Study Abroad Policy

Study abroad can be an important phase of undergraduate and graduate programs in American colleges and universities. Carefully planned and administered foreign study can add significant dimensions to a student's educational experience. A study abroad program should:

a. Be clearly related to the objectives of the sponsoring or participating institution;

b. Have a well defined rationale that states the specific nature and purposes of the program and is accurately represented in the institution’s catalog and all promotional literature;

c. Provide educational experiences related to the institution’s curriculum;

d. Be available to students who are carefully selected according to ability and interest;

e. Have a carefully articulated policy regarding the availability of financial assistance to students for programs required by the institution;

f. Have clearly specified language proficiency requirements, when appropriate to the program and place of study, and clearly defined methods of testing language proficiency prior to acceptance into the program;

g. Provide intended participants with accurate and current information, specifically describing the following: program opportunities and limitations; how and where instruction will be given and the relationship to the foreign institution; grading practices; significant differences between a home campus experience and what can be expected abroad, including information about local attitudes and mores; and a description of local living conditions and the extent of responsibility assumed by the program for housing participants;

h. Provide extensive orientation for participants prior to departure for, and on arrival in, the foreign country with respect to the matters in (g) above, and augmented with more detailed information and instruction related to the specific program;

i. Provide counseling and supervisory services at the foreign center, with special attention to problems peculiar to the location and nature of the program;

j. Guarantee adequate basic reference materials to offset any limitations of local libraries or inaccessibility to them;

k. Include clearly defined criteria and policies for judging performance and assigning credit, in accordance with prevailing standards and practices at the home institution. A common basis for determining grade equivalents is established when several institutions are involved with a single overseas institution or in a consortium;

l. Stipulate that students will not ordinarily receive credit for foreign study that is undertaken without prior planning or approval on the student’s home campus;

m. Include provisions for ongoing institutional oversight, including assessment of the educational effectiveness of programs;
n. Assure fair reimbursement to participants if the program is not delivered as promised, for any reason within the sponsor’s control; and

o. Provide opportunity, at the conclusion of the student’s program or upon return, to process and reflect on the experience in ways that may contribute to the student’s and others’ learning.

Cooperative arrangements are urged among American institutions seeking to provide foreign study opportunities for their students. In many cases, resident directors, faculty, and facilities could be shared with significant improvement in the efficiency and economy of the operation. One basic reference collection, for example, supported and used by students from several programs, is likely to be more satisfactory than several separate ones.

Credit is not awarded for travel alone. Commercially sponsored “study/travel programs” should be thoroughly investigated by an institution before it grants degree credit for these activities.

Travel/study courses sponsored by the institution must meet the same academic standards, award similar credit, and be subject to the same institutional control as other courses and programs offered by that institution.

Credit for travel/study courses is limited to a maximum of one semester unit of credit per week of full-time travel/study (or the equivalent in quarter system units), with one additional unit of credit for additional readings, papers and class meetings that are required before or after the course.