



By Example: Resources for Education Abroad Offices and Advisers Revised Edition

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INTRODUCTION

As education abroad increases in popularity on campuses across the United States, the number of education abroad offices continues to grow. While many of these offices are well established and mature, many others are just developing, often staffed by administrators new to the field. For this reason, *By Example: Resources for Education Abroad Offices and Advisers*, first published in 1994 as *Forms of Travel: Essential Documents, Letters, and Flyers for Study Abroad Advisers*, still has a sizable audience and important role to play in the field of education abroad.

The goal of *By Example* is to provide a useful set of common sample forms and publications produced by different education abroad offices. This publication is intended for new offices and newcomers to the field, but can also provide interesting models for more experienced education abroad professionals who are rethinking their approaches to the basics.

By Example addresses issues of communication between education abroad offices and students (and their families) at all stages of the process, from first contact to reentry. In that way, it differs from and complements other NAFSA publications, most notably [*Abroad by Design, Key Strategies and Resources*](#), which focuses on the forms and documents needed to manage education abroad programs and maintain essential relationships with colleagues in the United States as well as internationally.

Of course, communication itself has been revolutionized since the original publication date of 1994, as your websites, e-mail, mobile phones, and social media have transformed communication with students and families—and therefore, their expectations have grown. While constituting a mixed blessing, these media forms have nevertheless allowed us to present more students with up-to-date information in a more timely and efficient manner.

Samples for this publication include print forms, promotional pieces, PDFs, Web pages, and other kinds of materials that have been solicited from diverse education abroad offices across the country. We have attempted to represent a broad range of institutions, as well as an array of approaches to each area of contact with students, always with the goal of providing excellent and replicable samples for other institutions to adapt for their own purposes. All of the contributing offices have given their permission for readers to use, duplicate, and/or customize these materials as they see fit, and there is a combination of public websites and e-documents that did not require prior consent as they are public information. **Please note, however, that none of the forms included are endorsed by the editors or by NAFSA.**

Samples in each chapter are presented alphabetically by name of institution.

CHAPTER 1. MARKETING

If you build it, will they come? Well, maybe. Even with the growing popularity of education abroad on U.S. campuses, it's never safe to assume that students (faculty or advisers) are fully aware of the education abroad opportunities that exist on your campus.

How can you get the word out? You can use the following strategies:

- Website
- E-mails to students
- Classroom visits
- Information tables and presentations at student events
- Education abroad fairs
- Presenting at meetings or clubs
- Ads in your campus newspaper
- Posters
- Flyers
- Social Media
- Brochures
- Banners
- Returned student advisers/assistants.

Remember to keep your message simple and consistent so that students will identify a particular brand with your office. Your goal is not so much to provide students with all of the information they need, rather to give them the chance to visit your office to discover what they need to do. Keep in mind that it will take multiple points of contact and media—website, posters and flyers, articles and ads in your newspaper, and face-to-face discussion—to reach students. “Reach and frequency” is the marketer’s term for this. Always think in terms of outreach—with students, faculty, advisers, and other administrators. Even if you aren’t speaking with students or don’t feel like you spoke to enough students, remember that the students are seeing your presences even if they aren’t speaking to you directly.

Your audience may vary dramatically—it might be your entire undergraduate population or a more specific group such as a particular residence hall, major, student groups, or even a specific class. This, along with your budget, will determine which media you should employ. Electronic media increasingly constitutes the foundation of your efforts. Emails to students, faculty, and advisers and electronic newsletters, as well as listservs, are also effective ways to announce essential and timely information, especially if you don’t have the resources to update your website frequently.

Other ways to take advantage of technology include receiving inquiries and requests for materials via e-mail, Web-based response forms or advising via teleconferencing (if you have the necessary hardware and time).

Publications range from education abroad fact sheets, to lists of approved programs, to posters and brochures. You can develop publications as long as you have some type of budget, people in your office to work on these types of projects, or a publications office. You can also draw on the talents of students who may be skilled in design and advertising. Solicit their advice and ideas on outreach. Often you can learn about new and creative ideas from students in order to update the look of your publications. Once you have produced these documents, it’s time to distribute them. Use bulletin boards, your office, department mailrooms, advising centers, classes, or any other location where the information will find an interested audience.

Advertising and articles in newspapers and other student publications should have a look that is consistent with your other marketing materials (i.e., posters and brochures) and can be used to announce information sessions, fairs, deadlines, and other important dates. Essays written and photos taken by alumni and current students can reach a larger audience as well.

Education abroad fairs are labor intensive but provide a great way to present your students with the widest array of available options. Just remember that it is up to you to determine which education abroad programs are represented. You may choose to include and promote only those programs run by your institution, a broader sampling based on your approved program list, or an open invitation to any program providers. Use all media at your disposal to promote education abroad fairs. An education abroad fair is an important place to share basics with students—including “how to study abroad” guides, approved lists if applicable, and financial aid information.

SAMPLES

Boston University

[Dresden Engineering and Science Program](#)

[Ecuador Tropical Ecology Program](#)

[Financial Aid Information for Non-Boston University Students](#)

[International Programs](#)

[London General Studies Brochure](#)

Delaware Technical Community College

[Costa Rica Brochure](#)

[Russia Brochure](#)

Michigan State University

[Brochure for Incoming Freshmen](#)

[Freshman Seminars Abroad Flyers](#)

[Study Abroad Fair Ads](#)

[Study Abroad Fair Program](#)

[Study Abroad Video \(13.5 Mb file size\)](#)

Skidmore College

[General Poster on Study Abroad](#)

[Off-Campus Study Brochure](#)

[Shakespeare Programme Brochure](#)

University of Colorado, Boulder

[Why Study Abroad?](#)

University of Minnesota

[International Program in Toledo, Spain](#)

[Student Profile: Allie Studies in Argentina](#)

CHAPTER 2. BLOGS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Given that this resource is an e-publication, it is obvious that electronic communication is becoming increasingly popular on our campuses and with our students. This chapter will focus on electronic media and social networking and its growing demand and importance in education abroad.

Many of our students depend heavily on social media to learn about the realities of the programs that they wish to study on and to learn about the actual experiences of their peers. Increasingly, many education abroad offices host blogs, Facebook accounts, YouTube channels, and Twitter accounts to keep students updated and informed about opportunities abroad.

Facebook is a good way for students to begin having conversations before departing on their respective programs and to share pictures of their time abroad. Often, they can coordinate flight plans, decide on what to pack, and plan for on-site logistics prior to the program, which can serve to alleviate some anxiety for them. Your office can set up the account, or you can task a student assistant who has been on the program before to manage it. It is important that you do monitor the account closely to make sure that the information being shared from student-to-student is, in fact, accurate. Also, be prepared that this could be a lot of work.

Blogs are also increasingly popular resources for students and can be linked directly to your offices website. They can center around a specific program or region. It is important that you establish some parameters for the blog authors, but also encourage them to be open and honest about the highs and lows of the education abroad and cross-cultural experience. These honest accounts assist prospective students with their planning and also serve as excellent reentry tools for the blogger and others who participated on the program upon their return. They can reflect on their experiences while also remembering some of the challenges they may have faced. It can serve as a great resource for all students involved and a great informational tool for families and other interested parties on campus.

SAMPLES

Georgetown University

[Georgetown Blog](#)

Emory University

[Emory Blog and videos](#)

Indiana University

<http://overseas.iu.edu/about/media/socialmedia.shtml>

Syracuse University

[Syracuse University Video Footage](#)

University of Minnesota

<http://www.youtube.com/user/umabroad230>

<http://twitter.com/umabroad>

<https://www.facebook.com/LearningAbroadCenter>

<http://umabroad.com/>

Wheaton College

[Wheaton Blog](#)

CHAPTER 3. ADVISING

An old but useful educator's cliché is “never underestimate students’ intelligence, never overestimate student’s knowledge.” Some students have done enough research to have a good idea of education abroad and the policies of your institution, while others will be starting from or near zero. The role of the adviser is to present students with an intelligent range of education abroad options and a manageable process (manageable for both the student and the adviser), talking them through inquiries, program selection, applications, the on-site program itself, and finally, the reentry process.

The entryways into your office—both the physical presence and your website—should be as attractive and as informative as possible. It is a question of attitude as much as anything else. This chapter presents several examples of forms and publications that can make the process flow more smoothly for your students, your colleagues, and yourself.

“Office portal” is a hopelessly generic term for a student’s first glimpse of your operation. This can take the form of a “How to study abroad” flyer placed on a table in your front office or it could be your institution’s homepage, which contains links to information sessions, office hours, how-to guides, and advisers’ e-mails addresses.

Step-by-step guides vary in length and complexity from single sheets to full handbooks. While the student needs may vary from institution to institution, there are good arguments for making the initial contact with students as simple as possible while holding more complex materials, such as information on academic policies and financial aid, for later contact, once the student is more committed. Approved lists, if your university decide to have one, should be available in both electronic and print form, and it is crucial that these be kept up to date. A more sophisticated version may provide links from the name or location of an approved program to a description of the program itself or to the program provider’s homepage. Some offices also provide links to search engines such as www.studyabroad.com and www.iiepassport.org.

To serve your students and manage your operation effectively, you will need to collect information from the point of first contact with interested students. This information includes everything from a student’s factual data to his or her interest in languages and countries, major or academic interest, and personal desires. An electronic database is the easiest way to manage this type of information. Consult with your office or university IT staff to learn about the standard database for your campus or to gather other recommendations. A web-based database allows students to provide information electronically without the need for you or an employee to reenter it. Paper forms are also acceptable.

Study on non-approved programs or programs outside your institution’s own education abroad offerings often requires a separate process—sometimes a petition process. This process should also be outlined simply for the student, both electronically and in hard copy. This petition can be developed in consultation with faculty and administrative colleagues and should have a firm deadline and review process, which should be made clear on the forms and during the advising process.

Academic planning guides, course approval forms, and leave of absence forms often are required from students (precise requirements may vary from institution to institution). These can range from tailored guides for specific majors (e.g., “Study abroad for engineering majors”), policy statements, to actual forms to be completed and signed by academic advisers. Remember that the key is simplicity for students. You also want to be sure to collaborate with other offices that may be involved in this process, and be sure to keep the forms up-to-date if they are not maintained by your office.

Financial aid is no less important to a student going abroad than it is to the student on your home campus. While your financial aid office will be considered the authority, you have a responsibility to transmit your policies about financial aid for education abroad in a clear and helpful manner to both the financial aid office as well as to the student. Financial aid will be covered more thoroughly in another chapter.

SAMPLES

Delaware Technical Community College

[How to Apply](#)

[Scholarships](#)

Lincoln University

[Course Approval Form](#)

[Study Abroad Guidelines](#)

Michigan State University

[Study Abroad Checklist](#)

[Study Abroad FAQs](#)

[Study Abroad for MSU Students with Disabilities](#)

[Study Abroad Program Search](#)

Skidmore College

[Checklist for Study Abroad](#)

[Graduation Plan Worksheet](#)

[Student Intake Form](#)

Trinity University

[Worksheet on Degree Status](#)

University of Minnesota

[Academic Planning for Study Abroad Form](#)

[Advising Handbook](#)

[Finding Course Information](#)

[Study Abroad in Chemical Engineering Advising Sheet](#)

[Study Abroad in English Advising Sheet](#)

Villanova University

[A&S Prior Approval Form](#)

[Folder Checklist Attachment](#)

[Information Packet](#)

[Office of International Studies Checklist](#)

[Prior Approval Form](#)

[Prior Approval Form VSB](#)

[Student Information Form](#)

CHAPTER 4. APPLICATION MATERIALS

The application process can oftentimes be confusing, complicated, tedious, and a mystifying experience to a student. It is important that you help them understand the process in a clear and transparent manner with the help of the documents here.

Students may often be required to fill out more than one application. For example, a student applying for a direct enrollment program may need to fill out separate applications for his or her home school (you), the host school, and the program provider brokering the time abroad. Some applications may be paper based, some downloadable from the Web, and others found in catalogs. Many can be submitted online. All applications undoubtedly will have different deadlines. Make sure to inform students of this fact.

It is therefore in your best interest to develop a complete, streamlined application that fits the needs of your office and a timetable that works for your office and the programs your students will attend. Pay close attention to deadlines throughout this process. Please note, however, that many offices that work with program providers do manage without their own applications. These programs will still require some sort of form in order to create and maintain files on students abroad.

What Should You Include?

An application can serve a variety of purposes, including:

- General permission to study abroad
- Admittance to a specific program
- Record-keeping, for emergency contact and quality control.

In general, the application might ask for:

- Personal information, including emergency contact information
- Program information
- Transcripts
- Letters of Recommendation
- Essays
- Release of information
- Financial aid information
- Application fee

An instruction sheet or checklist can make the student's job easier and the product better.

Formats of Application Forms

There are typically three types of formats: paper, downloadable, and Web-based.

The trend is toward downloadable or Web-based forms; what you choose will depend upon your students and the state of your campus' electronic capability. In addition, some applications may be verbal (an interview). Some offices require interviews for all applicants while others require interviews for applicants to foreign language programs only. Some do not require any interviews at all.

Making It Even Simpler

Many databases, especially those that are Web-based, allow application information to be entered automatically into a student's record if the student also submitted a previous inquiry or filled out an education abroad information form. This would allow you to track the student's progress through the entire experience, and may also interface with your university's student information system. (This is where the IT department at your university can make your life easier.)

SAMPLES

Babson College

[Application Process](#)

[Petition Process of a Non-Approved Education Abroad Program](#)

[Study Abroad Petition Packet](#)

Boston University

[Division of International Programs Online Application Login](#)

[Participation Confirmation](#)

Delaware Technical Community College

[Costa Rica Application](#)

[Russia Application](#)

Elon University

[Application Instructions](#)

Indiana University

[Application Instructions](#)

Michigan State University

[MSU Decision Form](#)

[MSU Study Abroad Online Application Overview](#)

[Non-MSU Student Application for Study Abroad](#)

Skidmore College

[Approved Program Application](#)

Trinity University

[Course Approval Form Study Abroad and Special Semesters: U.S.](#)

[Course Selection Sheet](#)

[Summer Program Application](#)

University of Minnesota

[Learning Abroad Center Study Abroad Process](#)

Villanova University

[Prior Approval Form](#)

[Summer Application Program](#)

CHAPTER 5. PREDEPARTURE MATERIALS

There are two general categories of predeparture materials: the forms that institutions require of students and the materials that students need from institutions. The latter will be addressed primarily in Chapter 6, Orientations. In this chapter we focus on the information you will collect from accepted students to complete their files.

As with application processed, the process is more complicated when students must submit multiple applications, which nearly always entails multiple sets of predeparture forms. Learning the requirements of the program provider is generally the responsibility of the student; however, you might want to consider accommodating students within your system to make the process a little less confusing for the student and the student's family.

Offices increasingly are making predeparture forms available online. While this is undoubtedly convenient, it may not always be sufficient. This is because once a student has been accepted into a program, your office starts to accept legal responsibility for him or her. This means that you have a legal responsibility to collect certain kinds of information from the student, and to transmit other kinds of information to the student. This is known as informed consent. You may want to make these forms available in hard copy as well as online, and you must absolutely require that the student complete and return them as a condition of studying abroad. It is also imperative that your school's legal counsel reviews these forms as well as any changes to them.

Depending on the level of technology available to you, the online component can be handled in two ways: downloadable PDF forms and Web-based response forms.

Generally speaking, you will want forms in the following areas.

The Acceptance Statement/Student Declaration, which can be known by other names, is signed by students as an acknowledgment that they are aware of financial and personal responsibilities and agree to abide by the program's rules and codes of conduct. Other conditions may be attached depending on the needs of your office and programs. For example, the declaration may contain a liability waiver and an assumption of risks, and it may acknowledge the receipt of orientation materials. These statements are typically drafted by your university legal counsel.

Medical Information Form. Program sponsors will certainly require this. Other offices may feel this is essential information to have on file for any student studying abroad. This is the document where students have the opportunity to disclose any existing medical conditions or concerns. It is useful in case of a medical emergency and also as the main vehicle for disclosing any special needs the student may have. Students who will seek accommodations must disclose any existing condition here so the program may consider appropriate accommodations. This information typically is collected after the student has been accepted to eliminate the possibility that a student is rejected because of disability or chronic illness. Your legal counsel will advise on the best time to collect this information.

Emergency Medical Care Authorization provides a good opportunity to collect emergency contact information if you do not already have it.

Parent Right to Data Form, required by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The registrar's office on your campus can fill you in on FERPA requirements.

You may want to provide students with the following types of predeparture forms dependent on their destination and type of program:

- Financial Aid Application
- Power of Attorney

- Academic Calendar
- Residence Agreement
- Housing Questionnaire
- Internship Questionnaire
- Visa Instructions and Visa Application
- Passport Information
- Academic Planning

SAMPLES

Boston University

[Emergency Medical Care Authorization \(Summer\)](#)

[Insurance Information](#)

[Medical Information \(Summer\)](#)

[Passport Information](#)

[Student Declaration](#)

Indiana University

[Overseas Study Advising Plan](#)

[Predeparture Overseas Advising Instructions](#)

Michigan State University

[Information for Multicultural Students Studying Abroad](#)

[Statement of Responsibility](#)

[Student Health/Emergency Treatment Authorization](#)

Skidmore College

[Predeparture Information](#)

University of Colorado at Boulder

[Diversity in Study Abroad Web Page](#)

[Essential Guide to Study Abroad](#)

University of Pennsylvania

[Policies & Procedures](#)

Villanova University

[Student Handbook for Overseas Study](#)

CHAPTER 6. ORIENTATIONS

The predeparture orientation is a standard and expected part of the student's program abroad. It's a chance to talk about all aspects of the program and the host country; about issues facing students overseas; about health, safety, and security; and about the student's disengagement from and reengagement with the home institution.

But most of all—and this is an important point to remember—the orientation is the first activity of the student's semester abroad. Even though there is an enormous amount of material to be covered, the orientation process can be made much more productive and enjoyable if it strives to embody some of the atmosphere and culture of the destination.

This chapter does not discuss orientations per se—information on how to set up an effective orientation can be found in other places—but rather the orientation packet (the materials provided to students during the orientation). The packet can be mailed to students who are unable to attend or they can be directed to access it online (if available).

Online Orientations. In addition to predeparture forms, many offices are now putting substantial pieces of their orientation materials—and even orientation programming—online. This is not intended to replace the live orientation, but it can cut down on some of the more bureaucratic aspects of the presentation. It can also allow you to reach students who may not be able to attend the orientation and provides students with a reference that they can easily access from around the globe. Nearly all education abroad programs now are following this trend.

An agenda for the orientation (the electronic version of which would be a well-linked table of contents) is a helpful tool that can help students organize their planning well after the orientation has concluded.

Any predeparture forms not yet distributed to or collected by your students should be given out at this time. This is also a good time to deal with any pressing or unresolved matters, such as missing materials or deposits.

Handbooks come in two forms—general and site-specific—which may be kept separate (the preference of large programs) or combined into a single publication. Handbooks will cover much of the information discussed aloud at the orientation and so provide a helpful and necessary reference for students over the course of the program. They also help serve your legal needs by allowing you to state with confidence that key information about the program and its policies has been provided in writing to the students.

Some key components of the handbooks, whether general or site-specific, include the following.

- University education abroad policies and procedures (credits, credit transfer, registration, billing, refund policies, financial aid, housing on return to campus, codes of conduct, and judicial policies)
- Practical matters (travel and arrival information, visas, medical information, finance, communication, what to pack, legal matters)
- Health, safety, and security information
- Information on the host institution and/or resident staff, including contact information
- Academic structure of the program and calendar
- Cultural matters (general introduction to the country, cultural adjustment, issues affecting women, minorities, religion)
- Life in the host culture (language, food, money, cell phones, legal issues)
- Resources (websites, books, newspapers, films)
- Maps and photos

Specialized publications to supplement the handbooks are often prepared for specialized populations, including women traveling alone, single parents, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered students.

Collateral materials can help build anticipation and make the orientation more concrete and fun. Maps, photos, brochures, discount coupons, and even candy from the destination country can all be brought in to good effect.

Don't forget about the orientation of parents. Parents do not often attend predeparture orientation sessions, but information should still be made available to them via printed handbooks and information on your website—consider a “for parents” section that can answer parents’ common questions about costs, health and safety, on-site support, etc.

SAMPLES

Center for Global Education

[PLATO: Project for Learning Abroad, Training, and Outreach](#)

Elon University

[Personal Information Form](#)

Michigan State University

[General Study Abroad Orientation: Sample Slides](#)

[MSU Orientation Packet](#)

SUNY University at Buffalo

[Study Abroad Handbook](#)

University of Colorado at Boulder

[Guide to Study & Living Abroad](#)

University of Minnesota

[Online Orientations](#)

University of the Pacific

[“What’s Up With Culture?” Online Cultural Training Resource for Study Abroad](#)

CHAPTER 7. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Health, safety, and security have become more important considerations for all in the field of education abroad. While most programs have always included basic requests for medical background and insurance information in their predeparture forms—and have made health and general safety part of predeparture orientations—we must now provide much more for students at all stages of the process, from first contact through successful execution of the program.

Websites increasingly are being used to discuss all aspects of health and safety with students, from the need to evaluate their readiness to study abroad to statements of the emergency plans of different programs. In general, any public and/or policy documents regarding the health and well-being of your students should be prepared in close consultation with appropriate offices on your campus, including legal counsel, risk management, disability services, and student health services.

Health, safety, and security manuals should be a part of your operation. A comprehensive plan, controlled by the education abroad office, should be complemented by up-to-date emergency plans (including contact plans and phone trees) at each site. Your manual should cover the basics of health, safety, and insurance, and provide specific guidelines for action for as many contingencies as you can think of. These should be primarily internal documents—don't make your security arrangements public. Some basic information on emergency preparation and recommendations to students, however, can and should be made public via your Web site and orientation manuals.

Your website and orientation process provide good information to remind students that life abroad requires a higher standard of functioning than life at home. They should take the opportunity to examine their physical, mental, and emotional preparation for life overseas. Use your website and orientation sessions to provide students with a simple checklist for this purpose—"Am I ready for life overseas?"

Students with disabilities or chronic illnesses have been asked to disclose any such condition, particularly if they are seeking accommodation while abroad. Many programs provide special handouts for students in this situation. Documents such as these should always be prepared in consultation with your disability office.

Most, if not all, programs require their participants to be covered by a comprehensive health insurance policy. Increasingly, programs are also requiring or offering emergency travel assistance. These plans typically provide coverage for emergency medical evacuation or repatriation and a range of assistance services available by telephone. The International Student Identity Card provides some of this coverage; many other plans are available. Benefits are easily summarized and should be distributed to students.

Travel warnings and other public announcements issued by the U.S. State Department should be copied to students and parents wherever relevant. Because a State Department message triggers different responses in different schools, it is important to have a written policy about how these will affect programs you administer or use.

Special waivers are often employed by programs that take place in countries where a State Department Advisory or Warning is in effect. These supplement the liability waiver you have all students sign by taking into account the special information available for the country in question.

Disciplinary questions, which are indirectly related to health and safety, are also an increasing concern on many campuses. It is important to have clear statements regarding both eligibility to study abroad and disciplinary standards and processes while abroad.

SAMPLES

Boston University

[Health, Safety & Security Abroad Web Pages](#)

Center for Global Education

[Safety Abroad First Educational Travel Information \(SAFETI\) Clearinghouse](#)

Elon University

[Assumption of Risk and Student Responsibilities](#)

Indiana University

[Agreement and Release Form](#)

[Office of Overseas Study Statement](#)

[Responsible Study Abroad: Safety and Responsibility Guidelines](#)

Kalamazoo University

[Center for International Programs](#)

Michigan State University

[Emergency Card](#)

[Health, Safety, and Security Concerns in Study Abroad Web Page](#)

[Onsite Operations Manual for Study Abroad Program Leaders](#)

[Study Abroad Program Leader Wallet Guide](#)

Middlebury College

[Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risks and Release Agreement for Students Participating in Non-Middlebury Programs Abroad](#)

[Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risks and Release Agreement for Students Participating in Programs Abroad in the Middle East](#)

[General Risks](#)

[In Case of Emergency Sheet](#)

[Post-Acceptance Health Information Form and Release](#)

[Special Needs Identification Form](#)

[Student Information Sheet](#)

Trinity University

[Acknowledgment Form](#)

[Intent to Study Abroad Form](#)

University of Minnesota

[Health & Safety Web Pages](#)

Villanova University

[Acknowledgment and Assumption of Risks, Statement of Responsibility and Release](#)

[Medical Report Form](#)

Wake Forest University

[Assumption of Risk and Release Form: Wake Forest University Student](#)

CHAPTER 8. ACADEMIC POLICIES, CURRICULUM, AND CREDITS

Academic policies, curriculum requirements, and credit transfer procedures can vary dramatically from institution to institution and, to some extent, within institutions. It is important not only to provide this information to your students, but also to ensure that such policies are enforced consistently for all students.

Academic policies affect all aspects of a student's academic life, from attendance policies to grading criteria. They are normally adapted from the home institution's policies, but may be customized to fit the requirements of particular sites. Program providers may also have their own set of rules and regulations.

Curriculum issues, including major and minor requirements, prerequisites, and acceptable courses taken off campus, are much more specific to schools and departments and must be investigated carefully and represented accurately in order to not place students in a difficult position as they progress toward their degrees. The more detail you can provide students in this regard, the fewer challenges your students will have later.

Credits, depending on the program and your office's relation to it, may be placed directly on a student's transcript (with or without grades) or transferred into a student's record. In the case of the transfer credit you should have a credit transfer approval form, which may already exist at your institution. These forms are generally filled out and approved before the student is approved to study abroad and contain detailed information about the specific courses, which normally must be individually approved for credit transfer by the student's adviser or academic department prior to study abroad. The process is completed when the student or the program provider submits an official transcript of the student's work, which becomes the basis for credit transfer. It is important that the student fully understands the academic policies and that it is reiterated to them from the advising process through to predeparture so that there are no surprises upon their return.

SAMPLES

Elon University

[Academic Policies](#)

Harvard University

[Study Abroad Information and Recommendations by Concentration](#)

Indiana University

[Summary of Academic Policies and Procedures](#)

Michigan State University

[Course Approval Request Form](#)

[Curriculum Integration Project](#)

Skidmore College

[Academic Guidelines](#)

[Policy Document](#)

University of Minnesota

[Academic Policies Credit](#)

[Learning Abroad Center Policies](#)

Villanova University

[Policy for Overseas Study](#)

CHAPTER 9. COMMUNICATION WITH STUDENTS AND PARENTS DURING THE PROGRAM

We are both blessed and cursed by the various forms of instantaneous communication—mobile phones, Twitter, e-mail, Facebook, instant messaging, for example—now available to our students and their families. While we lament the fact that students may rely too much on these electronic umbilical cords to keep them connected to their daily lives back home, we can also take advantage of them to stay in close contact with students (and their families) during emergencies, keep them informed about events in their programs, and help prepare them for their return to their home school.

What is the proper amount of communication with students, and at what point does it cross the line into the realm of “babying” students, given that one of our goals is for students to learn how to confront unfamiliar settings and systems? Only you can speak for your office or institution, as you try to walk the fine line between providing students with necessary contact and information, and hindering their experience.

Please note that this section deals strictly with communication from the home office. It is assumed that, in the case of a program with an office overseas, communication with students will be frequent, expected, and ongoing.

Student records are the basis of communication. They should contain two types of information.

1. The student’s most up-to-date e-mail address and mobile phone number [this information likely must come from the program site since students will not generally have a mobile phone number until they have arrived (if at all)].
2. Emergency contact information for at least two individuals—typically family members—back home. This information may be collected as part of the student’s application or more commonly during the predeparture phase, and should include multiple channels: e-mail address, mailing address, telephone number, and mobile phone number.

Mailings (physical, or more likely electronic) are still useful ways to provide bulk information to your students, including financial aid authorization forms, registration and housing information, and catalogs.

E-mail is something we’d probably like our students to do less of while abroad, but it can be an effective way to reach them for routine or emergency purposes. Keep two points in mind: first, it is easy to overdo e-mail contact; second, you cannot rely on e-mail (or any other form of communication) in a true emergency, so you should have backup plans. The same can be said regarding e-mail communication with parents.

Newsletters—whether general or program-specific, electronic or paper—can provide information about activities on site and news back home. Telephones are useful if and when you need to speak to parents. The Internet is used widely now as the basis for course registration and housing assignment. Your obligation is to make sure that students understand how and when to use Web registration and other such systems. Other Internet resources include newspapers and radio programs. These are invaluable resources for students who are working on their language skills (even after they’ve returned home). The online editions of school newspapers and local newspapers work wonders for the homesick.

SAMPLES

Skidmore College

[Parent Handbook](#)

Delaware Technical Community College

[Parents Information](#)

Indiana University

[A Parent's Guide to Overseas Study](#)

Michigan State University

[Congratulations Sheet for MSU Students](#)

[Congratulations Sheet for Non-MSU Students](#)

University of Colorado at Boulder

[Resources for Family and Friends](#)

University of Minnesota

[Information for Parents](#)

[Parent & Student Roles](#)

CHAPTER 10. REENTRY

For many young people who have lived abroad, the culture shock faced upon reentry to the United States is far more immediate and troublesome than what they experienced upon arrival in their country of destination because it is often unexpected. It is our responsibility to prepare them for this experience and to offer them assistance in readjustment. To some advisers, this is part of a continuous process that began with predeparture orientation activities. And that is often a helpful way to look at reentry—as part of an ongoing experience, whose emotional highs and lows will continue for a while, and which will remain part of their lives.

Students who have returned from abroad are now trying to set the course for the rest of their time in college and for the life that awaits them after college. They are seeking to make their international experience meaningful in personal and professional ways. Because we have created in our students an expectation that their lives will be different after their time abroad, we have a responsibility to show them how to begin to make that happen.

There are many activities that can facilitate the reentry process—parties and receptions, photo contests, and reentry conferences are examples of successful reentry programs. The challenge, as always, is in communication, which can be especially difficult given that the students are beginning now to move away from your office, rather than toward it.

The timing of communication can be difficult to judge. Many programs have success with sending reentry materials to students who are still abroad. E-mails work well in this regard. Mailings to students' permanent addresses—especially for students who have been abroad for the spring semester—are often well-received, as are communications that reach them at the beginning of their first semester back and that are tied to activities also occurring early during their first semester back.

Print and electronic newsletters can help the students establish a sense of community among themselves.

Similarly, a reentry handbook can cover a lot of issues based on the experiences of other returned students, and can provide a lot of information about resume writing, career planning, and ways that students can remain connected to their experience abroad.

An invitation to show their photos can keep a lot of returned students directly involved, and can put you in touch with potential peer advisers and recruiters for your program. Contests are popular—feature the best photos in flyers, brochures, and websites.

Don't neglect the usefulness of your website to returned students. Just because they're back doesn't mean that you don't need your website anymore!

SAMPLES

College of St. Benedict & St. John's University

[Reentry Conference](#)

Elon University

[Reentry Adjustment](#)

[Integrating Your Experience into Your Future Career](#)

Hobart and William Smith Colleges

[Writer's Workshop for Returned Students](#)

Metro Boston Students Study Abroad Reentry Conference

[Metro Boston Students Study Abroad \(BASAA\) Website](#)

[Resources from the Metro Boston Students Study Abroad Reentry Conference](#)

Michigan State University

[Certificate of Participation](#)

[Spartans Abroad Photo Contest Entry Form](#)

[Student Contests Flyer](#)

[Tales from Abroad](#)

[Unpacking Your Study Abroad Experience Workshop Flyer](#)

Middlebury College

[Reentry Resources](#)

Skidmore College

[Off-Campus Study & Exchanges—Coming Back](#)

University of Minnesota

[Reentry Activities](#)

Villanova University

[Photo Release Form](#)

CHAPTER 11. EVALUATION

There are three distinct kinds of evaluations that should be part of your ongoing review of programs. All are important aspects of program management. Your students will provide two of these types of evaluations.

- Program evaluations
- Course evaluations (which may or may not be part of an overall program evaluation).

Evaluations can be challenging to facilitate because each institution has different needs for assessment. Some colleges and universities want to mirror the evaluations distributed on campus, while others need to develop evaluation specific to the program and location abroad. Many offices on your campus may need to be involved in the evaluation process. Some institutions may use specific IT software connected with internal servers for evaluation, while others may still be paper-based. With such an array of evaluation methods, it is challenging to find good examples to demonstrate. This process may merit further conversations with IT and academic affairs to determine the best methods or evaluation and distribution of information.

The importance of evaluations is obvious to all of us who work in education administration: to improve the quality of the program and the services of the education abroad office; to guarantee a consistently high level of instruction and ensure that courses will continue to be accepted by your home institution and faculty; and to provide more accurate predeparture information, among other uses. Also, it is important to ensure that the student experience is still a positive one, through assessment of learning outcomes and overall success of their experience abroad.

Further, evaluations are often made available to prospective students as part of the advising process. While not as useful as face-to-face peer advising, written evaluations can nevertheless help a student identify which program meets his or her needs.

The final type of evaluation is a site review. During a site review, you and a member of your faculty or a third party (or some combination of these) review and evaluate a program in detail. This may be a program offered by a provider that you are considering for your students or a program of your own undergoing review. Because its questions can be articulated prior to the visit, such an evaluation often represents a necessary complement to student evaluations.

SAMPLES

Michigan State University

[Student Evaluation Form](#)

Skidmore College

[Student Evaluation](#)

Villanova University

[Overseas Study Evaluation Form](#)

[Survey on International Studies Summer Programs](#)

CHAPTER 12. PROMOTING INTERNATIONALIZATION

Many colleges and universities now plan activities marking International Education Week in November, providing activities for international students, host cultural events, and plan other internationally themed programs. These are all excellent opportunities for your office—and especially for returned students—to promote your programs and further the ongoing internationalization of your campus. It is also a great opportunity to collaborate with other offices to put together programming with an international theme (career services, international student office, alumni association, etc.)

Types of programs to consider include:

- Model United Nations
- International film festivals
- Lecture series
- Student activity groups

All of the communication methods you employ to promote programs, information sessions, reentry activities, and other events can be employed to communicate with students about on-campus international programs. Such activity will raise the profile of your office with students, faculty, and administrators, and it is in your interest to take the lead in communication about these events, as well as in planning the events themselves.

SAMPLES

Delaware Technical Community College

[Global Understanding Series](#)

Michigan State University

[Global Opportunities Fair Poster](#)

Skidmore College

[Global Skidmore Website](#)

University of Arizona

[International Education Week Flyer](#)

[Global Reach Newsletter](#)

[International Education Week Poster](#)

[International Education Week Calendar of Events](#)

University of Minnesota

[Curriculum Integration](#)

CHAPTER 13. STUDENT FUNDING

The ability to finance the costs of an education abroad program may be the deciding factor in a student's choice to pursue study abroad. Some students may not consider the possibility because they believe it is financially beyond their grasp. One key way of helping the student is for them to compare apples to apples. Talk the students through the costs of the programs and what each one does or does not include. Another key to successfully increasing the number of students who study abroad, and to helping students maximize the financial aid they are eligible for, is for them to start thinking about financing for an international experience as early as orientation for their college career. Students should be encouraged to think about and plan for their education abroad experience from the moment they arrive on your campus. Working collaboratively and effectively with your institution's enrollment management, financial aid, student affairs and business office teams will also help make education abroad an affordable reality through appropriate budgeting and planning.

As the cost of education continues to rise and all college administrators become increasingly aware of the debt burden that students are graduating with, an understanding of financial aid is essential for those advising students about education abroad options. Education abroad professionals must have a basic grasp of the regulations of financial aid, how those regulations are applied at their own institutions, and where to direct students with questions. Ideally, education abroad staff should work with the financial aid office staff to make sure that complete and accurate information about financial aid for education abroad is available and that processing student financial aid is completed smoothly and expediently. Education abroad advisers who have not worked with their colleagues in financial aid should investigate the relevant policies at their home campus and start a working relationship with the financial aid office. Knowing how your institution's policies work for applying the various types of aid to an education abroad program will allow you to analyze various program models to find the combination that will help to maximize participation on your campus.

In addition to having a good basic grasp of financial aid policies and procedures, it is helpful to provide estimated program costs for your students. Aside from indicating the cost of tuition, fees, room and board, offering estimates on books, travel, and personal expenses will give your students a realistic idea of what the total cost for the abroad experience will be. These figures should be reviewed each year because of changes in currency exchange rates. Compiling these figures not only assists your students in their financial planning, but will help your financial aid officer in determining aid eligibility.

Last, for many students, the financial aid cultivated from government resources may not be enough to cover student needs. Along with your aid office, determine the best method for delivering all available information on external education abroad scholarships and fellowships to students. Highlighting these resources will shed light on their existence and encourage students to investigate these options.

COST EXAMPLES

University of Hawaii–Hilo

[Study Abroad Expenses](#)

University of North Dakota International Programs

[FAQ–Money Matters](#)

[Financial Aid](#)

SAMPLES BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION

COMMUNITY COLLEGES

College of DuPage

[Office of Student Financial Aid](#)

[Study Abroad Scholarships](#)

Delaware Technical Community College

[Study Abroad Programs Scholarships](#)

San Diego City College

[Study Abroad Opportunities](#)

PRIVATE COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

Boston University

[International Programs Financial Aid](#)

Elon University

[Financial Aid Brochure](#)

New York University

[Study Abroad Financial Aid](#)

St. Joseph's University

[Scholarship and Financial Aid Information for Study Abroad](#)

Santa Clara University

[Financing Your Study Abroad Program](#)

Trinity University

[Study Abroad Financial Aid](#)

PUBLIC COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY

Illinois State University

[FAQ about Financing Study Abroad](#)

Michigan State University

[How to Finance Your Study Abroad](#)

University of Colorado at Boulder

[Financial Aid and Study Abroad](#)

University of Minnesota

[Learning Abroad Center Financial Resources](#)

NOTABLE WEB SITES

FinAid.org

[Domestic Exchange and Study Abroad Programs](#)

IIEPassport

[Study Abroad Funding](#)

Studyabroad.com

[Study Abroad Financial Aid and Grants, Fellowship, Scholarships, and Funding](#)