

Faculty Timeline for Coordination of International Field trips



The purpose of this document is to provide program leaders with the general framework of the processes involved in developing an international field trip.

6-12 MONTHS PRIOR TO PROGRAM START

<p>Program discussion</p>	<p>Faculty discuss the Field Trip idea with the department head and with the international program liaison (https://abroad.tamu.edu/Connect#liaisons). This will help determine if the field trip will be managed by the department or the college. The location, course(s), logistical support, and recruitment pool will be discussed for approval.</p> <p>Review the recent updates on requirements to lead a group of students abroad: Update on Guidelines, Policies and Procedures</p> <p>Note that all TAMU programs require two responsible leaders (refer to the guidelines above)</p>
<p>Risk Assessment and Travel Advisories</p>	<p>As you finalize your destination, please review the information about travel and safety.</p> <p>Texas A&M Country Risk List: https://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf If your destination country is on the list, additional approval may be needed. EA will work with you to obtain the approvals.</p> <p>U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html</p> <p>Useful State Department link about COVID and country restrictions: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/COVID-19-Country-Specific-Information.html</p> <p>NOTE: With the current COVID pandemic, leaders need to monitor the country entry and activity restrictions with their onsite provider. Education Abroad (EA) will also work with the Office of Risk, Ethics, and Compliance to assess program feasibility. Cancellations may be activated if restrictions would prevent the program from operating, or medical testing and care are not adequate. Contact EA team for questions and assistance.</p>
<p>Program Itinerary</p>	<p>A daily itinerary should be developed to identify the logistical needs and locations.</p>
<p>Provider for logistics</p>	<p>Travel logistics must be managed by <u>a vetted partner or education provider</u> in order to guarantee that the key components (accommodations, transportation, excursions) meet the safety standards and contractual requirements set by the university. The proposal may be rejected if these parameters are not met.</p> <p>Contact Education Abroad (EA) to obtain the names of recommended providers in the countries that will be visited. A travel agency such as Student Universe may be used for booking of international flights.</p>
<p>Provider Quote</p>	<p>It is good practice to review a couple of quotes to assess which one is best. Once a provider has been identified, obtain a quote that will include faculty and student expenses. Review their payment schedule and cancellation clauses to ensure that it meets your recruitment and program approval timeline. Avoid early deposits, if possible.</p>

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Program Budget	<p>Based on the quotes you collect, you can start designing a budget for a minimum number of students, in collaboration with your business office. Visit https://abroad.tamu.edu/I-Am/Faculty-Program-Leader/Proposing-a-Field-Trip for a budget template (optional). Ensure you factor in the \$200/student EA fee and insurance cost \$1.39/day/person.</p>
Contract for Payment of Support Services	<p>International Service Provider Contract (ISP): Once the provider is chosen, check with the contracts office to see if there is an ISP contract in place. Units can typically use that ISP for their program. If not, visit the Contract Office website (contracts.tamu.edu) to start the process. Note that it can take 2-4 months to route and obtain all approvals. You must have an approved contract in order to prepay program expenses. FMO rules and new tax laws require that you limit large payments on site, and the ISP facilitates those requirements.</p>
<p>3-6 MONTHS PRIOR: FORM SUBMISSIONS AND APPROVALS</p>	
STEP 1: International Field Trip Registration Form for Education Abroad	<p><i>NEW!</i> All field trips (new and repeats) must submit a <i>new education abroad Field Trip form</i> to receive approval from the college and EA. It can be accessed at: https://abroad.tamu.edu/I-Am/Faculty-Program-Leader/Proposing-a-Field-Trip</p> <p>This form will route through your college liaison and the assistant or associate dean signing off on international programs. All elements must be met to be approved at the set deadlines: October 1st for Spring programs, February 1st for Summer and Fall.</p>
STEP 2: Provost Portal for Fee Submission	<p>If students will not be charged a fee or it will be the same amount previously approved, then the EA form will suffice to register your field trip.</p> <p>If you will have a new, increased or decreased fee, you will need to submit a <i>Provost Field Trip Fee Approval form</i> as well at: https://aitsapps.tamu.edu/fieldtrip/open.aspx. For questions regarding fee approval, contact the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics at (979) 845-4016. This form must be submitted and routing for approval already by October 1st for Spring programs, February 1st for Summer and Fall.</p>
Education Abroad Notification	<p>EA will notify the faculty and liaison that the field trip is approved. EA will also provide instructions about program and student registration.</p>
Student Application	<p>Once the Trip Leader begins the group registration and the approval form is complete, the education abroad advisor will open the student field trip application in the Education Abroad portal. The advisor will send the student application link to the trip leader. You must forward this link to all field trip participants. Participants <u>must</u> complete the registration process by the date indicated by the advisor in order to allow ample time for pre-departure preparation and insurance enrollment.</p>
<p>2-3 MONTHS PRIOR</p>	
Registration Items	<p>Complete all items in the Field Trip Registration, especially:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Program Information Form *PRIORITY* <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency Contact Information for Groups Abroad <input type="checkbox"/> CISI Enrollment Information – Field Trip Leaders

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Leader Briefing	ALL TAMU trip leaders must attend this workshop once per year in person or virtually. EA will date options. A separate format will be offered if the second leader is the on-site coordinator that will be with the group during the entire program.
Mandatory Student Orientations	Trip leader informs students of the <u>mandatory</u> online, pre-departure orientation that all students must complete by at least 30 days prior to departure. Additional information will be provided by the EA advisor.
Financial Aid Request form	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.
Education Abroad Service Fee	EA Service fee: \$200/student: either paid by the college or department through a transfer (IDT) or collected by EA from the students' Howdy accounts.
4 WEEKS PRIOR	
UPDATES! UPDATES!	Send the following to the education abroad advisor: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
Exit Packet	Education Abroad will email designated trip leader(s) an exit packet, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CISI international insurance card for each participant, including leaders. • CISI invoice for international insurance for students, staff and faculty on program. Invoice should 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.

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 their department staff in coordinating the following with the provider:

- Trip location(s) and dates. A detailed daily itinerary will be needed.
- Number of participants and support staff planned.
- 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 business office that a contract (ISP) is in place with the provider rendering services.
- Coordinate with the business office/SBS to post program fees to student accounts, if applicable.
- Coordinate to execute payments to partner/third-party provider.

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□ Program Leaders' Dependents

Review the dependent policy to understand the parameters and requirements. [Policy on Dependents](#)

□ Passports

- Ensure that students who do not have a valid passport apply for one 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.
Note: Education Abroad is a passport agency. <https://abroad.tamu.edu/Passport-Services/Home>
- Passports must typically be valid six months beyond the date of return to the U.S. For country-specific requirements, visit <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), or even a transit visa. For more information on country-specific entry and exit requirements, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>
- If required, the student should contact the appropriate Consulate to begin the visa application process.

□ Non-U.S. Citizens (including International Students & Permanent Residents)

- Non-U.S. citizens may need a visa to enter the destination country or transit countries. Students should refer to the countries' embassy website for entry requirements based on citizenship.
- International students (non-green card holders) must have a valid student visa to re-enter the United States upon return. They must 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>.
- Recommended airport check-in time: 3 hours prior to departure (for international flights); 2 hours prior to departure (domestic flights).
- Verify additional requirements, such as PCR tests or vaccination certificate before flying.

□ Health and Medical Considerations

- **Vaccinations**—Although Texas A&M University does not require that students be vaccinated, some countries, organizations or providers may require that students be vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to enter/travel. Review your destination's requirements regularly to adjust to changes.
- **Prescription Medications**—should be transported in its original container with the prescription attached. Remind participants to bring a sufficient supply.
- **CISI International Medical Insurance**—for more information regarding Texas A&M's policy with CISI, including coverage limits, see <https://abroad.tamu.edu/I-Am/Parent-Family#Section6>. All participants will be enrolled in CISI for the duration of the trip. They cannot opt out.
- **Doctors and Medical Facilities**—for information regarding doctors and medical facilities worldwide, consult CISI (website or call). Contact EA if you need further assistance.
- **Emergency Contacts, Medical Information & Consent Form**— The form, embedded in the student's application, collects voluntary student 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. 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 secured copy of this document. This information must be destroyed upon completion of the trip.

- **COVID Matters, Before and During Travel**- visit our website to read updated information about Texas A&M and travel consideration during the worldwide pandemic: <https://abroad.tamu.edu/Menu/COVID-19-UPDATES> . Our University will conduct risk assessments about locations, activities, and COVID response regularly and will provide guidance, as necessary.

□ Pre-Departure Preparation and Orientations

- Education Abroad will provide a comprehensive, online pre-departure orientation for all students that covers a variety of topics, including health & safety. 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. Information on how students can access and complete the orientation will be provided.
- Field Trip Leaders should provide orientations 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)
 - Provider's services and rules
 - 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 that is open to any student and discusses scholarships and financial aid for education abroad. Field Trip Leaders can encourage students to attend or view the presentation.
- 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

- All trip leaders must have a functioning cell phone while abroad that can both call and text internationally.
- Consider destination country/area food and water safety. Share that information with students.
- Prepare a first-aid kit for the group, and discuss emergency and safety measures you have in place.
- Determine rendezvous locations, dates, and times if group will not always travel together.

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□ Final Trip Preparations

- Confirm all in-country logistics, including accommodation reservations, transportation, museum appointments, addresses, 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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