in which to manage the finances of your program. **This section might not be relevant if the program is sponsored by third-party providers.**

#### A. Budgeting

Sound budgeting will serve you well in avoiding funding shortages and keeping students costs down. Use the following guidelines when creating your budget:

1. Determine an enrollment number for which you will budget, based on an estimate of student interest and the program's capacity.
2. Figure a total per-student package cost by dividing group expenses by the target number of students, then adding individual expenses to this figure.
3. If faculty meals are not pre-paid, you should budget a daily food allowance (per diem) for each faculty participant. Add to the total package figure a cushion of 5-10% for administrative overhead, variation in exchange rates, and price fluctuations.

4. Use a conservative estimate for exchange rates as they may fluctuate greatly
5. **DO NOT INCLUDE TUITION AS PART OF YOUR PROGRAM BUDGET-** This will be handled through student accounts. **EXCEPTION:** If instruction is completely contracted out to a host institution, tuition payments will be transferred to that institution. Contact VP Financial Affairs.

## **B. Budget Items**

The following items (if they are part of your program package) must be included in your budget:

1. International travel
2. Accommodation
3. Meals (for faculty, this may be in the form of a per diem)
4. In-country travel
5. Entrance fees
6. Guided tours
7. Faculty expenses (#1- #6 above)
8. Facilities rental
9. Guest lectures
10. Others

## **C. Application Fees and Payment Schedules**

The following are guidelines for application deposits, student payment options, and payment schedules. You will require funds well in advance to cover items like airfare deposits and accommodation costs, however, many students will not be able to pay the entire package cost in one payment. Breaking up the package cost into an application deposit and two or more payments should help you obtain funds early enough to pay advance costs while maintaining program affordability.

1. You should require an application fee to be applied toward students' package costs. You should consider an application incomplete without the application fee. You may wish to make part of the application fee refundable up to a specified date (**BE SURE TO INCLUDE A DETAILED REFUND POLICY IN YOUR PROGRAM LITERATURE**). The remainder of the program fees may be broken down into two or more partial payments. For example: \$100 application fee; \$950 due on May1; and \$950 due on June 1 for a total package cost of \$2,000;
2. You should require that students' application fees be paid by check or money order. The remainder of the package cost may be paid by check, money order, Visa, or MasterCard. Please contact the Business Office and Vice President (Financial Affairs) to set up a procedure for credit card payments for your program.

## D. Account Management and Record Keeping

As a program director, you must keep accurate financial records and follow guidelines on the use of student money established by VUU. Use the following guidelines to manage your agency account and keep financial records:

1. As soon as plans are underway to launch your study abroad program, you should establish an agency account in which to deposit program fees and from which to draft checks to pay for program expenses. Contact the office of Financial Affairs for more information
2. Once you have your agency account, make arrangements to receive monthly ledger reports from the Office of Vice President for Financial Affairs
3. In addition to the ledger report, you should create your own program spreadsheet to keep track of the balance in your agency account
4. **It is very important to keep in mind that student tuition payments must be kept separate from program fees.** Charges for tuition will appear on students' accounts when they register for classes. Students are responsible for paying tuition money into their accounts at the Student Accounts Office
5. Program fees covering airfare, room, board, etc. must be paid by students to the program director. **All program monies received must be deposited into the program agency account intact** – Do NOT spend cash you receive from students. Use the following procedure for depositing money into the program's agency account:
  - a. Draft a memorandum to the VP for Financial Affairs listing each check by the student's name and amount of check. The memorandum should explain that the money should be deposited into the program's agency account (include the account number)
  - b. **BE SURE THAT STUDENT NUMBERS (ID/SSN) ARE ON ALL CHECKS**
  - c. Photocopy all checks and file copies
  - d. Attach checks to memorandum and make deposit at the Business Office
  - e. Record transaction on your spreadsheet
  - f. Deposit all checks on a weekly basis – do not hold checks for more than one week
  - g. If a check is returned, contact the student and try to collect payment
6. When you have money in your agency account, you may begin paying for program services. It is best to pay for as much as possible in advance to avoid the risks of carrying large amounts of money abroad. To do this, obtain an invoice from the service provider. If the invoice is in U.S. dollars, use the following procedure to make a payment by check:
  - a. Fill out a check request form
  - b. Include Federal ID Number of payee on the check request form

- c. Request that the check be sent directly to you – not the payee
  - d. Remove “Requestor” copy and file
  - e. Submit check request and invoices to the Student Account Office
  - f. When you receive the check, make a copy for your files and record transaction in your spreadsheet
7. In many cases, it will be impossible to acquire invoices for services (e.g. entrance fees, cab fares). To obtain a cash advance from your agency account to pay for services, for which it is impossible to acquire invoices, use the following procedure:
- a. Establish in your budget costs for such services (e.g. museum entrance fee: \$10x 10 students = \$100)
  - b. Submit a completed “Request for Authority to Travel on Official University Business” form with a memorandum requesting the funds in advance, and a copy of your budget to the Vice President for Academic Affairs
  - c. COLLECT RECEIPTS TO ACCOUNT FOR ALL PAYMENTS
  - d. Upon return, submit a Travel Expense Statement with receipts and a cover memorandum to the office of VP financial affairs
  - e. On receipts written in a foreign language, circle the monetary figures and provide an exchange rate
  - f. **Advance funds not accounted for must be returned to the Office of Financial Affairs or else the sum will be deducted from regular paycheck.**
8. If a daily meal allowance (per diem) for faculty is included in the program budget, you may get a cash advance from your agency account by using the following procedure:
- a. Establish in your budget a daily allowance for faculty multiplied by the number of days the program will run (e.g. per diem: \$30/day x 30 days=\$900);
  - b. Submit a completed REQUEST FOR AUTHORITY TO TRAVEL ON OFFICIAL UNIVERSITY BUSINESS with a memorandum requesting the funds in advance, and a copy of your budget to the Vice President for Financial Affairs. **YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO SUBMIT RECEIPTS FOR GOODS AND SERVICES PAID FOR WITH A PER DIEM.**

## **E. Financial Aid**

Financial aid is often a critical issue for students wishing to study abroad. As a program director, you should be familiar with the use of student financial aid to pay for study abroad expenses and the availability of supplemental funding. Students may use their state grants and federal financial aid packages to cover the costs of credit bearing studying abroad programs.

Students with financial aid who wish to study abroad should contact the Financial Aid Office and follow the “Instructions for Students with Financial Aid” information sheet provided by that office. Financial aid is disbursed to student accounts and excess money is refunded to the student, just as if the student were studying on campus. You should advise students that if

they need money for a summer program, they should make sure that there will be enough funds available from their annual package to cover summer costs. Students who have not applied for financial aid should obtain a Free Application for Federal Student Aid at the Financial Aid Office as soon as possible. Study abroad scholarships are available on a limited and competitive basis. Advise students to contact the Center for International Studies and ask about study abroad scholarship opportunities.

## **IV. Risk Management**

No activity is risk-free, but study abroad may involve unique risks to participants and a higher level of responsibility for supervisors. This section will describe how program directors can best protect their students from harm, themselves, and the university from litigation. The final part of this section is devoted to procedures for handling crisis situations abroad.

### **A. Safety and Tort Liability Issues**

#### **1. Background**

Tort law covers civil suits involving wrongful acts that result in injury, loss or damage. Negligence is the most common tort litigation. In study abroad, the most common example of negligence is a failure to counsel students sufficiently about risks and dangers (natural, social, political, cultural, and legal) associated with living in a foreign environment.

A legal judgment of negligence must prove duty, breach of duty, proximate cause, and actual injury. Duty is defined as an obligation recognized by the law. A duty is determined when the risk in question is deemed to be foreseeable through the objective eyes of “a reasonably prudent person in a similar situation.” Once a duty has been determined to exist, a standard of care is a breach of duty and can result in a lawsuit. For example, a program director, who takes a group of students into a known war zone, has breached his duty.

With a breach of duty established, a litigant must determine proximate cause. Proximate cause is proof that the breach of duty resulted in the injury, loss, or damage in question. Finally, successful litigation requires proof that an actual injury, physical or mental, occurred.

It is important to note that the standard of care in study abroad programs is higher than at the home campus because students are in unfamiliar environments without the support networks they are accustomed to. In addition, students may be operating in non-English speaking populations. You must be conscious of this fact during pre-departure preparations and on-site management of your program.



## 2. Programs and Site Familiarity

You must be thoroughly familiar with the program, providers of services, and the cultural, political, and social conditions of the site. Investigate the security of all accommodations and the safety record of all transportation providers. Research the security of all destinations and the areas through which the group will travel using ground transportation. Monitor State Department Travel Advisories and Consular Information Sheets available at [www.stolaf.edu/network/travel-advisories.html](http://www.stolaf.edu/network/travel-advisories.html). A site visit/planning trip well before the program begins is absolutely necessary.

## 3. Supervision and backup

Make sure that someone is always in charge. An assistant director or leader must be available in case the director is unable to function. Students should always be accompanied during group travel. Someone (director, assistant or co-director, host institution staff, or student leader) should be available to handle emergency situations at all times.

## 4. Insurance

VUU, through Arthur J. Gallagher Risk Management Services, Inc. provides comprehensive insurance for abroad travelers throughout the academic session. However, students going abroad may also carry insurance that will cover medical expenses, repatriation of remains, and medical evacuation. This must be made very clear to students upon application and during orientation. Students should be required to purchase the International Student Identification Card (ISIC) for approximately \$20. To obtain the card, students will need to submit a passport-style photo and show proof of college enrollment, i.e. a valid student I.D. card. The ISIC entitles a holder to travel discounts and health insurance. Possession of an ISIC meets minimum study abroad insurance requirements.

## 5. Orientation

One of the best ways to ensure the safety of students and minimize the occurrence of litigation over negligence is to provide a thorough orientation. The orientation should include:

- a. Cautions about alcohol and drug abuse and a warning not to carry, buy, or sell illegal drugs
- b. A warning that students are subject to local, not U.S. laws, and that little can be done by VUU or the US Embassy to help students who are caught breaking the law
- c. Region-specific health information such as the nature, prevention, and treatment of region-specific diseases; required and recommended vaccinations; water and food risks; and descriptions of persistent and epidemic diseases. You may wish to distribute travel health information available from the Centers for Disease Control at [www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.html](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/travel.html)

- d. Advice to prepare a customized medical kit including prescription medications in labeled bottles, generic prescriptions for refills, and an extra pair of eyeglasses if needed)
- e. Information about the physiological consequences of jet lag, culture shock, homesickness, loneliness, changes in diet, lack of exercise, and so on
- f. General instructions for emergency medical situations-using an emergency telephone system (like 911), calling an ambulance, a hospital or doctor, or an embassy or consular office
- g. Prudent advice on how to minimize the possibility of being the victim of crime
- h. Advice to avoid political activity
- i. How to locate routine and emergency professional medical help
- j. Facts on local crime and the political situation. You should distribute the State Department's Travel advisories and Consular Information Sheets
- k. Providing student with cards that include daytime and evening telephone numbers and addresses for the program
- l. Retaining a photocopy of the information pages in students' passports

6. Statement of Responsibility

All students who participate in VUU study abroad programs must sign a statement of responsibility that includes all of the language on the next page. The first four items should be agreed to in writing by the student upon application. **Program directors must photocopy each signed Statement of Responsibility for their files and send the originals to the Center.**

**B. Student Release And Waiver**

**Virginia Union University  
Exchange Program Agreement  
(to be signed by student)**

This agreement must be signed and returned to the Center (or insert the name of Director) no later than (insert month, day, year)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree as follows:  
(Student's Full Name)

1. I agree to accept an invitation to participate in the Virginia Union University \_\_\_\_\_ program (hereinafter "Program").

2. I agree to pay all program costs associated with my participation in the Virginia Union University Program. In addition to customary Program costs, I understand that I may incur additional expenses as a participant in the program, and that I will be responsible for any and all additional costs. Examples of such additional costs include, but are not limited to, domestic and international air and ground travel, orientation program fees, airport fees, housing, meals, medical insurance, bank/bureau de change, wire service fees, books, personal

expenses, fees for class, program excursions, passport fees, identification cards, visa fees, photos, vaccinations, costs that may not be foreseeable, and other expenses related to the program.

3. Personal Conduct: I understand that Virginia Union University and the Host Institution have the right and authority to establish rules of conduct, and any other regulations governing Program participants, necessary for the operation of the Program during the entire period of the Program, including free time. I agree to abide by such rules of conduct and other regulations. I understand that Virginia Union University and /or the host Institution has (have) the right to enforce the rules of conduct and other Program regulations, and that I may be dismissed from the Program at any time for failure to comply with such rules of conduct and other regulations.

4. Illegal Drug Use and Other Criminal Acts Policy: The use of illegal drugs and the involvement in any act which constitutes a violation of the policies of Virginia Union University, State, Federal, or host Country law during the entire period of the Program, including free time, is strictly prohibited. In particular, the possession, use of or association with illegal drugs may subject me to severe legal penalties, including the legal penalties of foreign countries. I understand that the consequences for possessing, using, or associating with illegal drugs during the entire period of the Program, including free time, include:

- \*Immediate expulsion from the program
- \*Total forfeiture of all fees paid to the program
- \*Loss of all academic credit

5. Expulsion from the Program: I understand that if my participation in the Program is terminated by Virginia Union University, I will be sent home with no refund of fees. If I am sent home before completion of the program, I agree that I, along with my parents or guardian, will be responsible for any and all costs and expenses associated with my return home. In addition, I will forfeit all academic credit and rights of further participation in any Study Abroad Program. I further acknowledge and understand that, while United States nationals are under the protection of a United States passport, certain acts will place me beyond this protection and that of the U.S. Embassy. Should I experience legal problems with any foreign nationals or foreign governments, I will attend to the matter personally, using my own funds. Virginia Union University does not guarantee what, if any, assistance it can provide under such circumstances.

6. Cancellation: I understand that if I voluntarily leave the Program, for any reason, or am forced to withdraw for reasons beyond my control, I will remain responsible for all Program costs incurred on my behalf prior to such cancellation. I also understand that I will be responsible for the entire cost of the Program until cancellation is received in writing by the Program Director at Virginia Union University. Following formal cancellation, any subsequent payments or potential refunds will be subject to the University Cancellation/Refund Policy. I agree to furnish any documentation requested by the Program Director to assist in determining my eligibility for a refund.

I understand that Virginia Union University and the Host Institution/Country reserve the right to make cancellations, changes or substitutes in the program at any time because of emergency, changed conditions, or the Program Director's determination that such changes or substitutions are in the best interest of the Program or its participants.

7. Medical Treatment: I have full disclosed any health, physical, and or psychological problems that I may have. I authorize Virginia Union University, through its agents and employees, to take whatever action is deemed necessary with respect to my health and safety. I further authorize Virginia Union University, and its agents and employees, to secure medical treatment on my behalf, at their discretion and without further consent, including, but not limited to surgical procedures and the administration of an anesthetic and placement in a hospital or in the care of a local doctor. I agree that I, along with my parents or guardian, will be fully responsible for any and all expenses, including transportation costs associated with or in any way related to my medical care.

8. Emergency Situations: I authorize Virginia Union University to communicate in emergency situations with the contact person(s) provided in my application materials.

9. Insurance Coverage: I understand that I MAY have additional adequate health, accident, disability, and hospitalization insurance to cover myself during participation in the Program, including all times while abroad.

10. Theft and Other Crimes: I agree to release Virginia Union University, its agents and employees from any liability for damage to or loss of my possessions, injury, illness, or death arising out of crimes committed during the period of the Program.

11. Political Unrest. I recognize that in cases of political unrest, an official representative of Virginia Union University will take practical measures for the protection of Program participants. I understand that Virginia Union University, its agents and employees assume no responsibility for damage to or loss of property, injury or death arising out of political unrest.

12. Travel: I understand I will be traveling during the Program by various modes of transportation, including, but not limited to plane, train, bus, or van. I release Virginia Union University, its agents and employees from any responsibility for loss of property, injury or death during such travel. I also understand that during free time within the period of the program, and after the period of the Program, I may elect to travel independently, and/or operate a motor vehicle at my own expense. I agree that Virginia Union University assumes no responsibility for any injury, damage or loss that may result therefrom.

### **Release, Waiver of Liability, And Covenant Not To Sue**

I hereby acknowledge my awareness that my participation in the program may expose me to risk of property damage and bodily or personal injury, including death. I understand that the risks that I may encounter include airplane crashes, motor vehicle accidents, terrorist incidents, political unrest, strikes, sickness and criminal acts, as well as other risks that may not be foreseeable. I hereby assume any and all such risks.

For the sole consideration of Virginia Union University's arranging for my participation in this program, I hereby release and forever discharge Virginia Union University, their members individually, and their officers, agents and employees from any and all claims, demands, rights and causes of action of whatever kind, arising from or by reason of any personal injury, property damage, or the consequences thereof, resulting from or in any way connected with my participation in the Program.

I understand that the acceptance of this Release, Waiver of Liability and Covenant Not to Sue by Virginia Union University shall not constitute a waiver, in whole or in part, of sovereign immunity by said VUU, its members, officers, agents, and employees.

**I certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I have read and understood the above.**

_____ Signature of Student Participant	_____ Date
_____ Student's Full Name (please print)	_____ SS#

\_\_\_\_\_  
Permanent Address: Street, City, State, ZIP Code

_____ Emergency Contact Person	(_____) _____ Telephone #
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\_\_\_\_\_  
Permanent Address: Street, City, State, Zip Code

### **C. Contractual Liability**

This form of liability stems from not providing the services or quality of services that are promised. In order to avoid contractual litigation, you should do the following:

1. Be honest about travel, prices, housing, food, etc
2. Include disclaimers, e.g. prices may vary, services may change, all costs are subject to change because of unanticipated increases in airfares or other program elements or fluctuations in monetary exchange rates
3. Provide adequate services when changes are made
4. Obtain clear, written contracts with service providers that include services, costs, and a refund or alternate plan if first-choice services cannot be provided

## D. Crisis Management

All of the crisis management protocols below require that you contact the Center for International Studies. The telephone numbers are (804) 342-3939 and 342-3937. You should ask for either Dr. David Adewuyi or Mrs. Ida Jones. If neither is available, you should try to reach Vice President for Academic Affairs at (804) 257-5606. During evenings and weekends you may reach the VUU Campus Police at (804) 257-5850.

### When handling any crisis, DOCUMENT YOUR ACTIONS!

#### 1. Medical Emergencies

Before departure you should learn about the general attitudes towards health care in culture, e.g. do doctors hesitate to use potent drugs and take a wait-and-see approach or do they aggressively treat problems? This information will be invaluable in dealing with medical emergencies.

In case of serious medical situations, you are to do the following:

- a. Take a person to a hospital/clinic, verify the nature of the emergency with a doctor, inform health care personnel about chronic medical conditions, and assist with medical insurance paperwork
- b. Obtain the medical help indicated
- c. Contact the Center with the nature of the medical emergency, and keep in regular contact with the Center until the emergency has passed. Advise the Center if the student does NOT want the emergency contact notified
- d. Have the student call the emergency contact. If the student is not available to communicate, the Center will call the contact
- e. If the student is unable to make advance payments for treatment, contact the Center with details. Note: this is a good reason to require that students carry the International Student Identification Card and recommend that they carry credit cards
- f. If the student has not signed authorization for you to obtain medical treatment, seek authorization from the student's contact person. Remember, you are not the student's legal guardian, but you should try your best to get medical attention for him/her
- g. The following is a list of information you should obtain to assess the situation:

- Student's name
- Date of accident or commencement of illness
- Details of injuries, symptoms, present condition, including temperature
- Name and telephone number of attending physician
- Name, address, and telephone number of hospital or clinic, if applicable
- Drugs administered

- X-rays taken and results
- Surgery proposed. Type of anesthesia. Wait for authorization if necessary and possible (work with doctor).

2. Natural Disasters and Group Accidents

In case of earthquake, flood, avalanche, epidemic, bus crash etc., you are to do the following:

- a. See to the safety of all group members
- b. Communicate immediately with the Center as to the safety and state of health of all group members, the group's location, plans, and when you will contact the Center again
- c. Communicate the same information to the nearest American Embassy or Consulate. Diplomatic channels are an alternative way to get information to the Center if public communication fails
- d. Consult with American Embassy/Consulate, local police, local sponsors, etc. for advice on how to respond to the situation
- e. Discuss plans with group members. This may include change of location, change in program schedule, cancellation of the program, or a shift in emphasis in the program
- f. Some students may decide to return home immediately. Of course, this is their prerogative and you should assist in making arrangements
- g. Keep in touch with the Center

3. Civil Disturbance

- a. Be aware of situations and locations that can be potentially dangerous. Warn students and advise them to avoid such areas whenever possible. Discourage or forbid, if necessary, attendance at particularly sensitive political meetings, rallies, or other sizable gatherings
- b. Keep the American Embassy notified of your location at all times if you suspect problems are likely to erupt. Make sure you fully understand evacuation procedures to be followed in case it becomes necessary
- c. Keep the Center informed of developments and follow instructions issued by the American Embassy
- d. Contact the Center as soon as possible in the event of a coup, assassination, riot, revolution, etc. so parents who call may be fully informed

4. Missing Program Participant

- a. Inquire with friends and associates of the missing participant about his or her whereabouts
- b. Notify the American Embassy, local police, and local sponsor(s) and give them your telephone number
- c. Notify the Center at once. The Center will notify the student's emergency contact. Be sure to provide the Center with as many details as possible regarding what happened and what is being done
- d. Check with authorities daily, and inform the Center of any new developments

5. Student(s) Arrested
  - a. Call local law enforcement agency
  - b. Visit student in jail and determine what happened
  - c. Have the student call emergency contact. If student is unable to make call, the Center will call contact
  - d. Report situation to American Embassy or Consulate
  - e. Assist student in obtaining funds for bail if possible
  - f. Notify the Center about incident
  
6. Robbery
  - a. Call local law enforcement agency
  - b. Assist student in obtaining funds to replace stolen money
  - c. Have student call emergency contact
  - d. Notify the Center
  
7. Assault
  - a. Go through medical emergencies protocol in section “1”
  - b. Call local law enforcement agency to report incident
  - c. Notify the Center about the incident
  
8. Rape
  - a. Go through assault protocol in section 7
  - b. Notify the Center about the incident
  - c. Help student find counseling. Keep in mind that in many cultures medical doctors often are the first point of contact for people struggling with emotional or psychological issues
  - d. Help student (if requested or required) return home
  
9. Death of a Student or Faculty Member

If a student or faculty member dies while participating in the program, record all available facts accurately. The atmosphere surrounding the program will be emotionally charged, and it will be difficult to manage the program while handling all of the details listed below. Even so, it is very important that the tasks below are handled promptly and effectively.

Take the following steps if a student or faculty member dies:

- a. If word comes by phone, obtain the identity of the person giving the information
- b. Determine the cause of death-if illness, what illness; if an accident, what kind, where did it happen, who else was involved, etc.
- c. Find out time and place of death
- d. Get name and address of undertaker, if available
- e. Find out participant’s religion. If Catholic, check if last rites have been administered. If Jewish, contact a local Rabbi immediately. For those of other religions, wait until you have heard from the family as to their wishes
- f. If the participant died in a accident, inquire about local laws regarding autopsy;
- g. Find out if anyone has contacted the participant’s family



- h. Contact ISIC and, if applicable, the participant's insurance company for coverage of repatriation of remains

#### Reporting the Information:

- a. Inform the Center immediately. The Center will then inform the participant's family personally
- b. Notify the U.S. Embassy or Consulate

#### Follow-up:

- a. Continue to keep a chronological record of events and actions as they occur
- b. Talk to other student participants and keep them informed and counseled
- c. The Center will give the participant's family as much support as possible
- d. The Center will send a letter of sympathy to the participant's parents
- e. The Center will assist the program director in making arrangements for the repatriation of the body's remains
- f. Gather the participant's belongings and make an inventory
- g. Ship the belongings and inventory to the Center, which will forward everything to the participant's family

### **E. Rules of Behavior and Penalties**

You should establish a set of rules and penalties (first, second, third offense) for breaking these rules that you cover in orientation. These rules should be discussed orally and in writing. **Students may be expelled from the program, with no refund, if clear warning about the consequences of misconduct is given.** Rules should be established for the following:

1. Fighting
2. Theft
3. Destruction of property
4. Excessive drinking
5. Harassment of students, faculty, staff, or host families
6. Absences
7. Non-participation in group activities
8. Dress code (for professional programs)

### **V. Health and Safety Considerations**

#### **A. Guidelines For Program Sponsors**

To the extent reasonably possible, all program sponsors should endeavor to meet these guidelines. It must be noted that both the structure of study abroad programs and the purposes of sponsoring organizations vary widely, and that due to these variations, the guidelines outlined below may be met using different strategies depending on the nature of each program. In particular, program sponsors who rely

heavily on the collaboration of overseas institutions may exercise direct control over specific program components. In such cases, sponsors are urged to share these guidelines with the representatives of these institutions and request that they operate consistently with the health and safety guidelines of the program.

Program Sponsors Should:

1. Conduct periodic assessments of health and safety conditions for the program, and develop and maintain an emergency preparedness and crisis response plan
2. Provide health and safety information for prospective participants so that they can make informed decisions concerning participation in and behavior on the program
3. Notify prospective participants that home campus services and conditions are not replicated at the overseas site
4. Provide orientation to participants prior to the program and as needed on site, which includes information on how to deal with health and safety issues, potential risks, and appropriate emergency response
5. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program
6. Provide to participants either appropriate health insurance, or information about how to obtain coverage
7. Evaluate the local environment of the program, including program sponsored events, excursions and other activities, on an ongoing basis and provide information and assistance to participants as needed. Use reasonable care when selecting any third party to provide products or services
8. Evaluate available medical and professional services, provide information to participants, and help them obtain the services they may need
9. Provide appropriate and ongoing training on health and safety guidelines and practices for program directors and staff
10. Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when aware that students are in violation
11. Inform participants when and where the sponsor's responsibility ends, and what aspects of their overseas experience are beyond sponsor's control

In Particular, Program Sponsors Generally:

- a. Cannot guarantee the safety of participants or eliminate risk from the study abroad environments
- b. Cannot monitor or control all daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants
- c. Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities
- d. Cannot assure that US standards of due process apply or provide or pay for legal representation of participants

- e. Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that arise due to failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information
- f. Cannot assure that home-country cultural values will apply on the program when they differ from those of the host country

## **B. Guidelines For Participants**

Participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

### Participants Should:

1. Read and carefully consider all materials issued or recommended by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries
2. Consider their personal health and safety needs when accepting a place in a program
3. Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience
4. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations
5. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance policies and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers
6. Inform parents, guardians, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program and contact information. Keep them informed on a regular basis
7. Understand and comply with the terms of participation and codes of conduct of the program, and obey host-country laws
8. Be aware of local conditions when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals
9. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well being of others
10. Accept the consequences of their own decisions and actions

## **C. Guidelines for Parents and Guardians**

Parents and guardians play an important role in health and safety of younger participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

### When Appropriate, Parents or Guardians Should:

1. Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor, the Center for Disease Control, the US Department of State, and other sources
2. Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program
3. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues related to the program
4. Be responsive to requests from the program sponsor for information needed regarding the participant
5. Keep in touch with the participant

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