Study Abroad
Faculty Handbook
Center for Intercultural Engagement
Union University
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STUDY ABROAD AT UNION:
A FACULTY GUIDE

This handbook is for faculty who are assisting students in selecting an external program or designing a departmental international or domestic program. While this evolving document provides an overview of the opportunities and resources that are available, faculty are encouraged to contact the Study Abroad Coordinator for additional information and dialog.

What Are the Benefits of Study Abroad at Union?
Union University’s Study Abroad Program, housed in the Center for Intercultural Engagement (CIE), is committed to providing optimal duty of care concerning external programming opportunities. To that end, the Study Abroad program provides structured support for both domestic and international curricular and co-curricular initiatives that reflect’s Union’s commitment to being a high contact, high care institution. We work with faculty and students to craft study programs using our expertise in off-site travel, course transcription management, and financial aid implications. With a clear protocol prior to departure, support during the experience, and a thorough debriefing process upon return, the CIE is committed to ensuring that students have a safe, academically rigorous, and interculturally relevant experience.

How Does a Faculty Member Assist Students Who Wish to Travel Abroad?

- Dialog with student to establish purposeful plans that support student development and learning goals
- Review the types of programs offered through Union’s study abroad (See Appendix A for a list of study abroad categories offered at Union) to ensure External Study courses integrates with home institution’s degree requirements
- Refer students to the External Study Student Handbook (available on our website)
- Send students to the Study Abroad Coordinator early in the process

Note: Students who do not work through the Study Abroad program must treat their study abroad experience as if they were taking courses at another institution in the U.S to transfer back to Union. When they return, they will need to apply for readmission to Union. Students are responsible for submitting transcripts from the international institute where they studied to an approved translation and evaluation agency. The Registrar will determine course credit when the translation and evaluation are received.

What Is Included in the Study Abroad Process for Students?
Students must meet the following requirements in order to Study Abroad. Students must have completed at least one semester at Union University before applying to Study abroad, have a 2.5 GPA, and get the approval of the Dean of Students and their academic adviser.

Completion of the Study Abroad Advising Form. The student must complete the Proposed Study Abroad Review form and get pre-travel approval for the courses they plan to take. Course substitutions satisfying a major or minor requirement must be approved by the chair of the department; elective courses must be approved by the Study Abroad Coordinator; and courses satisfying general core requirements must be approved by the Registrar. This form is
due before the end of the semester prior to travel and will also serve as a request that these courses be added to the schedule so that the Registrar can assign a course synonym.

Students should understand that it is the department’s prerogative to allow specific course substitutions for the major or minor. A department may ask the student to take an exam or complete additional requirements before the substitution credit is granted. It is very important to caution students that they cannot receive credit for a course that is a repeat of work for which they have already received college credit or a course whose level is lower than the UU course equivalent. Although academic advisers and students work with the Study Abroad Coordinator, decisions remain the purview of the student. Advisers should encourage students to develop decision-making skills and to be self-directed. In light of this objective, while advisers should practice continuous advisement throughout the experience, it is the student’s responsibility to notify all parties concerned when there is a change to the Proposed Study Abroad Review form.

**Registration.** Students who study off-campus will be registered at Union by the Program Coordinator using the appropriate departmental international external study course numbers (180, 280, 380, 480) or domestic external study course numbers (179, 279, 379, 479). This registration process ensures that students’ records are kept current and that they do not have to apply for readmission. It also gives them access to their student email account, WebAdvisor, and other campus services and ensures that financial aid is not interrupted. As with general pre-registration guidelines, the CIE program coordinator cannot register students with holds on their accounts.

Should a student need to change a course after beginning their program, to ensure accurate transcription they must notify the Program Coordinator as soon as possible and forward the new course syllabus. The Program Coordinator will notify the Registrar, the department that approved the proposed course, and the student’s advisor.

**Management of Financial Matters.** Uninterrupted enrollment at Union greatly facilitates the continuation of external financial aid and externally funded scholarships. Union provides assistance to students concerning the provision of internal and external financial aid. However, due to the varied nature of UU Study Abroad programs, students need to meet with Student Financial Planning to discuss distribution of awards (see Appendix B). Furthermore, grades will not be submitted until full program and study abroad payments have been made.

Institutional scholarship funds may only be used for UU tuition. Extra-institutional funds may be used for any type of study as long as the proper criteria are met per the Office of Student Financial Planning. External Study Scholarships (see the following) are awarded for both study abroad and domestic study twice during the academic year. Deadlines will be posted on the CIE website.

- The J.M. Powell Memorial Scholarship, an endowed fund designated for international semester-length study, is also available for tuition or non-tuition based expenses.
- The Cynthia P. Jayne Fellowship for Global Studies Award is an institutional scholarship and awards should not exceed the cost of the program’s tuition.
Applications for the above listed scholarships are available on the Horizons Travel Registry and on the CIE website.

For external programs where the official transcript is issued by the host institution, students pay all program costs (with the exception of program deposit paid directly to the provider with their application) to the Program Coordinator in lieu of paying Union tuition. The coordinator will make payment to the external program provider. However, Union cannot issue a check to the provider until all student program fees have been paid.

Travel and expenses not covered in the program fees are the student’s responsibility. Students are also charged a separate Study Abroad Program Fee to cover administrative costs. The General Student Fee is waived for the term(s) that the student is off campus.

**Participation in Pre-Departure and Re-Entry Sessions.** In accordance with the *Standards of Good Practices in Education Abroad*, prior to departure, students are required to attend an orientation and pre-departure training and risk management sessions. Along with the initial interview, the pre-departure process provides assessment of the student’s individual needs and allows the Study Abroad Coordinator to continuously monitor, maintain, support and improve advising and orientation. The sessions also offer further opportunities for communication. All pre-departure forms will be outlined and are due to the Program Coordinator at the end of the semester prior to travel.

International experiences have a profound impact on our students who go abroad. The required re-entry meeting allows us to make contact with students during the critical early days of the semester that they return to Union and provide support with evaluating the experience. Students are reminded to follow up on requirements that they must complete before course credit can be awarded. We alert them to some of the common frustrations and concerns of returning students and professionals, and give them an opportunity to make contact with others on campus that have had similar experiences. The CIE also works with the Vocatio Center to assist returning students with career goals and interests.

**Risk Mitigation.** All students traveling internationally will complete risk mitigation training following protocols established through Fort Sherman Academy and reflected in the *Standards of Good Practices in Education Abroad*. The Study Abroad Coordinator reserves the right to require students traveling domestically to also complete the training as may be needed.

**Insurance.** All students and faculty participating in an external study program must have proof of comprehensive health and repatriation insurance as well as travel insurance prior to departure.

**Program Evaluation.** Faculty experience with the external study process and the feedback faculty receive from students is important and aids in our assessment process. We are also interested in faculty evaluation of the quality of the programs we support. Has the experience had a positive impact on the students’ work since they returned to Union? Do the course materials reflect the level and quality of study that we expect for students? Any insight that faculty can give us is greatly appreciated.
How Does Union’s Study Abroad Program Identify Preferred Programs?
One of the Study Abroad program’s primary responsibilities is to evaluate external study experiences. Our commitment is to ensure that we support domestic and international programs that have high academic standards, provide opportunities for students to engage with people from the host institution and the surrounding community, offer a safe living environment, and have an adequate support system for the student. The CIE adheres to the Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad put forth by the Forum on Education Abroad.

Union’s Study Abroad program uses a rigorous set of criteria for identifying and cultivating relationships with high-quality, ethically-grounded programs around the world that provide optimal experiences for students. Moreover, preferred programs, in particular, may offer some scholarship money to our students who enroll in their programs. They sometimes also allow faculty to participate in site visits at low cost and may provide a small annual donation for promotion of international education (See Appendix C for a complete list of criteria).

What Are the Steps for Developing an External Program?
Each department is the best resource for choosing or designing international or other external programs for students in that discipline. For faculty who want to establish an external opportunity, the Study Abroad program’s role is to help facilitate the development of departmental programs within guidelines set by the university.

What Are Some Initial Considerations for Developing a Faculty-Led External Program?
We recommend that faculty begin program development by considering the needs of the given department or program and the integration of a study abroad experience with a department’s needs, goals, and curriculum. Questions to consider include the following:

- How would a departmental international course opportunity enhance our major/minor?
- Does the lack of a departmental international opportunity limit our graduates’ goals in any way?
- What goals or objectives of our program would be best met through an international opportunity?
- What kinds of programs would give our faculty desirable opportunities for international travel, research or teaching in international institutions or practical experience with international organizations?
- What kinds of domestic external programs would give our faculty desirable opportunities for travel in the US, research or teaching at other US institutions, or practical experience with other organizations?
- What do existing external programs (domestic or international) offer that we might not be able to provide our students at this time?
- Can these courses be incorporated into the student’s overall program at UU without requiring additional semesters in residence?
- Would it be helpful to partner with another department? If so, what other disciplines / courses might work well?
- Are there faculty members in the department who have experience in this area?
- Who is most interested in pursuing this type of program development?
We also encourage faculty to consider the format of the credit-bearing experience; course delivery options include the following:

- Course on the road taught by UU faculty (entire course delivered while traveling)
- Travel-study tour taught by UU faculty (some work completed on campus, some delivered while traveling)
- On-site course delivered by UU faculty (group travels to one or two locations for extended time, course delivered entirely at the destination site)
- On-site course delivered by international faculty with UU faculty in residence
- Institutional partnerships that promote student and faculty exchanges, visiting lectureships, internships or practicum experiences
- Third-party provider program visited by UU faculty periodically
- Course equivalent to UU course, taught at discipline-specific CIE (not a credit-granting institution; UU faculty must evaluate and approve course work for credit)

What is the Approval Process for a Faculty-Led External Program?

According to SACS guidelines, all programs for which students receive Union credit must be approved by the CIE prior to publicizing them or recruiting students. The guidelines and forms can be found on the CIE website or in the CIE office. For approval, faculty must complete and submit the following documents to CIE:

- **External course proposal form** (this form must be turned in before the course can be added to the schedule; see Appendix D)
- **Any contractual agreements** relevant to the experience
- **Course syllabus** — please note:
  - All pre/post trip required lectures and course meetings must fall within the course dates approved by the Registrar
  - No student may register for the study tour after course meetings have begun without prior approval of the Registrar and CIE
- **Budget** — (see Appendix E)
- **Program promotional materials**

In addition, the following must be on file with Horizons Travel Registry **prior** to travel:

For all travelers:

- Passport photocopy – Passport must be valid as least 6 months after return date
- Visa information/copy
- Liability release/Code of conduct form
- Proof of Insurance forms/medical self-disclosure
- Contact information sheet
- Crowning Shield registration

For students only:

- Pre-travel course and financial approval form

What Are the Department/Program’s Responsibilities? What are the CIE’s Responsibilities when Implementing an External Program?

The sponsoring department is responsible for the following:
• Making travel arrangements
• Providing publicity/recruitment
• Scheduling Pre-departure training & debriefing
• Advising students in completing CIE course approval forms
• Collecting information and fees from students in a timely fashion
• Setting a schedule of payment deadlines for travelers
• Collecting and keeping record of participant payments
• Submitting student payments to CIE after each payment deadline
• Evaluating program, including student assessment

_The CIE is responsible for the following:_

• Assisting departments in selecting or designing an external program
• Providing support (information, suggestions, contacts, guidelines) for planning and travel arrangements
• Providing emergency contact information and support during the trip
• Providing safety information and guidelines for faculty
• Setting up an agency account for the program (The group leader/department chair can request WebAdvisor access to the agency account each month; all travel costs for students and faculty expenses come from this account)
• Approving all contracts with third party providers, tour agencies, or other institutions for services provided in conjunction with external programs
• Depositing student payments into agency account
• Requesting and monitor transfer of scholarship money to appropriate student account
• Processing payments for trip expenses upon receipt of bills/invoices
• Monitoring student registration to ensure correct billing and credit
• Providing travel guidelines for students
• Conducting pre-departure training/debriefing meetings in conjunction with sponsoring department

**What Is Union’s Study Abroad Policy for Non-Credit-Seeking and/or Non-Union Participants?**

It is vital to the success of our external study programs to remember that these experiences are credit-bearing, academic endeavors created for the benefit of Union University students. Adding non-credit-seeking and/or non-university participants creates complex liability issues for the program leaders and the university. Thus, the CIE recommends that external programming include sponsoring faculty and credit-seeking students only. Faculty organizers considering a program design that intentionally includes non-credit-seeking and/or non-university participants directly with the Study Abroad Coordinator or Director of the Center for Intercultural Engagement for consideration.
Appendix A

Types of Study Abroad Programs at Union University

The following are some of the more common approaches to study abroad programming. Union University provides a variety of options for students to best serve the students’ academic goals and career aspirations. To receive Union credit for the experience, students must follow the policies published in this document. The CIE regularly reviews new and previously approved programs for relevance and effectiveness and implements appropriate changes as needed.

Direct (Concurrent) Enrollment
Union students may apply for admission and directly enroll in many universities abroad, just as we have international students who attend Union. Students who choose this approach to study abroad will need to work closely with their academic advisor and the Study Abroad Coordinator, following the Study Abroad programs procedures, if they wish to be concurrently enrolled, allowing them to maintain their status as admitted Union students and to facilitate the transfer of credit when they have completed their study.

Being a full-fledged member of the student body of an international university is a rich experience; however, for many students this approach to international study may be somewhat problematic. For example, the academic calendar and the structure of university curricula in some countries may make it difficult for students to enter a program and take courses in single semester or year that correspond closely to courses needed to fulfill program requirements at Union. Also, understanding how credit received abroad is categorized and weighted by Union’s registrar’s office can be complicated. Some universities have an international student office that will assist in selecting and obtaining permission for the student to take the most appropriate courses; others would place that responsibility on the student.

Please note: if a student chooses to leave Union University for a semester to directly enroll in an external program, without following Union’s Study Abroad procedures, the work they do will be evaluated in the same way that transfer credit from any US or international institution is evaluated through the Registrar’s office.

Independent Institutes or Providers
Usually discipline or area specific, these programs are sponsored by a variety of organizations or institutions. Faculty may be permanent or adjunct, from the U.S. or other nations. When sponsored by a university, the program may be integral or peripheral to programs on the main campus of that university. We have agreements with several organizations in other countries that operate or provide programs in their location. Many welcome faculty to visit or participate in the program. Some organizations will also assist faculty in developing departmental programs for study tours.

Institutional Agreements
Institutions may enter into direct partnerships to facilitate student and faculty exchange and to encourage program development that serves specific educational or research goals.
Institutional agreements are negotiated and housed in the university’s administrative offices. Successful partnerships encourage faculty collaboration and regular student and faculty exchanges. Union currently maintains a number of current institutional agreements.

One option for this type of agreement is that institutions may allow students to pay their home institution tuition, room and board. Similarly, for a faculty exchange, each institution is responsible for its own faculty member’s salary, while the host institution is responsible for room and board. In addition to research and study opportunities, some discipline-specific partnerships facilitate the placement of students in internships or specialized course experiences like student teaching.

**Third Party Providers**

Third party providers (TPPs) are private companies/organizations—not educational institutions—that primarily serve individual students. Some TPPs offer study opportunities in most disciplines for almost every semester or term in almost every country, while others are more limited in scope, operating either semester or short-term sessions in one or two countries or regions of the world. Each TPP uses its own criteria for in-country faculty recruitment, course offerings, package cost, payment options, national to international student ratio, housing, in-country support, transcripts, and relationship to an in-country university.

While TPPs traditionally serve individual students, for faculty looking to develop an external program, TPPs often support faculty-developed study tours. Furthermore, they can be a liaison to international academic institutions and facilitate arrangements for travel, housing and meals for faculty or departments that want to design their own courses.

Students are asked to consider our preferred TPPs. Students who ultimately use non-preferred TPPs must receive Study Abroad Coordinator approval a year in advance of study. We will not support providers that fail to meet the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* established by the Forum on Education Abroad.
Appendix B

Financial Guidelines For External Programs

UU Tuition is charged for:
• Study tour courses bearing the same course title and number as regular catalog courses
• X80/X79 courses delivered and/or transcripted by UU/taught by UU faculty
• X80/X79 courses that are transcripted by another institution, but delivered as an inclusive package per a direct exchange agreement with UU

Note: It is Union University’s responsibility to bill students for semester abroad tuition and program fees upon receipt of invoice from a third-party provider. Students only pay application fees and deposits directly to third party providers.

Charges and payment process for other programs (Winter, Summer, Spring/Fall, Year)
Student may be billed for
• Tuition
• Room and board
• Program costs
Payment procedures vary according to program

Financial aid (refer students to Student Financial Planning)
• Financial aid (some is only applicable to tuition)
• Institutional financial aid does not apply to external programs (unless there is also a course billed for UU tuition)
• Faculty discounts do not apply to external programs (unless there is also a course billed for UU tuition)
• External aid may apply (provided the external program fulfills degree requirements) Examples include company, church, and lottery scholarships.
• UU provides some funds for competitive external study scholarships

Deadline for final payment of travel costs is determined by the program provider. Union cannot send payment to the provider until student accounts are paid. Unless the provider sets an earlier date, all payments must be submitted to the CIE by:
• December 1 for winter or spring travel
• August 1 for fall travel
• May 1 for summer travel

Fees
Individual students participating in external programs are charged a non-refundable fee to cover administrative costs. Student services fee for the term/semester of external program study is waived. The fees for each type of program are as follows:
• Domestic Short term $75.00
• Individual Study Abroad/faculty-led $175.00
• Student Teaching Abroad $175.00
Appendix C

Criteria for Identifying Preferred Programs

Our general set of criteria for identifying preferred programming includes the following:

- **Academic Credit**: For a course to be credit bearing it must be taught by an instructor with the minimum of a Master's degree in the subject, meet the seat hours requirement set by SACS, and receive a letter grade.

- **On-site Contact/Point Person/Housing director**: We prefer to send students to programs that have a full-time international student director who is available both to the student and to us if a need arises. Students must be provided with or assisted in securing appropriate housing.

- **Interaction Among National and International Students/Host families**: In its mission to foster intercultural understanding and to help students develop their language skills and/or intercultural communication, students are encouraged to either take classes with natives or participate in a homestay housing arrangement. Programs must have an element of cultural engagement.

- **Availability of Course Offerings**: It is important to most students that courses they take abroad will satisfy curriculum requirements at Union. Institutions and programs vary greatly in their flexibility and reliability with regard to course offerings. Therefore, the program must offer a variety of options for students in case of cancellation. (Students need to be prepared with preapproved substitutions for courses that do not make because of overall enrollment. They must notify the Program Coordinator of any changes.)

- **Language of Instruction**: A number of institutions and programs worldwide offer extensive courses in English, but many do not. For students who want to take more advanced courses in their major or minor, careful investigation of the availability of appropriate courses is essential. Depending on the size of the program, we look for a variety of levels being offered.

- **Host Faculty Credentials and Relationship to Institution**: Some professors have full-time positions on the faculty of the host institution, while other professors are not on any university faculty. As we evaluate programs, our concern is that the instructors have appropriate credentials, close ties to the host institution and an understanding of international education that will enhance our students’ experience.

- **Health, Safety, Security and Risk Management**: Program must supply adequate and published policies that govern these areas and demonstrate continuous attention to them.
• **Code of Conduct**: Program must operate in accordance with ethical principles that are in similar to those of Union University.

• **Insurance**: Since all students are required to have proof of insurance, preference is given to programs that include insurance for the student.
Appendix D

External Program Course Proposal Form

for

________________________________________________________________________

Is the course

_____ A catalog course regularly taught on campus?
_____ A departmental internship or practicum that can be taken in various settings?
_____ A departmental special studies?
_____ A X80 or a X79 course designed for this trip?
_____ A cohort classification due to dates existing outside a regular semester?

If the course is a catalog course:

_____ How many other sections of the course have been offered in the past year?

_____ Were any of these taught in off-campus settings?

_____ Can the travel course be scheduled so that it does not adversely impact the on-campus course enrollment?

If the course is also taught on campus, briefly comment on how the travel makes a difference in the way that the course objectives are met.

What type of course delivery is proposed?

_____ Study tour / course excursion
_____ Off-site faculty-led course
_____ Practicum
_____ Internship
_____ Other (Please describe.)

How many on-campus class sessions will be required?

_____ None
_____ Pre-travel
_____ Post-travel
Has the proposed course and delivery format been discussed with the department?

How does the proposed course meet department goals and objectives?

How does course meet the goals and objectives of Union University’s Core Values?

Will the proposed course:

- Satisfy a core requirement?
  - If yes, which one(s)?

- Fulfill a requirement for the major?
  - If yes, which one(s)?

- Fulfill an elective for the major?
  - If yes, which one(s)?

- Fulfill a requirement for the minor?
  - If yes, which one(s)?

- Fulfill an elective for the minor?
  - If yes, which one(s)?

Is the proposed course

- Lower-level?
- Upper-level?
- Multi-level? (if so, syllabus must indicate how levels are differentiated.)

How many hours can a student earn?

- (If the course has variable credit, syllabus must indicate different requirements for each number of credits.)

Who is eligible to take the course?

- Freshmen
- Sophomores
- Juniors
- Seniors
- All undergraduates
Graduate Students
All students
Non-students

How many department faculty would need to travel with the group for the program to be successful?
Teaching faculty
Non-teaching program director

Is there a faculty member available and willing to lead the group and teach each course?
If no faculty member will travel with the student/group,

How will the work be supervised?

How will the work be evaluated?

Who will be the on-site contact?

How would the program affect faculty load?
Course taught as part of the regular load
Course taught as overload
Multiple faculty split course load credit
Multiple faculty each get full course load credit

How will the travel and site arrangements be made? (Check all that apply and give name of the organization)
Outside vendor? Name_______________________________
Travel agency? Name _______________________________
Another academic institution? Name _______________________
Faculty member? Name _______________________________
Other (please describe) ______________________________

Minimum number students needed to cover faculty travel costs? (See budget planning sheet.)
Minimum number of fully registered students needed to cover instructional costs (Does not include students receiving tuition discounts.)
Maximum number of students?
Attach:

Syllabus
   The syllabus for every course with an off campus component should explain clearly how the travel fulfills specific course goals and objectives in ways that would not be possible in a campus classroom setting. If the course is a travel-enhanced version of a standing course, the syllabus should clearly show how the course is different from the on-campus version, and that it has comparable scope.

Proposed Itinerary

Proposed Budget (See “Budget Planning Guidelines and Worksheet”)

Proposed publicity information

Signatures:

_________________________________________ Department Chair __________________________ Date

_________________________________________ Dean __________________________ Date

_________________________________________ Director, CIE __________________________ Date
Appendix E

Budget Planning Guidelines
Department Travel Programs

Each destination will vary somewhat according to the type of facilities available and the objectives of the travel program. The following worksheet is a suggested first step in the budget planning process.

Please remember that tuition is not included in the cost of the trip. Students are billed for tuition for faculty-led programs when they register for the course. Financial aid will be determined by the Office for Student Financial Planning. Guidelines for a minimum number of students for the course to make are generally the same as those for courses taught on campus; faculty should consult the appropriate Dean for this information. The number of students needed to support “free” travel for accompanying faculty varies depending on destination and mode of travel. Any departure from these guidelines must be approved as part of the course planning process.

The Study Abroad Coordinator will provide faculty with a required budgetary worksheet to be completed prior to trip approval. For recurring programs, a new budgetary worksheet must be completed for each trip. This worksheet is to help determine the cost of the trip. Total costs for all trips will be presented as ranges to accommodate unforeseen changes in costs, including but not limited to fluctuations in currency exchange rates and unexpected increases in fees. Other costs to be covered include but are not limited to the following:

- International phone rental or purchase for each faculty (Some faculty already own appropriate phones, but will need to add short term international coverage.)
- Faculty meals if not covered by tour
- Transportation to and from local airport
- Airport parking
- Faculty travel visa fees
- Comprehensive health and repatriation insurance
- Travel insurance

Furthermore, students will need to know how many meals, entrance fees and other costs they are responsible for during the trip. They will also ask for an estimate of how much additional spending money they will need.

For international programs, passport costs run about $100.00. Travelers should plan to apply for a passport at least 8 weeks prior to travel. If a visa is necessary, passports may have to be sent to the appropriate embassy. Allow at least 2 weeks to get a visa. Visas vary in cost depending on the destination and length of stay. Remind students that passports must be valid 6 months after the trip return date.