# Checklist and Pre-Departure Considerations for International Field Trip Leaders

*Section I: Checklist for Texas A&M Education Abroad*

Below are the chronological steps that a Field Trip Leader should follow before conducting an international field trip. Education Abroad is here to assist with any questions you have about the process.

| 6 months – 1 year prior to departure | □ Complete the **Field Trip Approval Form** online to request approval of your field trip. For questions regarding the form and approval process, contact the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics at (979) 845-4016. Please note that this form must be complete before students can register for the field trip. The online form can be found at: [https://aitsapps.tamu.edu/fieldtrip/open.aspx](https://aitsapps.tamu.edu/fieldtrip/open.aspx). |
| 6 months prior to departure | □ Begin Field Trip Registration in the Education Abroad Portal. The registration link will be sent to you by an education abroad advisor. |
| Check for updated information about your destination: | □ Texas A&M Country Risk List: [http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf](http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf). If your destination country is on the list, additional approval may be needed. |
|  | □ U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory: [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html). |
| 2-4 months prior to departure | □ Complete all items in the **Field Trip Registration, especially:** |
|  | □ Field Trip Program Information Form *PRIORITY* |
|  | □ Emergency Contact Information for Groups Abroad |
|  | □ CISI Enrollment Information – Field Trip Leaders |
|  | □ Attend a Trip Leader Briefing. ALL trip leaders must attend in-person every other year. |
|  | □ Trip leader encourages students to attend mandatory health & safety orientations arranged by Education Abroad. Advisor will share dates with the trip leader. |
|  | □ Trip leader provides students with a completed Education Abroad Financial Aid request form (if program is credit-bearing). Student will provide the form to Scholarships & Financial Aid to determine additional funding available to assist with program expenses. |
| 1 - 2 months prior to departure | Payment of $100 Field Trip Fee *(trip leader selects one option below in group registration)* |
|  | □ If the **college/department** coordinating the field trip will be paying the $100 fee on behalf of the participants, the education abroad advisor will send an IDT for the total amount owed along with a payment deadline and instructions. |
|  | □ If the **student participants** will be responsible for paying the $100 field trip fee, the education abroad advisor will post the fee to their individual TAMU student accounts. Please remind students that they must pay this. |
| 4 weeks prior to departure | Send the following to the education abroad advisor: |
|  | □ Any updates/changes to information pertaining to the field trip. |
|  | □ Any updates/changes to emergency contact information. |
|  | □ Any changes in trip leaders or student participants. |
| 2-4 weeks prior to departure | Education Abroad will email designated trip leader(s) an exit packet, to include: |
|  | □ CISI insurance card for each participant and leader. |
|  | □ CISI invoice for international insurance for students, staff and faculty on program. Invoice can be paid directly to CISI by the sponsoring department or office. |
|  | □ A copy of each participant’s medical consent, medical information, and emergency contact information. |
|  | □ Clery Reporting Spreadsheet that must be submitted upon return. |
|  | □ Additional resources and information. |
|  | Once all items are complete, the education abroad advisor will change the Field Trip Registration to “Confirmed.” |
Section II: Pre-Departure Considerations

Below are some basic pre-departure considerations and recommended information to collect from participants. The list is not exhaustive of all that could be covered during the pre-departure planning.

- **Trip Logistics**
  - Education Abroad can provide advice and recommendations upon request. However, it is expected that the Trip Leader will coordinate or assist in coordinating the following:
    - Trip location(s) and dates.
    - Number of participants and support staff needed.
    - In-country arrangements, including lodging accommodations, transportation, cultural and educational activities, etc.
    - Bus, flight, or transportation arrangements to/from the destination.

- **Budgeting & Payments**
  - Create budget based on itinerary and program activities.
  - Coordinate with the college, department, or business office to post program fees to student accounts, if applicable.
  - Coordinate with the college, department or business office to execute payment of all trip-related expenses (e.g. hotels, airfare, and other vendors) or work with third-party provider to pay associated fees.

- **Passports**
  - Ensure that students that do not have a valid passport apply for a passport at least three (3) months prior to departure. More information on the passport application process, fees, and processing time can be found at: [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html)
  - Ensure that all participants’ passports will be valid for the required length of time after the trip’s end (usually six months). Each country has different validity requirements. For country-specific requirements, visit [https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html)
  - Collect color copies (scanned or hard copies) of each participant’s passport (photograph and information pages). These must be uploaded to the group registration in the education abroad portal. Students should also carry a color copy of their passport.

- **Visa Requirement**
  - A visa might be required by the host country(ies). For more information on country-specific entry and exit requirements, visit [https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html)
  - Some countries may require a transit visa to fly through their airport.
  - If required, contact the appropriate Consulate to begin the visa application process.

- **Non-U.S. Citizens (including International Students & Green Card Holders)**
  - Non-U.S. Citizens may need a visa to enter the destination country or transit countries. Refer to the countries’ embassy website for entry requirements based on citizenship.
  - International students must have a valid student visa to re-enter the United States upon return from the field trip.
  - International students are required to check their visa status and obtain a Travel Signature with International Student Services (ISS) prior to going abroad.

- **Research International Travel and Security Information**
  - Determine appropriate carry-on and checked baggage allowance. More information can be found on your airline carrier’s website or at: [http://tsa.gov](http://tsa.gov)
  - Recommended airport check-in time: 3 hours prior to departure (for international flights); 2 hours prior to departure (domestic flights).

- **Health and Medical Considerations**
  - **Vaccinations**—might be required. See the Center for Disease Control’s website ([http://cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)) for country-specific vaccination requirements.
  - **Prescription Medications**—should be transported in its original container with the prescription attached. Remind participants to bring a sufficient supply.
  - **CISI Medical Insurance**—for more information regarding Texas A&M’s policy with CISI, including coverage limits, see [https://abroad.tamu.edu/Parents/Insurance](https://abroad.tamu.edu/Parents/Insurance). All participants will be enrolled in CISI for the duration of the trip.
  - **Doctors and Medical Facilities**—for information regarding doctors and medical facilities worldwide, consult the CISI website, or Education Abroad.
  - **Emergency Contacts, Medical Information & Consent Form**— The form collects information about allergies, medications, and medical conditions that the student might have. Should a participant need medical assistance and is incapacitated, this form can be given to the assisting doctor or medical personnel. This form is embedded in the student’s application. Approximately 1 month before the program starts, this information will be sent to the faculty leaders by education abroad, along with all participants’ insurance ID cards. Trip Leaders should travel with a copy of this document. This document must be destroyed upon completion of the trip. 
Pre-Departure Preparation and Orientations
- Education Abroad will provide required health & safety orientations for all students. It is expected that the trip leader will communicate this requirement to students and work with the education abroad advisor to ensure attendance of all participants. Orientations are scheduled the semester prior and the registration link will be shared with the trip leader as soon as the dates are finalized.
- Field Trip Leaders should provide at least one orientation specific to their trip for all student participants. Suggested pre-departure orientation topics include, but are not limited to:
  - Behavior and expectations (pre-departure and while abroad)
  - Budget and financial information
  - Cultural and country-specific information
  - Travel and packing guidance
- In addition to the pre-departure orientation, education abroad provides an “Affording Education Abroad” presentation each month during the fall and spring semesters that is open to any student and discusses scholarships and financial aid for education abroad. Field Trip Leaders could encourage students to go to the presentation or read through the online material.
- The trip leader must also check that students are enrolled in the required course(s), if the program is credit bearing.

Copies of Documents
- Encourage participants to make copies of all important documents (e.g. passport, visa, airline tickets, credit cards- front and back, etc.).
  - Have them leave 1 copy with a trusted family member/friend in the U.S.
  - Take 1-2 copies with them abroad; should be stored securely.

Register with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate
- This can be done online at https://step.state.gov/step.
- Group or individual registration is available.

Destination Considerations
- Arrange a cell phone for while abroad that can both call and text internationally.
- Consider destination country/area food and water safety.
- Prepare a first-aid kit for the group.
- Determine rendezvous locations, dates, and times if group will not always travel together.

Final Trip Preparations
- Confirm all in-country logistics, including accommodation reservations, transportation, museum appointments, etc.
- Finalize and distribute a final copy of the field trip itinerary, emergency contact information, etc. to all participants.
- Confirm that participants requiring special documentation (e.g. visa) are prepared for international travel.
- Verify that all participants have submitted required materials (e.g. copies of important documents, Medical Consent Form, etc.).

Final Check for U.S. Department of State Travel Announcements
- Check to see if there are any warnings on the Texas A&M Country Risk List: http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf.
- For information regarding U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories, visit: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html.
- For other news involving international travel for U.S. citizens, visit: https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html.

Questions?
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