LEADING SHORT-TERM EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAMS:

KNOW THE STANDARDS

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THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

Educating students abroad opens the world to them and opens them to the world. You may be at the beginning of the process of developing a program, or perhaps you're leaving in a few days. This guide for leaders of short-term programs (8 weeks or less) explains what you should know before you lead a program abroad. It is a framework for conversations to have with all those involved in your program.

Best Practice Resources

Find samples of best practices supporting all areas of program development and administration: **www.forumea.org/standards***

STANDARDS

Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad were established in 2004 by The Forum on Education Abroad, recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field. They are higher education's benchmark for education abroad program excellence and accountability.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU AS A PROGRAM LEADER?

It means there are expectations of you and your institution that you should meet.

The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad are available at **www.forumea.org**.

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

As a program leader, it is important to know who is responsible for every aspect of your program. Depending on your institution's approach to education abroad, you may have:

- **FULL RESPONSIBILITY:** The program leader is responsible for all aspects of the program, from idea through approval to program delivery and assessment, including student affairs and risk management.

- **SHARED RESPONSIBILITY:** The program leader collaborates with campus offices that coordinate some aspects of the program.

- **LESS RESPONSIBILITY:** The program is entrusted primarily to an independent program provider.

PROFESSIONAL PARTNERSHIPS: THE FORUM AND THE FIELD

The education abroad office at your campus along with The Forum on Education Abroad's resources support your programs. Take advantage of these partnerships to strengthen your programs and your piece of mind:

- Contact the education abroad office on your campus;
- Attend a Forum event for additional training, education and networking;
- Subscribe to *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, an open-access, peer-reviewed journal, to stay on top of the latest research.

*If your institution is a Forum member, you have access to these additional resources. Visit www.forumea.org/access.

WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW? Addressing the questions below, informed by the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*, is the way to begin, whether this is the first time you are leading a program or the tenth.

PROGRAM CONCEPTUALIZATION AND PROPOSAL

- ☐ What is the program proposal process?
- ☐ Who must I collaborate with on my campus to develop this program?
- ☐ What are the learning goals of my program?
- ☐ How will my program leverage the unique learning opportunities of the destination?
- ☐ How will I support students' personal and intercultural development?
- ☐ How will I prompt students to reflect on their learning in and outside of the structured experience?
- ☐ How will I support the continuity of student learning pre-departure, on-site, and post-program?
- ☐ How familiar am I with the cultural values, norms and language of the host community?
- ☐ How will my program respect the values and norms of the host community and avoid imposing an undue burden on its resources?
- ☐ Will local infrastructure support a safe and effective program (transportation, housing, healthcare)?
- ☐ What are the risks associated with this destination? Who determines whether these risks are acceptable?
- ☐ What requirements do students need to meet to participate?

Looking for inspiration?

The Forum offers course and program profiles shared by faculty and education abroad professionals. **www.forumea.org/resources/curriculum***

PLANNING AND BUDGETING

- ☐ Who creates and approves the budget?
- ☐ How will the program be funded? Will low enrollment affect the program?
- ☐ What does the program fee include (credits, flights, meals, excursions, transportation, visas)?
- ☐ What financial aid or scholarships are available to students?
- ☐ Is the program prepared to include students with disabilities?
- ☐ How will I pay for goods and services while abroad?
- ☐ Who arranges appropriate insurance for my program? What is covered, and how is it accessed?
- ☐ Is my program sufficiently staffed to achieve learning goals and respond to emergencies?
- ☐ Will I need to hire local experts or service providers? How will they be vetted and arranged?

  Have I been trained on emergency plans and protocols, financial policies, student conduct and disciplinary policies?
- ☐ Have I been trained on incident reporting and requirements of Title IX and the Clery Act?
- ☐ What is my institution's policy on accompanying partners and family?

STUDENT ADVISING, RECRUITMENT, AND SELECTION

- ☐ Are recruitment and selection inclusive, fair, ethical, transparent, and accessible to students?
- ☐ What are the policies for academic eligibility, conduct, and health concerns?
- ☐ Who makes admissions decisions?
- ☐ Who communicates policies related to evaluation, awarding of credit, research ethics, and academic integrity to students?
- ☐ Are participant costs communicated clearly?
- ☐ Are potential challenges specific to your destination (LGBTQ, disabilities, women, faith, race/ethnicity, etc.) discussed with students?

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STUDENT PREPARATION AND PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

- ☐ Are program goals clearly articulated? How will I prepare students to achieve these and their personal goals?
- ☐ How are students asked to familiarize themselves with the location, cultural nuances, and local news?
- ☐ How will I communicate expectations, policies, and potential sanctions related to academics, housing, independent travel, drug and alcohol use, culturally-appropriate behavior, and sexual misconduct?
- ☐ Who prepares students to anticipate health or safety risks, and communicates:
  - Emergency plans and protocols, including crisis communication;
  - Phone numbers for local ambulance, fire, police, U.S. Consulate or Embassy;
  - Required travel documentation (passports, visas, immunization records, prescriptions);
  - Health preparations (international health insurance, immunizations, medications, voluntary disclosure of pre-existing conditions);
  - Healthcare options on-site?
- ☐ Who will register participants, including yourself, with the U.S. Dept. of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and other risk monitoring services?

PRE-DEPARTURE RESOURCES

- www.state.gov/travel
- www.cdc.gov/travel
- www.globaled.us/safeti
- www.asirt.org
- www.saraswish.org
- www.firesafetyfoundation.org

See your education abroad office for additional resources.

DURING THE PROGRAM

- ☐ What is my role on-site? What is the expected time commitment to fulfill this role?
- ☐ How will I communicate with students while abroad?
- ☐ Who provides on-site orientation?
- ☐ What opportunities are available that encourage responsible use of non-scheduled time?
- ☐ Have I communicated to students the risks specific to our location?
- ☐ Have I reviewed the emergency communication plan with students?
- ☐ Whom do I contact in the event of a hospitalization, death, mental health crisis, disappearance, sexual assault?
- ☐ What emergency protocols are in place for situations of civil unrest, acts of terrorism, and natural disasters?
- ☐ What is the contingency planning process for scheduled activities and transportation?
- ☐ How will I support student adjustment and moderate group dynamics? How often do I check in with my students to ensure that I am aware of issues?

COMMON RISKS

- Swimming in unguarded areas
- Traveling in unlicensed cabs
- Riding motorbikes or scooters
- Food and water safety
- Lack of awareness of surroundings
- Petty crime
- High-crime areas and trouble spots
- Hiking & adventure activities

STUDENT RETURN AND TRANSITION

- ☐ What opportunities are there for students to reflect on and share their experiences?
- ☐ Who assists students in applying their education abroad experience to their academic, professional, and personal progress?
- ☐ How is the program evaluated? How is this used to improve the program?
- ☐ How is the program budget reconciled?

THE **STANDARDS**

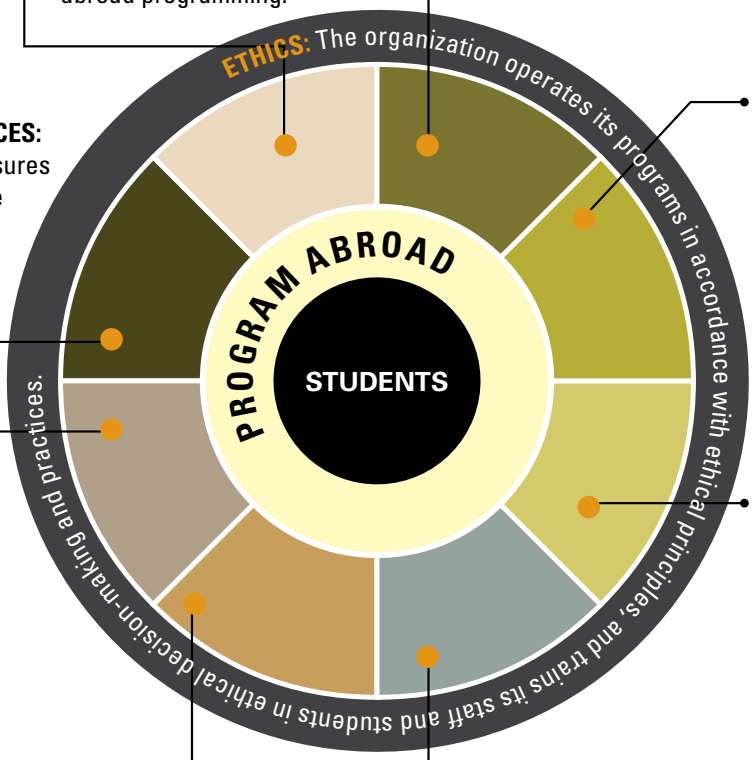
WHAT ARE THE STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR EDUCATION ABROAD?

MISSION & GOALS: The organization has a mission statement and articulates clear goals for its education abroad programming.

STUDENT LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT: The organization's mission, goals, and operations prioritize student learning and development.

ORGANIZATION & PROGRAM RESOURCES: The organization ensures that its programs are adequately funded and staffed.

ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK: The organization delivers academic content appropriate to its stated mission and goals, ensures adequate academic supervision and evaluation, and maintains clear and transparent academic policies.



HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY & RISK MANAGEMENT: The organization prioritizes the health, safety, and security of its students through policies, procedures, advising, orientation, and training.

STUDENT SELECTION, PREPARATION & ADVISING: The organization maintains fair and ethical recruitment and selection processes, adequate student preparation and advising, and ongoing student support.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES: The organization has well-defined and clearly-articulated policies and procedures that govern its programs and practices, ensures that they are fairly and consistently implemented, and conducts regular reviews to assess their effectiveness.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT & DISCIPLINARY MEASURES: The organization articulates clear and accessible guidelines for student behavior and consequences resulting from violations.

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ABOUT THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

The Forum on Education Abroad is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, membership association recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad.

The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad support the complex responsibilities inherent in offering education abroad opportunities to students. They act as a means to develop, manage, assess and improve education abroad programming. As a commonly developed and accepted set of standards, they provide a framework for accountability.

The Forum supports the implementation of the *Standards* through resources in outcomes assessment and data collection, and through quality assurance, training and professional development programs.

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