Contents

Introduction: Developing and Managing Learning Abroad Programs

Welcome to the Guidelines for Learning Abroad Programs (for staff). These guidelines provide Western staff with essential insights and practical directions in developing and managing impactful learning abroad experiences for students. Whether you're an experienced project leader or new to the realm of international education, these guidelines will serve as a valuable resource to ensure the successful planning, implementation, and evaluation of overseas programs.

Main Steps

1. **Initial Planning:** Laying the groundwork for the program
2. **Formal Approval:** Securing necessary permissions and endorsements.
3. **Student Recruitment:** Attracting and selecting participants.
4. **Booking Travel:** Organising the logistics
5. **Pre-departure Orientation:** Preparing students for the international experience.
6. **Overseas Experience:** Managing the program on foreign soil.
7. **Evaluation and Feedback:** Assessing the program's impact and gathering insights.

Timeline

To facilitate a Learning Abroad opportunity for students, endorsement is required from relevant delegates, including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International), as well as the Vice Chancellor. Initiating the process approximately **6 to 12 months** prior to departure is recommended, with ultimate approval to be secured **no later than 100 working days** before the scheduled departure.

NOTE

- 100 working days is approximately 20 weeks or 5 months prior to departure.
- Western Sydney International (WSI) will not support study tours that are not within the timeframe and a recommendation will made to postpone or cancel the project.

General Roles and Responsibilities

Project Leader	Western Sydney International (WSI)
1. Program Setup: • Initial Planning: Establishing program groundwork. • Formal Approval: Securing necessary permissions and endorsements.	• Ensuring compliance with policies and processes • Facilitation of the approval process for learning abroad programs

2. Participant Management: • Student Recruitment: Attracting and selecting participants. • Pre-departure Orientation: Preparing students for international experiences. • Overseas Experience: Managing the program abroad. 3. Financial Oversight: • Budget Management: Handling program finances. • Invoice Processing: Managing payments and invoices. 4. Stakeholder Engagement: • Main Contact: Serving as the primary point of contact for stakeholders, including students, international partners, and providers. 5. Program Safety and Reporting: • Ensuring Safety: Ensuring the well-being of participants. • Reporting: Providing updates and reports to WSI, WSU, and government authorities.	• Offering guidance to project leaders and staff • Setting up online resources

Contacts

For NCP and non-NCP Short Programs (new and existing programs):

- **Cammy Chan**
- Administrative Officer, Learning Abroad Government Programs
- International Liaison Officer, New Colombo Plan
- Email: C.Chan2@westernsydney.edu.au

For strategic insights, new ideas, or industry-level advice on Learning Abroad:

- **Steven McDonald**
- Manager, Learning Abroad
- Email: s.mcdonald@westernsydney.edu.au

Section 1: Initial Planning

To ensure a successful Learning Abroad opportunity for students, it is recommended to initiate the planning process a minimum of 12 months ahead of time. This early start allows for meticulous preparation, efficient student recruitment, logistical arrangements, comprehensive risk management, and the acquisition of essential resources. Ultimately, this approach enhances the overall quality of the program.

Additionally, it's crucial to ensure that Formal Approval is obtained at least 100 working days (equivalent to 5 months) before the scheduled departure date. The relevant decision-makers involved in this approval process include the Manager Learning Abroad (Short Programs), School Manager or equivalent, Dean or equivalent, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International), as well as the Vice Chancellor.

Before seeking endorsement, it is imperative to consider the various elements involved in developing an overseas experience for students. Below, you will find key areas that should be taken into account during this process.

Areas of Consideration

- **Program Objectives and Goals**: Define the educational, cultural, and personal development objectives of the program. What do you want participants to learn, experience, and achieve during their time abroad?

- **Host Location**: Opt for a location that aligns with the program's objectives. Take into account various factors including language, culture, safety, climate, seasons, accessibility, and the availability of resources for both learning and exploration.

- **Safety and Risk Management**: Consider the risks for the host location including natural disasters, political stability, health-related concerns, crime rates, cultural sensitivity, local laws, and any other locally relevant factors that might pose a risk to program participants. It's important to note that as part of the Project Proposal approval process, you will be required to complete a comprehensive Risk Assessment and Critical Incident Response Plan, outlining your strategies and preparedness measures to mitigate and manage potential risks.

- **Logistics and Infrastructure**: Plan for accommodations, transportation, and facilities. Ensure that participants have access to comfortable and safe living arrangements, as well as the necessary resources for learning and personal needs. You might also explore the option of enlisting the support of a trusted International Partner Provider (IPP) affiliated with WSU for assistance in this regard.

- **Alignment with the United Nations Sustainability Development Goals (UNSDGs)**: Alignment with the UNSDGs involves ensuring that the educational, cultural, and personal development

goals not only enrich the participants but also contribute to broader global objectives like quality education, reduced inequalities, and sustainable development. This alignment underscores the program's commitment to global responsibility and positive change. Key areas of alignment include supporting Quality Education (SDG 4), addressing and reducing Inequalities (SDG 10), advocating for Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (SDG 16), forging effective Partnerships for the Goals (SDG 17), actively participating in Climate Action (SDG 13), and upholding Gender Equality (SDG 5). As a crucial step in the Project Proposal approval phase, you are expected to clearly demonstrate this alignment with the UNSDGs. For additional information and guidance, refer to WSU's resources on SDGs.

- **Curriculum and Content**: Design a curriculum that aligns with the program's objectives. Determine the courses, workshops, or learning activities that participants will engage in. Consider how the curriculum will integrate with the local culture and environment. Assess how this curriculum will seamlessly integrate into the framework of Western Sydney University and the UNSDGs (above). Determine key details such as the total hours of instruction, prescribed textbooks, assessment methods, and allocation of credit points, among other essential factors. It is advisable to hold discussions regarding this endeavour with the Director of Academic Program (DAP).

- **Diversity and Inclusion**: Create an inclusive environment that respects participants from diverse backgrounds. Address potential challenges related to cultural differences, accessibility, and individual needs.

- **Budget and Funding**: Develop a clear budget that covers all expenses, including tuition, accommodations, meals, transportation, excursions, and administrative costs. Explore funding options, such as New Colombo Plan, Erasmus Plus, and OS-HELP.

- **Legal and Policy Considerations**: What are some of the legal and administrative requirements for the host location, such as visas and permits? What are the Western Sydney University requirements? It is strongly recommended that you review university and government policies and process. See university and governmental standards and policies.

- **Partnerships and Collaboration**: Build relationships with local institutions, organisations, and expert providers who can contribute to the program's success. Collaborate to enhance the learning experience and access local resources. We strongly advise that you to engage in collaboration with institutions that already maintain a partnership with Western. See Partnerships resource or reach out to the WSI Go Global team for further guidance.

Worksheet

To assist you in addressing these key areas, feel free to download and complete the Initial Planning worksheet. This resource is tailored for your personal use and intended to support your planning efforts.

Engagement with Your School or Department

Before you start, it is recommended to have initial discussions about this project with the Director of Academic Program (DAP), your supervisor, Deputy Dean, and School Manager. Please note that these are preliminary discussions, and the final proposal will not be available until it has been approved by the Manager Learning Abroad (Short Programs) at Western Sydney International. See Section 2: Formal Approval.

Tips

As a project leader, asking for advice when necessary is crucial. Find experts and gather input from individuals with diverse viewpoints, including colleagues, past project leaders, providers, and overseas institutions. Don't hesitate to seek advice early, test it when feasible, and remember that seeking advice can result in improved decisions and enhanced relationships. If you need more information, feel free to reach out to Western Sydney International.

Areas of Responsibility

Project Leader	School	Department	Western Sydney International (WSI)
Submit a Preliminary Proposal and arrange a meeting with WSI. Engage with School to communicate your intentions and ideas. Sharing your plans will help align the program's objectives with academic goals with School strategy.	Discuss admin, workload, and other school/department related aspects.	WSI collaborates with project leaders to offer guidance on project design, funding, budgeting, risk management, partnerships, compliance, and other aspects. It is common to have multiple interactions with WSI. Additionally, WSI may communicate with the School or department regarding the project leader's intentions. It's important to note that WSI's primary role is to offer advice to project leaders and ensure adherence to policies and processes. However, the overall project management is not within their scope of responsibility

How should I begin?

To kickstart the process, follow the steps below:

1. **Download and fill out the Preliminary Planning Worksheet**: Start by completing the [Initial Planning worksheet](#), which serves as a valuable resource for your personal reference and assists in your planning.

2. **Submit an Initial Proposal and set up a meeting with WSI**: Submit a [Preliminary Proposal](#) and coordinate a meeting with WSI. During this meeting, WSI will provide extensive guidance covering every stage of the project, from the Project Proposal phase to the post-program evaluation following participants' return from overseas.

3. **Engage with Your School**: Meet with representatives from your School to communicate your intentions and ideas. Sharing your plans with your School will help align the program's objectives with academic goals and potential collaborations.

Once you have completed these steps and are satisfied with your preliminary planning, it's time to proceed to the Formal Approval stage.

Section 2: Formal Approval

A project proposal is a formal document outlining a proposed overseas activity. The proposal typically outlines the project's goals, objectives, activities, budget, timeline, and any other documents including a Critical Incident Management Plan, Risk Assessment, and International Partner Proposal. It serves as a comprehensive plan that guides the implementation of the project while aligning with the educational goals of the learning abroad program. Typically, the Proposal undergoes review by specific departments and delegates, including:

1. WSI – Manager Learning Abroad
2. School or Institute – Manager or relevant delegate
3. School or Institute – Dean or relevant delegate
4. Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research, Enterprise and International)
5. Vice Chancellor and President

The final endorsement must be obtained no later than **100 working days (equivalent to 5 months)** before the departure date. The project proposal is a mandatory requirement of Western Sydney University and the Australian Government (NCP only). Marketing and recruitment activities must not commence until the Program Proposal has been formally approved by your School or Department.

Consultation Before Submitting a Project Proposal

All project leaders should meet with Western Sydney International (WSI) prior to submitting a Project Proposal. During this meeting, WSI will advise about the Proposal, budget, Critical Incident Management Plan, Risk Assessment, International Partner Proposal, and other aspects pertaining to the project's life cycle. To schedule a meeting with Cammy Chan, please visit the booking page or email her at C.Chan2@westernsydney.edu.au.

Steps for Submitting a Learning Abroad Project Proposal

1. Begin by downloading the following documents:

   - **Project Proposal**: This document encompasses project specifics, travel arrangements, financial considerations including a budget, and requisite authorisations. It also includes the:
     - Critical Incident Management Plan (CIMP): The CIMP contains vital information such as personnel, contacts, and emergency resources. It covers essential topics such as International SOS, PSEAH (Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment), Child Protection, Modern Slavery, and Foreign Interference.

o Risk Assessment (RA): This document facilitates the identification and mitigation of potential hazards throughout the project's duration. Comprehensive guidance on conducting risk assessments can be found on the Understanding Risk Assessments webpage.

If you are developing a project proposal for independent travellers (non-group), such as exchange or work experience, fill out the *Project Proposal (independent)* document, found on the Formal Approval webpage.

- **International Partner Provider Proposal** (IPPP) (if necessary): International Partner Providers (IPPs) play a crucial role in enhancing the learning abroad experience. They undergo a rigorous evaluation process and offer a range of services, including study tours, accommodations, internships, and cultural excursions. If an IPP is involved in the project, they are required to submit an International Partner Provider Proposal, which can be appended to the Project Proposal. Detailed information about IPPs can be found on the International Partner Providers webpage.

All of the above documents are accessible on the Formal Approval webpage.

2. Complete all of the required documents. You may have multiple interactions with WSI during this stage for guidance and clarification.

3. Upload the fully filled-out documents to WSI through Western Now

4. WSI will review the submitted documents, offer guidance, and then forward the final versions to the relevant delegates for approval.

The Project Proposal Budget

The Project Proposal includes a comprehensive budget that takes into account program expenses, income sources, student contributions, staff expenditures, and the overall project costs. Throughout the consultation process, WSI will provide guidance on navigating the complexities of budgeting. See Example Budget.

- **Income from student contributions:** Learning Abroad projects often receive partial funding from OS-HELP and/or New Colombo Plan (NCP) grants. OS-HELP is a deferred debt loan available to Australian citizens enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place for overseas studies. It covers expenses such as airfares and accommodations, with loans exceeding $8,000 accessible. Students can access a total of two loans, subject to HECS-HELP repayment conditions. For more information, please refer to OS-HELP.

- **Project Account**: WSI will engage in discussions concerning the establishment of a project account. The project account plays a crucial role during the project's lifecycle, serving as the repository for NCP funds and/or student contributions (income), as well as the source for settling invoices and covering other expenditures. It is important to note that the ultimate responsibility for managing the project account lies with the project leader and the respective School/Department.

- **One Stop**: As part of this process, WSI will create a One Stop shopping cart. This cart is used for the collection of student payments (income).

- **Contingency**: Consideration for adding a buffer of around 15% on top of the final total expenditure is generally considered a good practice in project management. This helps to account for unexpected expenses, changes in scope, or unforeseen challenges that can arise during the project lifecycle. It provides a cushion to mitigate cost overruns and ensures that the project remains within budget even if certain variables change.

Roles and Responsibilities

Project Leader	School	Department	Western Sydney International (WSI)
Meet with WSI. Submit a Project Proposal.	Approves or rejects project proposal.	In-depth consultation and review of project proposal. Set up of project account and One Stop. Approves or rejects project proposal. Sends project proposal to the School and relevant delegates for approval.

Section 3: Recruiting Students

Effective recruitment strategies are vital in attracting student participation in learning abroad programs. This section provides an overview of tools and communication strategies available to project leaders and support staff to maximise student engagement.

Maximising Student Engagement with the Go Global Portal (Terra Dotta)

Why Use the Go Global Portal?

The Go Global Portal is not just a beneficial tool; it's a compulsory aspect of program management and the student recruitment strategy. Here's why it's indispensable:

- **Streamlined Recruitment Process**: The portal's intuitive interface dramatically simplifies the complexities of application management and student communication, making the recruitment process smoother and more efficient for staff.
- **Enriched Student Experience**: With its user-friendly design, the portal offers students a seamless experience where they can easily explore various programs, understand their prerequisites, and complete essential pre-departure steps. This accessibility enhances their overall engagement and readiness for international study.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making**: Leverage the power of analytics within the portal to inform and refine your recruitment strategies. By analysing student preferences and trends, you can make data-driven decisions that align with your goals.
- **Mandatory for Compliance and Consistency**: Using the Go Global Portal is a mandatory requirement, ensuring that all program advertising, student applications, and pre-departure preparations adhere to university and government standards and regulations. This uniformity is crucial for maintaining high standards of program quality, safety, and compliance.

Portal Features

- **Dedicated Webpages**: Create engaging brochures and online applications.
- **Comprehensive Management**: Efficiently manage program administration, from selection to pre-departure.
- **Health and Safety Compliance**: Ensure adherence to policy acknowledgments and health information sharing.

Comprehensive Learning Modules in the Go Global Portal for Students

When students submit an application via the Go Global Portal, they complete learning modules and questionnaires on various important topics, ensuring they are well-prepared for their study abroad experience. These modules are designed to provide comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of studying abroad. The following areas are covered in detail:

- **Conditions of Participation**: Students are informed about the expectations and responsibilities associated with participating in an overseas programme. This includes adherence to both local laws and Western Sydney University policies.

- **Academic Approval**: The portal outlines the process for obtaining academic approval, ensuring that the overseas study aligns with their degree requirements.

- **Mental Health**: Resources and guidelines are provided to help students maintain mental health while abroad. Information on available support services, both on-site and remotely, is also included.

- **Go Global Grant**: Detailed information on the Go Global Grant, including eligibility and application procedures, assists students in their financial preparations for the journey.

- **OS-HELP**: Students receive guidance on the OS-HELP loan scheme, which supports international study expenses, covering aspects such as eligibility and application processes.

- **Centrelink Payments:** For those receiving Centrelink benefits, the portal explains how to ensure the continuity of these payments while studying abroad.

- **International SOS (ISOS)**: This section introduces students to ISOS services, emphasising access to support for health, safety, and emergency situations.

- **Passports and Travel Visas**: Essential information on passport validity and the visa application process.

- **Cultural Awareness in Learning Abroad**: This module enhances students' understanding and respect for the cultural norms and practices of their host country.

- **Vaccinations**: Advises students on necessary vaccinations and health preparations.

- **Bullying and Cyber-Harassment**: Addresses the recognition, prevention, and response to bullying and cyber-harassment, ensuring students' safety in both online and offline environments.

- **Child Protection**: Educates students on the importance of child protection, particularly relevant for those who will be working with minors during their learning abroad program.

- **Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)**: This critical module focuses on educating students about recognising, preventing, and reporting sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in an international context.

These modules are integral to preparing our students for the diverse challenges and opportunities they may encounter while learning abroad. By completing these modules, students not only gain knowledge but also develop a deeper understanding and respect for different cultures and environments. We encourage all staff to familiarise themselves with this information, which can be found in Section **5: Pre-departure Orientation**.

WSI Support for the Go Global Portal

WSI staff will provide comprehensive support, including:

- In-Depth Consultation: Collaborative efforts with project leaders to meet program objectives.
- Brochure and Application Setup: Assistance in designing and setting up online materials.
- Regular Updates: Timely updates on application statuses and student inquiries.
- Effective Promotion: Use of platforms like Engage and vUWS to enhance program visibility.

Getting Started with the Go Global Portal

To list a program, initiate the process by submitting a brochure request through WesternNow. WSI will guide you through approval processes and program implementation.

We encourage you to visit the Go Global Portal to discover its full potential. For more information about the backend capabilities, please contact Western Sydney International.

Enhancing Outreach and Recruitment

- Integration with vUWS for Wider Reach
- WSI will feature your project on the Go Global vUWS page, which is accessible to all students.
- Consider contacting your school to include the opportunity on a School vUWS site.

Additional promotional strategies

- Design a handout for distribution at lectures and across campus
- Establish an online presence – share your program details on platforms like Yammer and various social media channels
- Craft a concise, one-page PowerPoint presentation for brief introduction at the beginning of lectures and for distribution among colleagues
- Encourage current and past students to promote your program on their social media networks
- Organise information sessions to provide detailed insights about the program

Ensuring Ethical Advertising and Transparency

Adhere to ACCC guidelines, avoid misleading claims, and communicate program costs clearly, excluding airfares.

Application Timeline and Logistics

Student recruitment must be finalised **no later than 60 working days** before departure (equivalent to approximately 12 weeks or 3 months).

Due to administrative and logistical requirements, including the payment of invoices, applications should not be re-opened after the **agreed closing date**.

Students may require OS-HELP, which can take up to 25 working days to process (slightly more than a month).

After the closing date, WSI will send the student information to the project leader for selection. Selected students will be required to complete several tasks which may include committing to the program, paying deposit and final payment, and provide other details for travel bookings.

Student Selection Process

There are many different methods used to evaluate students for an overseas experience. This may include assessing academic achievement, Grade Point Average, a statement of purpose, knowledge about a country or program etc. When creating your online brochure, WSI will discuss the method you would like to use and how students will be selected.

Commitment and Financial Considerations

To book flights, a significant non-refundable deposit is often necessary (refer to Step 4: Booking Travel). Therefore, confirming student commitment to the program is crucial. It's advisable to obtain a non-refundable deposit from all participants through the Payments portal, ensuring their engagement. This aspect should be addressed in discussions with WSI.

Deposits, Cancellations, and Refund Policies

Establish clear cancellation and refund policies. Decide on the necessity and amount of program deposits, and ensure participants are informed of these policies.

Sample Policy Statements

- Cancellation and Refund Policy: Outline liabilities for program deposits and penalties upon cancellation.
- Fee Change Statement: Communicate potential fee variations due to external factors.
- Program Cancellation Statement: Clarify the university's rights to cancel programs for various reasons.
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Roles and Responsibilities

Project Leader	School | Department	Western Sydney International (WSI)
Finalising details for the student application process, which includes providing details on: - Program overview - Academic information - Relevant study areas/disciplines	The School has the responsibility to assist the project leader in several key areas: Creating an online presence for the project on platforms such as vUWS, Yammer, and other social media channels.	WSI's responsibilities include: - Conducting comprehensive consultations with the project leader. - Establishing an online brochure and application form.

• Minimum GPA requirement (if applicable) • Dates (start/end) • Closing date (3 months PRIOR to departure) • Student contributions including deposit and final payments • Main contact for student enquiries Requesting a brochure through WesternNow. Actively marketing the project and engaging with the student.	Arranging and reserving spaces for hosting informational sessions. Facilitating communication with students regarding the project.	• Supplying the project leader with the corresponding web link. • Regularly updating the project leader on progress and developments. • Advertising the program through platforms like Engage and vUWS.

Section 4: Booking Travel

Project leaders are responsible for organising international travel for learning abroad programs. Coordinating group travel can be a complex undertaking, particularly for project leaders at Western Sydney University who manage various duties, including teaching and research. The university acknowledges the complexities of arranging group travel and provides support to streamline this process. For guidance with TEMS or other travel-related procedures, feel free to reach out to travel team travel@westernsydney.edu.au or visit the Travel webpage. The dedicated team is ready to offer detailed guidance through each step of the process.

The upcoming sections will detail the essential steps and responsibilities required to efficiently organise and book group travel via the university.

Booking Group Travel

Before proceeding with group travel arrangements, the project leader must ensure the following:

A minimum of 10 travellers

A list of "committed" students

An Approved Project Proposal

WSU project account number

Quote from WSU travel agent

- A group comprising at least 10 individuals, including both students and staff members.
- A list of "committed" students who have paid a non-refundable deposit, in addition to any staff joining the trip. This list is to be finalised by WSI, after the closure of applications on the Go Global Portal.
- A fully approved Project Proposal, which should encompass a detailed budget, an itinerary, Group Travel Risk Assessment, a Critical Incident Management Plan, and an International Partner Provider Program Proposal.
- The specific WSU project account number, which is necessary for making travel bookings via TEMS. This number is available in the Project Proposal document.
- A quote from the University's travel agent, FCM.

Initiating a Quote for Group Travel

To initiate a quote for group travel, the Project Leader/Travel Arranger completes the following steps:

1. Submit a General Finance Enquiry to Western Now and request a quote for a group travel booking.
2. Submit a Group Travel Request in TEMS. This should include the itinerary, number of students and staff for the group booking, project description, cost centre and project account details, and travel start and end dates, and New Colombo Plan government reference number (if relevant).
3. Negotiate and discuss the options with the University's travel agent, FCM.

For any guidance or inquiries, you are welcome to contact the travel team at travel@westernsydney.edu.au.

Finalising Flight Bookings

Upon receipt of the full program fees from all enrolled students and the collection of necessary funds, the Project Leader/Travel Arranger should undertake the following steps:

1. Validate and agree to the quoted price from FCM.
2. Upload the approved and signed Project Proposal, list of participants, traveller information, and any other required documents to TEMS
3. Notify travel@westernsydney.edu.au that the supporting documents have been uploaded and are ready for the Vice Chancellors approval.

Once approved, the flights will be booked, and tickets will be issued.

Managing Group Flight Deposits

Securing a group flight often requires a substantial initial payment to the airline or travel agency. The project leader bears the responsibility for overseeing the budget and addressing any financial discrepancies that might occur. To prevent monetary complications, it is highly advisable to gather non-refundable deposits from all students participating in the trip prior to obtaining a quote or making any payments. This approach helps guarantee adequate funding for the group flight costs and affirms the commitment of all participants to the journey.

Invoice Payment for Learning Abroad Projects

When invoices related to a Learning Abroad project are received, it is the project leader's duty to ensure their payment. This involves coordinating with the relevant School to process the payment and handling any associated follow-up activities.

For payment details, the project leader should refer to the Project Proposal, where the project account information is provided. To proceed with invoice payment, the project leader should contact the School Manager, providing:

- The purpose for the payment.
- The invoice in question.
- Project account details as outlined in Section 5 of the Project Proposal.
- A link to the relevant webpage for reference.

The School Manager might delegate this responsibility to an Administrative Officer within the School. They may also inquire if a Purchase Order has been generated for the invoice, as detailed in the Purchase Orders section.

Guidance on Purchase Orders

For projects involving an International Partner Provider contracted by Western Sydney University, the requirement for a Purchase Order is waived. Further information about the provider can be found on the International Partner Provider webpage.

Note for Payment Processing Officers

When processing the invoice in Basware, it's important to note, "This supplier is one of our preferred providers and is on the supplier list. A Purchase Order is not required." Additional details on creating Purchase Orders are available in the WesternNow Knowledge article.

Roles and Responsibilities

Project Leader	Travel Team	Western Sydney International (WSI)
Completes the Western Now General Finance Enquiry Form.

Create a travel request in TEMS to initiate request for airfare quotes. | Provides walkthroughs on how to navigate TEMS and the travel process.

Offers general guidance throughout the process. | Sends final approved Project Proposal to project leader.

Collates information and provides final list of students to project leader.

Provides general guidance. |

Negotiates and discusses options with the University travel agent FCM. Payment of invoices.		

Section 5: Preparing for Departure

In Section 3: Recruiting Students, it was explained that when students submit an application via the Go Global Portal, they complete learning modules and questionnaires on various important topics, ensuring they are well-prepared for their learning abroad experience. These modules are designed to provide comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the key aspects of learning abroad. The areas covered include Conditions of Participation, Academic Approval, Mental Health, Go Global Grant, OS-HELP, Centrelink Payments, International SOS (ISOS), Passports and Travel Visas, Cultural Awareness, Vaccinations, Bullying and Cyber-Harassment, Child Protection, and Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) and more.

Additional information can be found in the Important Resources area at the bottom of this section.

It is now time to provide project-specific information to students. To achieve this, we highly recommend providing students with detailed and extensive information about the programme, encompassing areas such as:

- Programme Overview and Requirements: A clear explanation of the programme's objectives, structure, and requirements for participation.
- Itinerary and Accommodation Details: A complete travel schedule, including accommodation arrangements, transportation logistics, and essential contact details for each location.
- Travel Documentation: Guidance on necessary travel documents, such as passports and visas, including how to apply for them and their deadlines.
- Health and Safety Protocols: Provide information about required vaccinations and how to use International SOS for support or during emergencies.
- Cultural Orientation: Insights into the local customs, etiquette, and societal norms of the destination, aiding students in adapting to cultural differences and preventing misunderstandings.
- Clothing: Providing guidance on appropriate clothing is essential for ensuring that students are comfortable and respectful of local customs and weather conditions.
- Language Resources: If a different language is spoken at the destination, provide basic language learning tools and helpful phrases.
- Emergency Contacts: A comprehensive list of emergency contacts, including International SOS' details and program leader information.
- Financial Guidance: Tips on managing finances abroad, including advice on currency exchange, credit/debit card usage, and budgeting strategies.
- Communication Tools: Information about mobile phones and SIM card options for staying connected abroad.
- Packing Guidelines: Recommendations on what to pack, considering the destination's climate, cultural norms, and specific requirements of the study tour.

- Code of Conduct and Expectations: Clear expectations for student behaviour, emphasizing compliance with local laws and institutional policies while overseas (see Conditions of Participation below).
- Digital Tools: A curated list of helpful apps and websites for navigation, language translation, and other relevant resources.
- Sustainable and Responsible Travel Tips: Advice on environmentally and socially responsible travel practices, underscoring the importance of respecting the local environment and communities.
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) Awareness: Educate students about the UNSDGs, encouraging them to consider how their experiences and actions during the programme can contribute to these global objectives. This can include promoting understanding and engagement with issues such as sustainability, cultural sensitivity, and global citizenship.

Best Practice for Conducting Program-Specific Information Sessions

Here are several effective strategies for conducting informative and engaging program-specific sessions:

1. Host University Collaboration: Coordinate with the host university or overseas program provider to present detailed insights about the overseas program.

2. Engage Local Experts: Incorporate presentations by local experts to provide in-depth knowledge about specific topics relevant to the destination.*

3. Pre-Session Assignments: Assign students tasks to complete before the pre-departure session, focusing on practical, action-oriented content that simulates scenarios they might encounter abroad.

4. Evaluate Student Understanding: Gauge students' comprehension of the program through assessments and use this feedback to refine future sessions.

5. Incorporate Student Ambassadors: Involve students who have previously participated in the program in planning and conducting the pre-departure session. Their firsthand experiences can offer valuable perspectives to new participants.

Important Notice: Due to the large number of learning abroad programs offered (exceeding 200) at Western Sydney University, WSI does not have the capacity or resources to be involved in program-specific information sessions.

Roles and Responsibilities

Project Leader	Western Sydney International (WSI)
Responsible for ensuring students are provided with tailored, program-specific information relevant to the overseas activity.	Maintain information on Go Global Portal, including tutorials, videos on conditions of participation, passports, visas, emergencies, etc.

Important Resources and Information (in Alphabetical Order)

Centrelink Considerations for Students

Students that apply via the Go Global Portal are provided with an official letter documentation from Western Sydney University confirming that they are:

- Engaged in an international activity related to their current degree.
- Intending to return to Western Sydney University to resume their degree.

If a student is receiving Centrelink payments, they are to provide the government with this letter. Additional details regarding Centrelink's policies for overseas travel can be accessed on the Centrelink webpage titled " Travelling outside Australia." You are also welcome to use the WSU Centrelink video in your information sessions. Keep in mind that students might have previously watched this video while applying via the Go Global Portal.

Child Protection in Learning Abroad

Australia, as a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, is committed to prioritising children's rights and welfare, especially in Global Learning projects. At Western Sydney University (WSU), anyone working with children in these projects must adhere to both the university's Working with Children Policy and the Australian Government Child Protection Policy. Child abuse is defined as physical, emotional, sexual abuse, or neglect, while exploitation includes various harmful practices. For more information, one can contact the DFAT's Child Protection Compliance Section.

In case of incidents, reporting is crucial. At WSU, any child sexual misconduct or physical assault should be reported immediately. Additionally, suspicions or allegations of child exploitation or abuse in programs linked to DFAT must be reported on the DFAT website.

To aid in awareness, the WSU Child Protection video can be used in information sessions, although students may have already seen it through the Go Global Portal.

Further information:

- Western Sydney University's [Working with Children Policy](#)
- The Australian Government [Child Protection Policy](#)
- DFAT Child Protection Compliance Section, phone +61 2 6178 5100 or email childprotection@dfat.gov.au

Clothing

Providing guidance on appropriate clothing is essential for ensuring that students are comfortable and respectful of local customs and weather conditions.

- **Research Local Norms and Customs**: Encourage students to research the cultural norms regarding clothing in the host country. Some cultures have specific dress codes, especially in religious or traditional settings. Emphasising the importance of respecting these norms can prevent unintentional disrespect.
- **Consider Weather and Climate**: Advise students to consider the local climate and weather patterns when packing. They should be prepared for the range of weather conditions they might encounter, including rain, heat, or cold, depending on the destination and time of year.
- **Versatile and Practical Choices**: Suggest packing versatile clothing that can be layered. Clothes that are comfortable for walking and suitable for a variety of activities, from formal events to outdoor excursions, are ideal.
- **Special Clothing Items**: Inform students if there are specific clothing items they should bring, such as swimwear for coastal regions, hiking gear for outdoor activities, or formal wear for special occasions.
- **Sensitivity to Local Culture**: Stress the importance of dressing modestly where appropriate. This may include covering shoulders and knees, especially in religious or conservative areas.
- **Footwear**: Advise on appropriate footwear. Comfortable walking shoes are a must, and special footwear like hiking boots or sandals might be necessary depending on the activities planned.

By providing comprehensive clothing guidance, students can pack appropriately, ensuring they are comfortable, respectful of the local culture, and prepared for the activities planned during their stay.

Conditions of Participation and Leader Responsibilities

Western Sydney University (WSU) mandates high standards of personal and professional behaviour for students participating in overseas programs. Students are required to respect obligations to the University, the host location, and fellow participants. This includes adhering to University policies and ensuring personal and group safety. Non-compliance may lead to program removal without a refund, and the obligation to repay any received grants or scholarships. Agreement to these conditions is a part of the application process through the Go Global Portal.

Trip Leaders have the authority to remove students from the program for significant risks, law violations, or actions endangering themselves or others. Such decisions, needing prior supervisor approval, end the student's program participation, making them responsible for their safety and subsequent arrangements.

Trip Leaders are responsible for briefing participants on several key topics before departure:

- **Expectations and Responsibilities**: Emphasising adherence to local laws, university policies, and maintaining safety.
- **Consequences of Misconduct**: Discussing potential repercussions like removal from the program, financial liabilities, and academic consequences.
- **Support and Assistance**: Providing information on available support for issues during the program.
- **Communication and Respect**: Encouraging open communication and mutual respect among participants.

For comprehensive guidelines on student conduct and responsibilities during group travel, the Student Misconduct in Learning Abroad Programs (Group Travel) webpage should be consulted. Additionally, the WSU Conditions of Participation video is available for use in information sessions, though some students might have already seen it via the Go Global Portal."

Contacting Western Sydney International

- **Students**: To get in touch with the Go Global team, students are required to submit an enquiry or schedule a personal advising session.

- **Staff**:

For NCP and non-NCP Short Programs (new and existing programs):

- o **Cammy Chan**
- o Administrative Officer, Learning Abroad Government Programs
- o International Liaison Officer, New Colombo Plan
- o Email: C.Chan2@westernsydney.edu.au

For strategic insights, new ideas, or industry-level advice on Learning Abroad:

- o **Steven McDonald**
- o Manager, Learning Abroad
- o Email: s.mcdonald@westernsydney.edu.au

Cultural Diversity and Awareness

Cultural diversity represents the varied cultures and ethnic groups in a society, including their traditions, languages, values, and lifestyles. For students studying abroad, cultural awareness is vital,

fostering understanding, empathy, and improved communication in our globally interconnected world.

The SBS SBS Cultural Atlas is an important tool for understanding the cultural heritage of Australia's immigrant communities, offering insights into various cultures and promoting unity and inclusivity. Students are encouraged to use the Cultural Atlas to better understand the diverse society in multicultural countries like Australia.

In the context of intercultural communications, it's crucial to recognise that despite globalisation, cultures vary significantly in values and communication styles. This understanding is essential for effective intercultural interactions, especially among students from diverse backgrounds.

Culture shock is a common phase for students abroad, characterised by initial fascination, followed by frustration, gradual adjustment, and eventual adaptation. The intensity and duration of culture shock can vary. To adapt, students should remain open-minded, respect local traditions, engage with the local culture, and develop effective communication skills.

Provided below are some relevant documents provided by the Australian Government:

- Exploring Culture
- Intercultural Communication.
- Tips and Strategies for the Asian Region 1
- Tips and Strategies for the Asian Region 2

Emergencies and Critical Incidents (ISOS)

In case of an emergency overseas, Western Sydney University advises contacting International SOS (ISOS), our emergency assistance provider. ISOS offers a comprehensive service including emergency and medical advice, insurance claim assistance, and communication coordination. Travelers should download the International SOS App and refer to the Go Global International SOS webpage for details.

First Aid

Prior to leading students abroad, it is essential to obtain a first aid certificate. For information on acquiring this certification, including available courses and necessary steps, please refer to the Work Health and Safety webpage at Western Sydney University:
https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/whs/whs/incident_management/first_aid

Go Global Grants

Go Global grants are available for students participating in approved activities, including the Exchange Program, short programs, and work experience. Students funded by the New Colombo Plan or other areas, **are not** eligible.

For semester exchange, students can receive up to $1,750, while for short programs or work experience, grants of up to $500 are available. To receive the grant, students must register their participation via the Go Global Portal and fulfil the post-decision requirements. Students apply for a Go Global Grant through [Western Now](#).

Insurance for Travelling

Western's corporate travel insurance covers students and staff on approved University activities, but it has limitations. It does not cover personal travel before or after University activities or high-risk activities. For additional coverage, travellers can consider Chubb Travel Insurance.

The policy excludes coverage for several situations:

- Travel against DFAT advice (e.g., Do Not Travel recommendations).
- Pre-existing medical conditions, except in emergencies without disregarding doctor's advice.
- High-risk activities unrelated to University business, including extreme sports and motorbike riding.
- Illegal or reckless behaviour.
- Pregnancy and childbirth-related issues.
- Incidents under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Non-unforeseen expenses, like cancellation costs for expected events.

Note that this is not an exhaustive list and is subject to change.

It is strongly advised that all travellers consult [Western's Overseas Travel Insurance](#) webpage for the most up-to-date information. For more information or enquiries regarding this insurance, please contact Leah Dincog, Senior Operations Accountant on 02 4570 1217 or l.dincog@westernsydney.edu.au

International SOS (ISOS)

Western Sydney University utilises International SOS, a global service specialising in medical and travel security for international travellers and workers. International SOS provides comprehensive services, including telemedicine, emergency evacuation, travel safety advice, crisis management during emergencies like natural disasters, around-the-clock support centres, tailored destination information, and a mobile app for ongoing alerts and assistance. This collaboration is vital for ensuring the safety and well-being of the university's community during global travels. **See "Emergencies and Critical Incidents (ISOS)"**

Mental Health

Almost half of Australian adults will experience a mental illness at some point during their life. Mood disorders, anxiety, substance abuse and other conditions do not discriminate, and can affect anyone. A person's mental health affects how they feel, think, behave, and relate to others. Therefore, it is important that students are comfortable with their prospective learning abroad program. Further, the Australian Government stresses that anyone travelling abroad is subject to foreign jurisdictions, which may view mental illness different from back at home. Consequently, it is important to thoroughly research the destination and determine if there are any concerns that may trigger mental health concerns.

Should a participant encounter any obstacles potentially impacting their travel or experience in the host country, they are encouraged to reach out to International SOS (ISOS). In addition, Western Sydney University offers confidential counselling services, accessible well before departure. The University's free and confidential service is staffed by experienced social workers and psychologists, trained to support a wide range of student concerns. These services, available online or in-person, are designed to provide advice and strategies for managing mental health both overseas and at home. For additional information, students are encouraged to visit the Western Sydney University counselling service webpage.

New Colombo Plan

The New Colombo Plan Mobility Program (NCP) provides funding to Australian universities and consortia to support Australian undergraduate students to participate in semester-based or short-term study, internships, mentorships, practicums and research in 40 host locations across the Indo-Pacific region. For more details visit the Western Sydney University NCP Mobility Program webpage.

OS-HELP

A large majority of learning abroad programs at Western Sydney University are funded by OS-HELP. This is a deferred HELP debt loan for Australian citizens enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place who want to undertake some of their study overseas. Loans over $8,000 are available. Academic approval is required; have completed 80 credit points of study and have 10 credit points remaining on return. OS-HELP can be used for a range of expenses such as airfares, accommodation and other travel or study expenses. Students can access a total of two OS-HELP loans over their lifetime. The debt has the same repayment conditions as HECS-HELP and are indexed accordingly

Partnerships

International partnerships at Western Sydney University involve formal agreements with other institutions and companies to support various aspects of the learning abroad experience. These

agreements may cover research, scholarships, transnational education, learning abroad, training, capacity building, professional development, and clinical placements. For more details on these agreements, one can visit [International Partnerships](#).

Additionally, International Partner Providers (IPPs) are companies contracted by the university to facilitate services that enhance the learning abroad experience. Services provided by IPPs range from developing study tours and work placements to organising cultural excursions and providing onsite training. They also offer essential support to students, including airport pickup, transportation, accommodation, mental health support, and visa assistance. Further information on IPPs and their services can be found in the [International Partner Providers webpage](#).

Passports

A passport is an official travel document issued by a government that contains a person's identity and nationality of its holder. All travellers should have more than 6 months until expiration from the date of your return. To apply for a passport, travellers are encouraged to apply early, since there is a high demand for passport services. Make sure to watch the [explainer video about visas](#).

Further information:

- Australian citizens: the [Australian Passport Office](#)
- Non-citizens: [foreign consulate](#)s

Paying invoices

The responsibility for the payment of invoices rests with the project leader. This task requires coordination with the respective School or department to facilitate the payment process and manage any subsequent follow-up tasks.

To facilitate payment, the project leader must reference the Project Proposal, which contains essential project account information. Upon receiving an invoice, the project leader should promptly reach out to the School Manager, providing the following details:

- The specific purpose of the payment.
- The invoice that needs to be paid.
- Project account details as outlined in the Project Proposal.

The School Manager might delegate this responsibility to an Administrative Officer within the School. They may also inquire if a Purchase Order has been generated for the invoice, as detailed in the Purchase Orders section.

Guidance on Purchase Orders

For projects involving an [International Partner Provider](#) contracted by Western Sydney University, the requirement for a Purchase Order is waived. When processing the invoice in Basware, it's important to note, "This supplier is one of our preferred providers is on the supplier list. A Purchase Order is not required." Additional details on creating Purchase Orders are available on WesternNow Knowledge article.

Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH)

Western Sydney University and the Australian Government have a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade's (DFAT) Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policy establishes clear behaviour expectations and standards for all individuals and organisations, both in Australia and abroad. Under this policy, university project leaders and partner organisations must engage in comprehensive due diligence and risk mitigation, adhering to the [DFAT SEAH policy](#) and the [Western Sydney University Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy](#). Students at Western Sydney University are obligated to:

- Read the [DFAT SEAH policy](#).
- Complete the WSU [Respectful Relationships training](#).

For support, students aware of or personally experiencing unwanted incidents can access services through the Office of Equity and Diversity. There are two avenues for reporting incidents:

- [The Australian Government SEAH website](#)
- [WSU Sexual Harassment and Sexual Assault](#)

If a SEAH incident does occur during a program it must be reported in the WSU [Sexual Offences Reporting Portal](#) (SORP) either directly by the student/staff themselves or on their behalf.

These measures ensure a committed approach to preventing and addressing sexual misconduct within the university community.

Policies and Processes

Visit the Western Sydney University "[Policies and Procedures for Learning Abroad Programs](#)" webpage. This site serves as a comprehensive guide to ensure the successful and safe execution of learning abroad activities offered by Western Sydney University. This site outlines the essential framework and guidelines governing the administration, participation, and management of learning abroad programs.

Smartraveller

Smartraveller, run by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, equips Australians with essential travel advice and information for overseas journeys. It offers detailed country-specific advisories, a travel registration service, practical tips, regular updates, and emergency support, aiding Australians in making safer and more informed travel decisions.

Complementing this, Western Sydney University utilises International SOS, a global service specialising in medical and travel security for international travellers and workers. International SOS provides comprehensive services, including telemedicine, emergency evacuation, travel safety advice, crisis management during emergencies like natural disasters, around-the-clock support centres, tailored destination information, and a mobile app for ongoing alerts and assistance. This collaboration is vital for ensuring the safety and well-being of the university's community during global travels. International SOS enhances the offerings of Smarttraveller by delivering more in-depth and personalised support, meeting specific travel and security requirements.

Further information:

- [Smartraveller](#)
- [International SOS](#)

Sustainable and Responsible Travel

It is important to educate students about traveling in an environmentally and socially responsible manner. Sustainable and responsible travel involves being mindful of the impact one's travel has on the environment, local communities, and cultures. Key aspects include:

- **Environmental Awareness**: Encouraging practices that minimise negative environmental impacts. This can involve choosing eco-friendly transportation options, reducing waste (like using reusable water bottles and bags), and respecting natural habitats and wildlife.

- **Cultural Sensitivity**: Educating students on respecting the customs, traditions, and values of the local communities they visit. This involves understanding and adhering to local norms and etiquette, which helps in preventing cultural misunderstandings and fosters mutual respect.

- **Supporting Local Economies**: Advising students to contribute to the local economy by purchasing local products and using local services, which can help in sustainable community development.

- **Reducing Carbon Footprint**: Providing information on how to travel with a lower carbon footprint, such as opting for public transportation, walking, or cycling, and choosing direct flights when possible to reduce carbon emissions.

- **Conservation Efforts**: Involving students in conservation activities or educating them about conservation efforts in the areas they visit.

By focusing on sustainable and responsible travel, students can have a more enriching and positive impact during their study abroad experience, contributing to the well-being of the places and communities they visit. This approach aligns with the broader goals of global citizenship and sustainability, in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Terra Dotta

The Go Global Portal, powered by Terra Dotta, is an online platform provided by Western Sydney University, designed to facilitate and manage the various aspects of its learning abroad programs. This user-friendly portal serves as a centralised resource for students and staff involved in international education and exchange activities. Staff members who have authorised access can log in here: Terra Dotta (staff login)

Travel bookings

Project leaders at Western Sydney University are responsible for organising international travel for learning abroad programs, a complex responsibility that involves juggling various other duties such as teaching and research. Recognising these challenges, the university offers support for the group travel arrangement process. Project leaders seeking assistance with TEMS or other travel-related procedures can contact the university's dedicated travel team at travel@westernsydney.edu.au or visit the Travel webpage for detailed guidance. For more specific information on travel bookings, refer to "Stage 4: Booking Travel".

Trip Advice

Find the latest travel restrictions, visa requirements, documents and forms, public healthier requirements via the FCM Travel Hub.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs), adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, are a set of 17 goals aimed at ending poverty, protecting the planet, and ensuring peace and prosperity for everyone by 2030. These goals include ending poverty and hunger, ensuring good

health, quality education, gender equality, clean water, affordable energy, economic growth, and addressing climate change, among others. They are designed to address global challenges and are interconnected, meaning progress in one area is often linked to progress in others.

When talking with students, explain how their specific learning abroad program aligns with and contributes to these goals. This could involve:

- Highlighting how the program's curriculum or activities support specific goals such as Quality Education (Goal 4), Reduced Inequalities (Goal 10), Sustainable Cities and Communities (Goal 11), or Climate Action (Goal 13). For example, if the program includes community service projects, explain how these projects contribute to local sustainable development.
- Encouraging students to engage in sustainable and socially responsible practices while abroad, aligning with goals like Responsible Consumption and Production (Goal 12) and Life on Land (Goal 15).
- Discussing the importance of cultural exchange and understanding in fostering Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Goal 16).
- Facilitating opportunities for students to learn about and contribute to local initiatives that are aligned with the UNSDGs, thereby promoting Partnerships for the Goals (Goal 17).

By integrating an understanding of the UNSDGs into the program, students can become more aware of their impact on global challenges and the role they can play in contributing to a sustainable future. This approach not only enhances their educational experience but also fosters a sense of global citizenship and responsibility.

Vaccinations

Ensuring your well-being during international travel should be a top priority for all participants. By thoughtful planning and getting the required vaccinations, participants can effectively shield themselves from diseases and maintain good health throughout your journey.

When participants venture beyond Australia, there is a potential risk of contracting various preventable diseases. It's crucial to be aware that upon returning to Australia, someone might unknowingly bring back these diseases, potentially triggering outbreaks.

To safeguard everyone's health, it's strongly recommended that participants consult with a healthcare provider or visit a travel health clinic to discuss the necessary vaccinations before embarking on your trip. The specific vaccines may be different for each person and can depend on several factors, such as age, pregnancy status, underlying medical conditions, vaccination history, place of birth, travel destination, and the season of your travel.

To ensure participants have adequate protection, it's advisable to seek vaccination advice from a doctor or travel health clinic at least **6 to 12 weeks** before departing from Australia. Early

consultation is crucial because your body requires time to develop full immunity, and in some cases, multiple vaccine doses may be necessary to achieve optimal protection.

For more detailed information, you can visit the Australian Government's Department of Health and Aged Care website: https://www.health.gov.au/topics/immunisation/when-to-get-vaccinated/immunisation-for-travel#vaccines-needed-for-travel.

Videos (Advice for Staff)

Learn more about creating a program by exploring our Trip Leader Training video series.

Visas

A travel visa is a government-issued document allowing non-citizens to enter and stay temporarily in a country, appearing as a stamp, sticker, or card in a passport. Various visa types exist, granting different rights and depending on personal factors like birthplace or citizenship. To determine the specific visa needed, consult with the host institution or provider, and verify with the relevant embassy or consulate in advance. Only the embassy or consulate staff for the host location can provide up-to-date information about visa requirements for individual circumstances. Western staff are not permitted to provide this advice. Responsibility for obtaining correct visa information lies with the traveller. Make sure to watch the explainer video about visas.

 For more details, see below:

- Embassy or consulate webpage
- Travel Hub to make sure you're prepared for the trip

Section 6: Arriving Overseas

Welcome to the crucial phase of your journey - Arriving Overseas. This exciting stage marks the beginning of an enriching and transformative educational experience for both you and the students. As staff members leading this adventure, you hold the key to a smooth transition into a new and unfamiliar environment. The first few days in a foreign country are pivotal in setting the tone for the entire trip, and it's essential to guide students through this period with care and thorough preparation.

In this section, we'll cover a range of important topics and processes that need to be addressed upon arrival. From conducting an initial orientation to familiarising the group with local customs and safety practices, these guidelines are designed to ensure that every student feels informed, comfortable, and ready to embark on their international learning experience. Your role in facilitating this transition cannot be overstated; you are not just leaders but also mentors and a primary source of support for students as they navigate this new chapter.

As we delve into this information, remember that the goal is to empower students to engage confidently and responsibly with their new surroundings, fostering an environment of learning, respect, and personal growth. Let's ensure that the first steps in this journey are taken with confidence and enthusiasm, setting a positive and constructive tone for the days to come.

Essential Steps for a Smooth Transition Upon Arrival

As you embark on this international journey, it is crucial to lay the groundwork for a successful and enriching experience right from the start. The following key points outline essential steps for staff to facilitate a smooth transition for students upon arrival. These guidelines are designed to ensure that students are not only acclimatised to their new environment but also feel safe, informed, and culturally attuned. It's important to note that while staff play a pivotal role in this process, certain aspects of these guidelines may also be effectively delivered in collaboration with partner institutions or local providers. This collaborative approach can offer students a more comprehensive and localised perspective. Let's dive into these vital aspects that pave the way for a memorable and impactful learning abroad experience:

Orientation Session on Arrival

Organise a comprehensive orientation session immediately upon arrival, which serves as a foundational step for acclimatising students to their new environment. This session should encompass an in-depth exploration of local customs and cultural norms, detailed safety information including emergency procedures, and a thorough overview of the itinerary. It should also introduce the importance of respecting local traditions and laws. An interactive format is recommended, encouraging student participation and the opportunity to address any immediate questions or

concerns they might have. This proactive approach aims to create a comfortable and informed atmosphere, setting a positive tone for the duration of their stay. Provided below is information that can be discussed.

Health and Safety: Using International SOS (ISOS)

- Overview of Comprehensive Services by ISOS: Start by introducing International SOS as a vital resource for students traveling abroad. Detail the array of services offered by ISOS, such as telemedicine, emergency evacuation, and travel safety advice. Highlight their capability to manage crises, including natural disasters, and their 24/7 support centers. This assures students that ISOS can address a wide variety of health and safety issues they might face internationally.
- Utilisation of ISOS in Medical Situations: Elaborate on how students can leverage ISOS for immediate medical guidance. Explain the process for accessing telemedicine services and coordinating emergency medical care. Emphasise the importance of contacting ISOS for any medical emergencies or health concerns.
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures: Discuss ISOS's role in facilitating emergency evacuations. Explain their ability to provide logistical support and coordination in critical situations, ensuring students understand they have a dependable resource in severe emergencies.
- Emergency Contacts and Information: Instruct students that their primary contact in overseas emergencies should be International SOS. Provide clear steps for reaching ISOS, including essential phone numbers and contact details.
- International SOS Mobile App: Urge students to download the International SOS App prior to departure. Describe how the app offers continuous alerts, assistance, and specific information about their destination, which is essential for staying informed and safe while abroad.
- Insurance Claim Assistance and Communication Coordination: Finally, note that ISOS also aids in handling insurance claims and facilitates communication coordination, both crucial in effectively managing emergencies.

Mental Health

Upon arriving overseas, participants should actively monitor their mental health. This significantly influences thoughts, behaviours, and interactions. It's crucial to be aware of how foreign jurisdictions view mental health. Students facing any challenges should promptly seek assistance from International SOS or the University's confidential counselling services, available online or in person, for advice and strategies. For more information and support, refer to the Departure Section and the University's counselling service webpage.

Communication Plan

Develop a robust communication plan, crucial for ensuring everyone's safety and well-being. This plan should provide clear instructions on how students can contact staff members at any time,

detailing various modes of communication like phone, email, and instant messaging platforms. Additionally, establish a system for students to easily communicate with each other, fostering a sense of community and support. Implement regular check-in times, where students are required to confirm their safety and whereabouts. This could be done through a daily or weekly scheduled call, message, or meeting. Include protocols for emergency situations, ensuring students know the immediate steps to take and whom to contact. This comprehensive plan not only ensures efficient communication in routine and emergency scenarios but also helps in building a cohesive, connected group dynamic.

Transportation Guidance

Offer detailed guidance on navigating local transportation systems, a key aspect of ensuring students' safety and independence. Begin by providing comprehensive information on public transit options, including buses, trains, and subways, emphasising routes, schedules, ticketing procedures, and safety norms. Introduce reputable taxi services, including how to identify official taxis and tips for avoiding common scams. Discuss the use of ride-sharing apps if available, focusing on their safety features and how to use them effectively. Highlight any areas that are less safe or recommended to avoid, especially at night or for solo travel. Also, incorporate advice on pedestrian safety, such as understanding local traffic patterns and pedestrian rights. This transportation guidance aims to empower students with the knowledge and confidence to travel safely and independently within their new environment.

Accommodation Orientation

Conduct a thorough orientation of the students' accommodation facilities to ensure their comfort and safety. Begin by highlighting essential features such as emergency exits, illustrating the quickest and safest routes in case of an emergency. Familiarise students with meal options, including dining halls, nearby eateries, and any in-house catering services, addressing dietary needs and preferences. Show the location and operation of laundry facilities, providing instructions on usage and etiquette. Discuss the process for handling accommodation issues, such as maintenance requests or concerns with roommates, and provide contact information for the relevant support staff. This orientation should also include a tour of communal areas, such as study lounges, recreational spaces, and any health and wellness facilities available. The goal is to ensure that students feel at home, understand how to utilise the facilities to their fullest, and know how to seek assistance when needed.

Currency and Financial Tips

Provide comprehensive guidance on financial management, crucial for students in a new country. Start with advice on the best places for currency exchange, emphasising those with favourable rates and reliability. Educate students on safely using ATMs, including choosing secure locations, being aware of their surroundings, and protecting their PIN. Offer practical tips for budgeting effectively,

such as tracking expenses, setting daily or weekly spending limits, and prioritising needs over wants. Discuss common prices for everyday items and services to help students gauge the cost of living. Additionally, advise on avoiding financial frauds and scams prevalent in the area. This guidance aims to empower students with the knowledge to manage their finances wisely and navigate the economic aspects of their international experience with confidence.

Language Basics

In a non-English-speaking country, it's vital to equip students with basic language skills for effective communication. Organise a crash course focused on essential phrases in the local language. Start with common greetings and polite expressions, as these are fundamental in initiating respectful interactions with locals. Teach directional phrases and key vocabulary for navigating the area, such as names of places, transportation terms, and asking for directions. Emphasise phrases for seeking assistance, like "Where is the nearest hospital?" or "Can you help me?". Include functional language for everyday scenarios like ordering food, shopping, or addressing emergency situations. Utilise interactive methods such as role-playing exercises to practice these phrases in real-life contexts. This language primer not only aids in basic communication but also demonstrates respect for the local culture and enhances students' overall experience.

Group Dynamics and Expectations

Addressing group dynamics and setting clear expectations is crucial for fostering a cohesive and positive experience. Start by outlining expected behaviours that promote teamwork and collaboration, emphasising the importance of respect, empathy, and open-mindedness towards each other's backgrounds and perspectives. Discuss the value of individual responsibility in group settings, such as punctuality, participation, and adhering to agreed-upon guidelines. Encourage an atmosphere of mutual support, where students feel comfortable seeking help and offering assistance to their peers. Engage students in activities that build trust and understanding, such as group discussions, team-building exercises, and collaborative problem-solving tasks. Highlight the benefits of diverse viewpoints and the learning opportunities they present. This approach aims to cultivate a supportive, respectful, and inclusive group environment, essential for a successful and enriching international experience.

Cultural Immersion Activities

Carefully plan cultural immersion activities that are engaging yet considerate of students' adjustment period. Start with low-intensity activities that introduce students to the local culture in an accessible and enjoyable way. This could include guided tours of significant historical sites, museums, and local landmarks, offering insights into the country's heritage and traditions. Arrange for interactive workshops or demonstrations of traditional arts, crafts, or cooking, where students can participate and learn hands-on. Organise visits to local markets or cultural events, providing a

glimpse into the everyday life and customs of the area. Encourage students to engage with local communities, possibly through volunteer opportunities or cultural exchange programs. These activities should aim to deepen students' understanding and appreciation of the host culture, fostering a sense of connection and curiosity, while being mindful of their initial acclimatisation to the new environment.

Conditions of Participation

Upon arrival, it's essential to revisit Western Sydney University's Conditions of Participation with students, underlining their roles and expectations in the overseas program. Start by highlighting the high standards of behaviour expected, both within and outside the university context, stressing the importance of respecting the host community and fellow travellers.

Focus on the necessity of adhering to university policies for personal and group safety. Make it clear that not meeting these standards could lead to severe repercussions like removal from the program without a refund and the requirement to return any grants or scholarships received.

Detail the authority of Trip Leaders in safeguarding the program's integrity. Outline situations where leaders may dismiss students from the program due to significant risks, legal violations, or endangering behaviour. Such actions, subject to supervisor approval, will conclude the student's participation and shift the onus of their safety and future arrangements onto them.

Brief students on vital topics, including adherence to laws and policies, the consequences of misconduct, available support during the program, and the importance of communication and respect – see [Student Misconduct in Learning Abroad Programs (Group Travel)](#) webpage. Additionally, recommend viewing the WSU Conditions of Participation video on the Go Global Portal, especially for those who haven't seen it, as part of their orientation process.

Dealing with Jet Lag

Addressing jet lag is important for students to quickly adapt to the new environment. Provide practical advice on managing this challenge, emphasising the importance of staying hydrated, as dehydration can exacerbate jet lag symptoms. Encourage students to adapt to the local sleep schedule as soon as possible, even if it means staying awake longer or going to bed earlier than usual initially. Suggest avoiding heavy meals and caffeine close to bedtime, as they can disrupt sleep patterns. Recommend light exercise, like walking or stretching, which can help reset the body's internal clock. Also, advise on the benefits of brief naps (20-30 minutes) to recharge, while cautioning against longer naps that can interfere with night-time sleep. Share strategies for gradual adjustment before the trip, such as gradually shifting sleep times closer to the destination's time zone. This guidance aims to help students minimise jet lag's impact, allowing them to fully engage in the program from the beginning.

Sustainable and Responsible Travel Practices

Emphasising sustainable and responsible travel practices is key to fostering a respectful and environmentally conscious approach among students. Start by encouraging eco-friendly habits such as reducing waste, using reusable water bottles, bags, and other sustainable products. Discuss the importance of minimising carbon footprints by opting for public transport, walking, or cycling when exploring the local area. Highlight the significance of respecting local ecosystems and wildlife, advising against activities that harm the environment or exploit animals. Educate students on the cultural sensitivities of the host country, urging them to respect local customs, traditions, and sacred sites. Promote the concept of 'leave no trace', ensuring that students understand the importance of leaving places as they found them. Encourage participation in local conservation or community projects, providing an opportunity to contribute positively to the host community. By adopting these practices, students will not only enjoy a more authentic and respectful travel experience but also contribute to the global effort of sustainable and responsible tourism.

UNSDGs Awareness

Integrating awareness of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) into your program can significantly enhance the educational and ethical dimensions of the students' international experience. Begin by providing a brief overview of the UNSDGs, highlighting their importance in promoting global sustainable development. Explain how various aspects of the program align with specific goals, such as quality education, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, and responsible consumption and production. Encourage students to consider how their actions, both as individuals and as a group, can contribute positively to these goals. This could involve engaging in environmentally sustainable practices, participating in cultural exchange activities that foster understanding and respect for diversity, or contributing to local community initiatives. By understanding and considering the impact of their actions in the context of the UNSDGs, students can develop a deeper sense of global citizenship and responsibility, enriching their overall learning abroad experience. Remember, the key goal is to ensure that both staff and students feel prepared, safe, and informed, enabling them to fully engage with and benefit from their international journey.

Section 7: Evaluating Learning Abroad Programs

The evaluation process entails an objective assessment of the Learning Abroad program, aiming to gauge its performance and level of achievement. Key questions include:

- Were the program's objectives met?
- What challenges were encountered?
- What aspects can be improved?
- Is the program sustainable for future iterations?

During this phase, students are required to complete an online evaluation, providing insights into their overseas experience and sharing testimonials. This feedback is invaluable for program leaders to review the program's effectiveness and gather participant feedback. Additionally, the information serves to inform the Government and University about the efficacy and impact of student mobility programs.

New Colombo Plan (NCP) Completion Report

A crucial component of the evaluation is the submission of the NCP Completion Report. This report must be submitted no later than one month following the project's completion, or by the deadline set by Western Sydney International. For projects with multiple implementation dates, a report is required after each period. It's important to note that internal school/department reports are not a substitute for this document.

The completion report process involves:

1. Downloading the *Completion Report*: Participants are required to fill out this form thoroughly.
2. Upload the Project Report: This is done via Western Now, along with any supplementary information. Supplementary materials may include additional reports detailing the experience abroad.

This information can be found on the [Evaluation webpage](#).

The Go Global team will then review these documents and offer advice before the final versions are forwarded to the relevant delegates and the Government. This review process ensures the comprehensive documentation of the program's outcomes and its continuous improvement.