

Education Abroad Policy University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Preamble

Education abroad can be a very meaningful and rewarding component of the college experience and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign encourages all students to consider study abroad while earning their degree. While the University encourages participation, it has a responsibility to establish requirements for student participation to ensure that study abroad is an appropriate and relatively safe educational activity.

Illinois Abroad and Global Exchange (IAGE) and the university's academic units administer university-sponsored education abroad. All education abroad travel must be registered in the university's central study abroad database. Any unregistered activity cannot be University-sponsored. As such, participants are ineligible for scholarships, financial aid, travel reimbursement, international insurance, emergency assistance or transcribed academic credit.

All participants in education abroad activities at Illinois should read through the following statements of policy:

1. Policies for Students: Academics, Conduct, Disability Accommodations, Withdrawal, and Cancellation
2. Policies for All Participants: Health, Safety, and Program Approval
3. Policies on Short-Term Programs and Leadership
4. Definitions

As these policies are updated periodically, it will be beneficial to review this document each time education abroad is undertaken. Questions about policies can be addressed to [IAGE](#) or a college/school that administers education abroad programs.

1. Policies for Students: Academics, Conduct, Disability Accommodations, Withdrawal, and Cancellation

1.1. *Before departure.* Before departure, students must fulfill certain requirements to remain eligible for education abroad.

1.1.1. *Academics.* Before departure, students must fulfill certain academic requirements to become and remain eligible for education abroad.

1.1.1.1. Students must apply and be accepted into a study abroad program by both Illinois and the partner offering the program. Some programs

may have special eligibility requirements. The requirements will be clearly identified and must be fulfilled and maintained prior to departure.

- 1.1.1.2. Students under the age of 18 at any stage in the process—from time of application to participation in study abroad program—must have a parent or guardian sign all legal forms needed for application, admission, and participation in the program. These forms will be identified to the students.
- 1.1.1.3. Students must fulfill and maintain any additional eligibility requirements that may be necessary due to the special nature of certain programs. Program descriptions will clearly identify any unique requirements.
- 1.1.1.4. With few exceptions, acceptance is contingent students being in good academic standing. Additionally, some programs may require significantly higher GPA minimums, and/or minimum grades in certain areas (for example, a major field of study).
- 1.1.1.5. Students on academic probation at the time of application are typically not eligible to participate unless their home college approves a petition allowing them to study abroad. If approved for study abroad, students on academic probation must meet with their academic advisor prior to departure and, like all students, must meet all applicable academic requirements during the program.
- 1.1.1.6. The home college will assess students placed on probationary status between program acceptance and the program's start date on a case-by-case basis. If a student is deemed ineligible to participate while on probation, the regular cancellation/withdrawal policy will apply. However, in case of an academic drop decision between acceptance into a program and commencement of the program, students immediately lose University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign student status and are ineligible to participate. Students are also responsible for program withdrawal penalties in the case of academic drop status.
- 1.1.1.7. Students must secure all required travel documents, including passport, visa, work permit, etc. They are responsible for securing required travel documents, although study abroad offices may assist. Note that U.S. and foreign government offices issue travel documents at their discretion and have final authority over their issuance. What government offices require of students may vary based on student citizenship.

- 1.1.1.8. Students should be aware that academic advisors and study abroad professionals generally discourage participation in students' first or final semesters. Participation in semester study abroad programs during a student's first semester at Illinois is discouraged, as programs expect students to have demonstrated academic success in Illinois coursework. Participation in semester study abroad programs during a student's final semester on campus is discouraged due to potential challenges around credit transfer, degree conferral, and financial aid/scholarships.
- 1.1.2. Conduct. Students must meet expectations related to conduct to become and remain eligible for study abroad.
 - 1.1.2.1. Students are expected to be in good disciplinary standing with the university to participate in study abroad. Students on university conduct probation (disciplinary probation) or dismissal held in abeyance status in the term prior to or during the term of the study abroad program are ineligible to study abroad, absent a successful petition to the home college and sponsoring unit for an exception.
 - 1.1.2.2. Participation in study abroad by any student with any pending disciplinary action is on a conditional basis, and if such pending disciplinary action results in a finding of responsibility, the student's (continued) participation in the study abroad program may be in jeopardy. This includes the possibility that a student may be withdrawn from a program even after the start of the program.
- 1.1.3. *Accommodations for Disabilities.* Before departure, students requiring accommodations abroad for documented disabilities must work with their study abroad office and DRES to arrange for accommodations support.
 - 1.1.3.1. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is committed to providing access to education abroad. Students are responsible for requesting any reasonable accommodations required for any disability in an appropriate period prior to departure. To obtain accommodations support for any disability diagnosis while studying abroad, students must provide the university's Disability Resources and Education Services appropriate documentation of disability.
 - 1.1.3.2. Requested accommodations may not be available at the overseas location. If this is so, the university will attempt to provide alternative accommodations when possible.

1.1.3.3. If students do not make disability diagnosis(es) known in a timely manner, the university may delay a student's participation in the program until reasonable accommodations can be determined.

1.1.3.4. [DRES](#) maintains relevant policy and practical advice online.

1.1. *After departure.* After departure, students must fulfill certain requirements to remain eligible for study abroad.

1.1.1. *Academics.* Study abroad is above all else an academic experience; failure to remain engaged in the academic dimension of study abroad has defined consequences.

- For academic and related reasons, late arrivals and early departures are not permitted except as approved in emergencies.
- Students must remain in designated program location(s) and participate in scheduled curricular, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities. During designated unscheduled time, students may travel, subject to constraints in the interest of student health and safety.
- With few exceptions, education abroad participants must maintain full-time status as required by their specific program, both at Illinois and the partner institution. This enrollment must be maintained through deadlines as designated in program specifications. College approval is required for undergraduate students to carry a load of fewer than 12 hours in a fall or spring term. Failure to maintain full-time or approved part-time enrollment will result in withdrawal from the program, in which case, the regular cancellation/withdrawal policy will apply.

1.1.2. *Conduct.* After departure, continuing eligibility to participate in education abroad depends in large measure on adherence to policies that apply to all Illinois students regardless of location of enrollment.

- A student's rights and responsibilities outlined in the [Student Code](#) apply to off-campus conduct, including conduct while on a study abroad program (see, specifically, section 1-301).
- Illinois students participating in study abroad are expected to participate actively by attending all classes and program activities, including social events, field trips, and excursions. In all

circumstances, students must conduct themselves as responsible representatives of the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Academic misconduct, endangering the health or safety of any person, sexual misconduct (more below), and destruction of property are just some of the activities that the *Student Code* prohibits and for which it prescribes sanctions.

- In addition to university sanctions, some misconduct may expose students to legal prosecution if in violation of local laws. Students are also subject to, and must comply with, all rules and standards of conduct issued by the program provider.
- The university may take disciplinary action for incidents that violate the university's rules of conduct even though such conduct is not prohibited by local laws or program partners.
- The university has zero tolerance for sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct violates the university's institutional values and is strictly prohibited, regardless of where it occurs. Students may [report sexual misconduct](#) directly, or may report it to an Illinois faculty or staff member, most of whom are classified as Title IX Responsible Employees. Responsible Employees have defined responsibilities with respect to reporting sexual misconduct they observe or that is reported to them. [Details of Responsible Employee roles and other roles](#) (e.g., Confidential Advisor) are maintained by the university.

1.1.3. *Dismissal.* With respect to academic and conduct requirements for continuing participation in study abroad, the university has the authority to dismiss a student from a program. Additionally, study abroad partner institutions and study abroad providers may dismiss a student. Students dismissed from the program will be responsible for the costs of their return transportation and will not be entitled to a refund of any fees, dues, tuition or payments of any kind that have been paid in connection with their participation in the program. If dismissed from their accommodations but not the program, the university, program provider, and program staff will have no further responsibility for their accommodations. The student will be responsible for finding and paying for new accommodations, and may not be entitled to a refund of any fees or pre-paid costs associated with the initial program accommodations. Program dismissal results in no credit for academic coursework completed after the date of dismissal. Circumstances justifying dismissal include but are not limited to:

- Students whose conduct does not comply with all rules, regulations, and standards of conduct issued by the university (including, but not limited to, the *Student Code*).
- Students whose conduct is in violation of the rules and guidelines of the sponsoring institution abroad.
- Students whose conduct is in violation of regulations set forth by the on-site Resident Director.
- Students whose conduct is in violation of the laws and standards of their host country or of any country travelled to during the program.
- Situations in which a student's academic performance or conduct causes their presence in the program to jeopardize the reputation of the university, the participation of others in the program, or the safety of the student or other participants.

1.2. *Student withdrawal and refunds, and program cancellation.*

1.2.1. *Withdrawal before departure.* Students must officially notify their study abroad office by email of a withdrawal from any study abroad program. It is not sufficient to withdraw an application online. There are specific withdrawal procedures that are dependent on program type.

- Semester study abroad programs. University of Illinois students who completely withdraw from their semester abroad term must:
 - Withdraw from the study abroad registration or course in the Illinois Registration system.
 - Notify their college office via in writing by email.
 - Notify their study abroad office in writing via email
 - Notify their study abroad program provider or host institution (if applicable). If the Illinois course-drop deadline is past, students must contact their college office to drop the study abroad registration.
 - Students who completely withdraw from a semester study abroad program while abroad must contact their study abroad office, college office, and their host university, and follow the established procedures pertinent to their situation for both institutions.
 - A student is eligible for a [medical withdrawal](#) from both the study abroad program and the University of Illinois only when conditions specified by the Office of the Dean of Students have been met.

- *Short-term programs.* Students may need to withdraw registration from any Illinois course associated with the short-term program (full semester or Part of Term B course).
- 1.2.2. *Withdrawal after departure.* The *departure.* The University can opt to withdraw a student after departure if the student has been dropped from the university for either academic status or disciplinary action. Students who are withdrawn from their study abroad program due to being dropped from the university will not receive a refund for any study abroad-related expenses billed by the university. Students who voluntarily opt to return home early receive no refunds.
- If a student decides to return home, they can register for courses and will be charged based on their level of enrollment.
 - If a student chooses to return home early and does not register for courses on the Urbana campus, they need to be withdrawn from the semester by their college office. A study abroad withdrawal follows the same process and schedule as an on-campus semester withdrawal. The date of the withdrawal should be based on the date the student notifies the college.
 - Students must officially notify their study abroad office by email of a withdrawal from any study abroad program after the start of the program. It is not sufficient to withdraw an application online. There are specific withdrawal procedures that are dependent on program type.
- 1.2.3. *Refund policy.* The date a student notifies the study abroad office via email is the date by which any refund will be calculated. It is not sufficient to withdraw an application online, by student or study abroad office staff. Depending on the situation, there may be a balance due at the time of withdrawal. Those charges are billed to the student account and must be paid to the University of Illinois according to established policies. Refund policies and cancellation policies should be included on the Confirmation of Participation documents that students sign as part of their financial contract to participate in the program.
- *Refunds for withdrawal prior to departure.* Students who are in committed status for a program and who have signed the Confirmation of Participation are financially obligated to program costs. If a student chooses to withdraw completely or is completely withdrawn from the program by staff, up to the day before the advertised start date of the program, the student will pay:
 - \$350 withdrawal fee (semester/AY programs); \$250 withdrawal fee (summer/short term programs)
 - Any non-refundable portion of airfare

- Any non-refundable payments made on behalf of the student to the host university or program provider
- Any withdrawal fees charged by host institution or provider
- *Refunds for withdrawal after start of program.* No refunds of any kind will be made once student arrives at the program site and begins the program. The only exception is verifiable health matters, which follow the same procedures as Medical Withdrawal from the University of Illinois semester. In this case, recoverable costs will be refunded. Under no circumstances can any requests for refunds be considered for students who complete the program regardless of the mode of instruction. No refunds will be made for housing costs.

1.2.4. *Program cancellation.* From time to time, the university may need to cancel semester and short-term study abroad programs, either before or after they begin.

Cancellation before a program starts. Should the University need to cancel a program for health and/or safety reasons, every effort will be made to refund recoverable costs to participants. The time of program cancellation will determine the actual recoverable costs. The closer the program is to the start date, the less recoverable costs will be available.

- *Cancellation after a program starts.* Should the University need to a program cancellation become necessary for health and/or safety reasons, every effort will be made to refund recoverable costs to participants. The time of program cancellation will determine the actual recoverable costs. The closer the program is to the end date the less recoverable costs will be available.

2. Policies for All Participants: Health, Safety, and Program Approval. Before and after departure, all participants in study abroad must take prescribed steps to become and remain responsible for their own health, safety, and security while studying abroad. The university recognizes its role in promoting these steps by establishing minimum requirements for health and safety. Colleges/schools may introduce additional requirements in consultation with Illinois International and the Office of University Counsel.

2.1. *Self-education.* In addition to information provided by the university and program providers, students are responsible for educating themselves regarding the planned study abroad activities and travel destination(s). All students must follow U.S. and state laws related to international travel, as well as laws applicable in the country or countries being visited, and must consider guidance from government agencies, such as the U.S. Department of State (DoS) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

- 2.2. *Health.* Students are responsible for their health and well-being during study abroad. They must assess their health needs, the impact of traveling, living, and studying abroad, and corresponding strategies and resources necessary to maintain their well-being. Students are also responsible for researching and following vaccination and prophylaxis recommendations from the CDC. The university encourages students to consult healthcare professionals, the McKinley Health Center Travel Clinic, the university's division of Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES), and program providers.
- 2.3. *Program leader travel orientation.* Faculty, staff, students, or other individuals leading study abroad must attend a Program Leader Safety and Best Practices Workshop led by International Safety and Security within the preceding twelve (12) months. Program assistants are encouraged to attend, but at a minimum must be familiar with orientation material. Program leaders and assistants must be current on Title IX and Clery training requirements.
- 2.4. *Student orientation.* All students must receive a university pre-departure orientation that includes health and safety. All students, regardless of program type or duration, must also receive an on-site orientation in the host country provided by the partner university/organization. Individual students must attend on-site orientations as required by program providers. If offered but not required, students are strongly encouraged to participate.
- 2.5. *High risk destinations.* Programs subject to approval per paragraph 2.9 in the *Study Abroad Program Approval* section will address High-Risk Destinations during the approval process. All other education abroad travel will comply with the Policy on International Travel for destinations identified as high-risk.
- 2.6. *Registration.* All participants in study abroad, to include program leaders, must be registered in the university study abroad database(s). Enrollment in the university-approved International Insurance fulfills this requirement. Students traveling away from program sites on personal travel will provide travel dates, their destination(s), and contact information to the program provider if required.
- 2.7. *International insurance.* The university-approved International Insurance ("Insurance") is mandatory for all study abroad participants, regardless of other insurance coverage(s). Participants must also maintain their U.S. health insurance while abroad. The International Safety and Security Fee, which pays for the Insurance, will be included in program costs provided to students. The Insurance covers personal travel during program dates; independent travel outside program dates is ineligible for coverage. Travelers should purchase a separate policy for such travel. For semester and longer programs, Insurance coverage extends two days before and after the program dates. For all other study abroad, coverage is limited to the program dates.
- 2.8. *U.S. Department of State Traveler Notifications.* Before departure, all study abroad participants holding U.S. passports must register in the U.S. Department of State Smart

Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). All non-U.S. citizens must register for U.S. Department of State emergency notifications and are encouraged to check with their government for traveler information. Participants will document STEP enrollment in the study abroad database.

2.9. *Study abroad program approval.* The Program Review Committee will review and approve programs that require registration or application. The review process will account for new and existing programs, as well as semester and short-term programs.

2.9.1. *Short-term programs.* All short-term programs must be approved each year. The review for a new program consists of three phases: *concept, planning, and final*. Programs existing when this policy is approved only require final approval the first year. A subsequent iteration will require a new three-phase review. For new programs, sponsoring colleges and schools will not admit students before the Program Review Committee approves the concept. For all programs, program leaders or sponsoring units must receive final approval before participants travel. Activities excluded by the International Insurance

will not be approved unless there is a strong, direct tie to the academic goal and learning objectives and appropriate risk mitigation strategies are implemented. Significant changes to an existing program (provider, country, academic focus) requires a new three-phase review. Once every four years, existing programs require a new three-phase review.

- 2.9.2. *Semester and academic year programs.* All semester and academic year programs must be approved. For new programs, sponsoring colleges and schools will not initiate the contract process before the Program Review Committee provides initial approval. The University will not sign the contract before a final review is approved. Sponsoring colleges and schools may only conditionally accept students into the program before the contract is signed. Programs existing when this policy is approved must be reviewed and approved within three years, and then at contract renewal or upon significant changes within the lifespan of the contract.

3. Policies on Short-Term Programs and Leadership

3.1. Academics.

- 3.1.1. For credit-bearing programs, sponsoring colleges or schools will approve the program's academic content. All short-term study abroad programs must provide students with clear academic goals and learning objectives tied to the study abroad location. Additionally, program leaders should design programs to provide students with global perspectives and cultural context. Program activities should allow students to contextualize their studies and increase their global competency.

3.2. Development.

- 3.2.1. Short-term programs must be financially viable. Faculty compensation policies are determined at the unit level. The sponsoring college or school will not admit students before reviewing and approving the program budget. All agreements, payments, contracts, and purchases will comply with university requirements for purchasing and contracting.
- 3.2.2. Programs must be reviewed and approved by the *program review committee* for health and safety per paragraph 2.9 *Study Abroad Program Approval*.

3.3. Leadership.

- 3.3.1. The sponsoring college, school, or unit must review and approve program leaders. University of Illinois faculty, staff can serve as program leaders. Graduate students can serve as Program Assistants. Program leaders should possess subject matter expertise and familiarity with the program

destination(s). In locations where the program leader lacks experience, the use of a local program provider is required.

- 3.3.2. All programs should have a minimum of one (1) program leader and one (1) program assistant and a subsequent student to leader ratio of no more than 15 to 1. Programs with 16 students must have at least two leaders. Sponsoring units must approve non-University of Illinois employees who serve in a leadership position.
 - 3.3.3. Program leaders will serve as the initial responder to logistical, medical, behavioral, and other participant crises. Per paragraph, 2.3 *Program Leader Travel Orientation* above, program leaders must attend a Program Leader Safety and Best Practices Workshop within 12 months of leading students abroad and be familiar with the University's Program Leader Emergency Protocol.
- 3.4. *Program leader conduct and expectations.* Traveling with students and interacting with them in informal and foreign environments presents unique challenges and stressful situations not always found in the campus classroom setting. Just as students must abide by the *Student Code* as well as additional program-specific conduct rules while on a study abroad program, program leaders must demonstrate strong professional ethics and adhere to university campus policies while traveling with students.
- 3.4.1. *Diversity and inclusion.* Following guidance from the [Inclusive Illinois Commitment](#), the [Illinois Diversity Values Statement](#) and [NAFSA: Association of International Educators](#), study abroad program leaders are expected to foster understanding and respect of a diversity of worldviews, histories, and cultural knowledge across a range of social groups including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, abilities, economic class, religion, and their intersections. Program leaders should actively: encourage the expression of different voices, perspectives, and ideas; address issues of intolerance and insensitivity when they arise; and create a learning environment that is accepting of difference. Unacceptable conduct can negatively affect student experience and lead to legal problems for Illinois faculty and staff. Examples of unacceptable conduct are: interacting with students or other participants under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or using alcohol or drugs on the job; disrespectful treatment of other Illinois faculty/staff, local partners, or students; consensual relations with students as outlined in the report of the [Campus Consensual Relationship Policy Task Force](#) (and leaving the group mid-program (except in the case of family emergency)).

- 3.4.2. *Alcohol*. Many education abroad programs travel to locations where alcohol is consumed in a more social manner than in the U.S. Regardless, as a representative of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, program leaders will be accountable for their actions and any consequences. The consumption of alcohol and/or the results of such consumption are never considered a reason to compromise personal responsibility or accountability. Program leader should limit their alcohol consumption, even during free time, to ensure their judgment is never compromised or impaired.
- 3.4.3. *Sexual misconduct*. Program leaders are responsible for knowing and understanding the University's policies related to discrimination and sexual misconduct. Sexual misconduct includes sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault. Program leaders are Title IX Responsible Employees. In addition, leaders should be careful to avoid any behavior that could be interpreted as inappropriate between leader and student, such as spending time alone with a student or exhibiting signs of favoritism.

4. Definitions.

- 4.1. *Committed Status*. Refers to applications in the study abroad system with a status of committed are considered post-decision if/when the decision date has passed. Committed applications cannot be withdrawn by the applicant. Students accept their offer of admission to the program by changing their status from accepted to committed. This financial obligates students to the non-refundable withdrawal fees.
- 4.2. *Confirmation of Participation (COP)*. This is document outlines in detail study abroad program costs and requires the students signature to acknowledge those costs. It financially obligates to program costs. Outlined costs on the COP document should also match the Student Financial Aid Budget. Students are not permitted to study abroad if this document is not signed.
- 4.3. *Education Abroad*. Education, including, but not limited to, enrollment in courses, experiential learning, internships, service learning, and other learning activities, which occurs outside the participant's home country, the country in which they are enrolled as a student, or the country in which they are employed as *personnel*. As a matter of practice, Education abroad and study abroad are often used interchangeably.
- 4.4. *Study Abroad*. A subtype of Education Abroad that results in progress toward an academic degree at a student's home institution. (Or may also be defined as a subtype of Off-Campus Study that takes place outside the country where the student's home institution is located.) This meaning, which has become standard among international educators in the U.S., excludes the pursuit of a full academic degree at a foreign institution. (In many other countries the term study abroad refers to, or at least includes, such study.)

- 4.5. *International Insurance.* The negotiated global group insurance policy that provides health, medical evacuation and repatriation, and security evacuation coverage for travel abroad related to the university.
- 4.6. *Program Assistants.* Faculty, staff, graduate and or other individuals with assigned responsibilities to assist a program leader on behalf of the university. The sponsoring unit, program leader, and program assistant will mutually agree upon the assigned responsibilities.
- 4.7. *Program Leader.* An individual with responsibility for supervising safety and security of program participants on behalf of the university. Depending on the program, activity, or organization, the program leader may be a faculty or staff. The individual's on- campus roles may include teaching, program development, advising, recruitment, admission, orientation, and advocacy. Program leaders may be called on to assume a range of important responsibilities while abroad in the areas of administration, logistics, finances, and academics.
- 4.8. *Program Provider (or Third-Party Provider).* An institution or organization outside the University offering programs or services to students. A program provider may be another (non-Illinois) college or university, a nonprofit organization, a for-profit business, a consortium, or other entity.
- 4.9. *Recoverable Costs.* A portion of costs paid by the University of Illinois on behalf of the study abroad program that can be recovered or refunded by a travel agency, tour operator, or other travel supplier.
- 4.10. *Short-term Programs.* Typically led by a faculty (often called Faculty-Led) or staff member, and accompanied by a spring or fall semester pre-departure course, these programs can last eight weeks or fewer; may include summer, January, or other terms of eight weeks or fewer. Usually, though not always, 7-14 days is the common duration abroad.