



## Policy on Dependents, Extended Family Members, and Acquaintances of Program Leaders on Texas A&M Education Abroad Programs

This policy is designed to assist Texas A&M University faculty and staff leading education abroad programs in making informed decisions related to including guests and family members on all or part of an education abroad program. Such programs are, first and foremost, academic programs and, like their counterparts on campus, these classes, field trips, and cultural excursions should not be designed to cater to the needs of ancillary individuals who are not part of the academic experience.

Accompanying dependents, spouse/partners, and acquaintances should not interfere with the function of the education abroad program in any way. All dependents, extended family members, and acquaintances of program leaders on education abroad programs will be required to purchase international travel, health and security insurance that students and program leaders carry through the University's insurance plan with Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI), or will be required to show proof of an equivalent policy at least two months in advance of program departure. The coverage is at the cost of the program leader and separate from the program budget.

### I. DEPENDENTS

#### A. Spouse/Partner

- i. "Partner" will be used to refer to either the spouse or the domestic partner of a program leader, including those in same-sex relationships.
- ii. A partner may accompany the program leader for the duration of the program or a significant portion of the program as long as it does not interfere with the program leader's duties to the program and the education abroad students.
- iii. Partners should understand that their primary role on the education abroad program is that of partner and/or caretaker of any dependent children also accompanying the program leader. For liability purposes, it is important that partners do not have responsibilities related to the academic program (e.g. taking roll, chaperoning students, monitoring tests, leading excursions, managing working funds).

#### B. Children

- i. The program leader's children or legal dependents may accompany the program leader for the duration of the program or for a significant portion of the program as long as it does not interfere with the program leader's duties to the program and the education abroad students.
- ii. If the child is too young or unable to care for themselves, the program leader must provide a caretaker. This caretaker could be the spouse/partner of the program leader.
  1. The program leader must cover the caretaker's and the children's expenses.
  2. Students on the program should never be asked to serve as a caretaker for dependents of a program leader.
  3. The program leader cannot be considered the caretaker.
  4. Other faculty or staff members involved with the program should not be asked to serve as a caretaker.



- iii. It is strongly recommended that program leaders consider carefully the number of children being taken on education abroad programs. Logistically, the more children that are involved, the more difficult it becomes to make arrangements that will accommodate large families, and the more difficult it is for the program leader to focus their full attention on the education abroad program. Past experience shared by other program leaders suggests that a partner and several dependent children taken abroad require more attention from a program leader than they require at home due to language and cultural differences as well as lack of usual friends, recreational, and educational activities.

### **C. Financial Considerations**

- i. State regulations require that program leaders pay all expenses of their partners and dependents. Current Texas A&M fiscal policies do not allow such expenses to be paid by student program fees or monies mixed into student program fee accounts. This means that separate payments directly from the program leader will be required for dependent expenses. This information must be made transparent for all those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student program fees are, in any way, subsidizing non-participants. Please refer to the Working Fund Guidelines for more details or contact Education Abroad for questions about this information.
- ii. Dependents are not guaranteed potential “group discount” prices due to restrictions on such rates (e.g. age limits, student only prices, etc.)
- iii. In cases where a program leader requires a logistical arrangement for a dependent or spouse/partner that costs more than the price paid by a student, the program leader is responsible for the cost difference (e.g. if paying for a double room instead of a single room in a hotel, the faculty member would pay the difference between the single and the double to accommodate an accompanying partner).

### **D. Logistical Arrangements**

- i. Program arrangements are not made to accommodate the needs of dependents and partners. All program accommodations are made with the understanding that this is an academic program designed to meet the needs of the students and the faculty members.
- ii. Program leaders are responsible for obtaining passports and visas for their dependents.
- iii. Program leaders are responsible for obtaining health insurance for their dependents.
- iv. Program leaders must organize dependents’ travel arrangements whenever these arrangements deviate from those made for the planned education abroad program, such as (but not limited to):
  1. Transportation to and from the education abroad location
  2. Excursions in the host country
  3. Hotels
  4. Meals

When travel arrangements exactly coincide with the planned education abroad program, these will be coordinated with Education Abroad, using the same program deadlines that apply for students engaged in the program.



- v. Dependents may room with the program leader if accommodations allow, but, as previously addressed, the program leader must pay the difference for any room upgrade.
- vi. Dependents are not permitted to share accommodations with students.
- vii. Dependents should not compromise the planned academic program in any way, such as (but not limited to):
  - 1. Preventing the program leader from attending or leading field trips or other academic elements of the program.
  - 2. Disrupting class or field trips.
  - 3. Preventing students or other program leaders from engaging fully in the academic program.

## **II. EXTENDED FAMILY MEMBERS AND PERSONAL ACQUAINTANCES**

**A.** "Extended family members" are those relatives other than the program leader's partner or dependent children.

**B.** "Personal acquaintances" are generally individuals who have no official connection with the program and who are not related to the program leader.

### **C. Guidelines**

- i. Extended family members and/or personal acquaintances should visit before or after the official program dates, during a scheduled vacation (e.g. Spring Break), or during a free weekend. Visits during other time periods have proven to be disruptive to the academic program. This type of arrangement encourages the perspective that education abroad programs are vacations rather than academic endeavors.
- ii. Extended family and personal acquaintances should not travel with the education abroad group on program field trips or weekend excursions because of the increased potential for misperceptions related to the purpose of the program (academic versus vacation), financial difficulties in maintaining a separation of program versus guest payments, and liability for the program leader and the university.
- iii. All expenses and travel arrangements for any extended family and personal acquaintances must be separate from those of the program. This information must be made transparent for all those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student program fees are, in any way, subsidizing non-participants.
- iv. Extended family and personal acquaintances are not permitted to share accommodations with students.
- v. Extended family and personal acquaintances should not compromise the program in any way, such as (but not limited to):
  - 1. Preventing the program leader from attending or leading field trips or other academic elements of the program.
  - 2. Disrupting class or field trips.
  - 3. Preventing students or other program leaders from engaging fully in the academic program.
- vi. Extended family members are responsible for purchasing CISI insurance or providing proof of a comparable policy.
- vii. Extended family and personal acquaintances are responsible for making their own travel arrangements including passports, visas, transportation, food, and lodging.