Faculty-Led Program Proposal Process
Office of International Programs (OIP)

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For safety and program support, OIP recommends two faculty leaders. If a provider/partner institution abroad is retained, one faculty member may propose a program.

Leaders from different departments need to secure approval from their appropriate unit heads/deans.

Electronic Approval Signatures are accepted.

Submit Signed Form to Ms. Heather Catton, hcatton@sfasu.edu

OIP estimates the number and dollar amount of Study Abroad Scholarships based on planning proposals received by June 1st. Scholarship funds may not be available for proposals submitted after the due date.

Course(s) offered abroad must be applicable to the host country/region and taught in context.

Interdisciplinary programs are encouraged as they increase the learning outcomes for the students and the marketability of the program.

Know your audience: The program success depends on having enough students program to meet both budgetary needs and academic outcomes of the program.

OIP will help you gather resources needed to submit your Final Proposal:
- Program Tentative Itinerary
- Estimated Program Budget
- Course Syllabus

For assistance, contact Ms. Inés Maxit, maxitie@sfasu.edu

The travel costs of the program leader(s) are included in the overall program budget, and shared by the student participants.

Programs typically range from 1 to 4 weeks, they can be longer if cost allows it.

The program dates should not overlap when university classes are in session. Dates abroad should fall within defined academic terms.

In general, programs need a minimum of 10 students to run.

Programs are self-sustained and must generate enough revenue to cover the projected expenses of offering the program. If the program does not meet minimum enrollment as defined by the program budget, the program will be cancelled due to financial insolvency.

OIP submits approved course/s to the THECB for state approval.

Program marketing and student recruitment is one of the faculty leader’s main responsibilities and the most difficult, intense and time-consuming part of the process.

Leaders need to keep in mind that students often need 6 months to plan their schedules and finances to study abroad.

Not all students who initially express interest in the program will follow through with committing and participating. Set your recruitment goal higher than your enrollment goal to ensure you meet your target.

With the faculty’s feedback, OIP creates an online program page for marketing and application purposes.

Faculty leaders make all admission decisions. All program participants must be enrolled in the class.

Study Abroad Scholarships are available for students with an overall 2.5 GPA (to be applied to SFA tuition and fees).

OIP can coordinate information sessions with the Financial Aid Office to explain how this may be available for study abroad.

Resources
- Leading Short Term Education
- Learn by Going: Critical Issues for Faculty-Led Study-Abroad Programs
- SFA Faculty Study Abroad Handbook
- ASU Study Abroad
- UK Education Abroad Toolkit
- PSU Marketing & Recruitment
Frequently Asked Questions

When will I know the outcome of my proposal application?
We aim to notify Faculty members within two weeks of submission from the college dean.

If I am planning a program for Spring Break, when should I submit the proposals?
The same due dates apply for any program that will fall within the academic year (e.g., June 1 / August 1 for programs that will begin in the upcoming academic year). You are welcome to submit your Final Proposal well before August 1st to allow more time for recruitment and student payments.

Who can participate in the program?
All participants must be enrolled in the course. Family, friends or children cannot travel with a program participant.

May students with disabilities participate?
Study abroad programs are open to all SFA students. Federal law prohibits discrimination based on disability in university programs or activities. If a disabled student approaches you about participating in a study abroad program, please contact OIP. We will work with the SFA Disabilities Services to evaluate the accommodations the student will need during the time abroad and how the program can provide them. Please do not make promises to a student that cannot be fulfilled and do not turn away students because, at first glance, their inclusion seems difficult or costly.

What is my role before going abroad?
(1) Develop a program that intentionally incorporates aspects of the host culture and student experiences as a focus of the academic experience. (2) Work with OIP to establish the program. This includes developing a program budget, considering measures to keep the program affordable for students and appropriately manage program funds. (3) Market your program and recruit students to meet enrollment minimums, keeping in mind the appropriate student/faculty ratio. (4) Host meetings/orientations prior to departure to orient your students, set expectations, and start developing the group dynamic. (5) Maintain communication with the Study Abroad Office and students.

What is OIP’s role?
(1) Collaborate with the faculty leader(s) to establish the program. This includes developing a program budget, considering measures to keep the program affordable for students and appropriately manage program funds. (2) Assist with program marketing by developing a program webpage. (3) Facilitate the student online application process. (4) Handle student payments, contract approvals and payment to program vendors. (5) Collect passports, health, and emergency contact information. (6) Assist with visa process if need it. (7) Provide a general pre-departure orientation, mandatory for all study abroad students.

What makes for a successful program?
(1) Clear, straightforward student learning outcomes that students (and parents) understand and embrace. (2) Program locations, duration, and timing that appeal to student interest. (3) A reasonably affordable program fee. (4) Course numbers that satisfy student major or minor requirements. (5) Robust engagement from the faculty, department, and college with students. (6) Repeat or recurring programs, which usually attract students by word-of-mouth.

What are Program Providers?
Program Providers are companies or organizations that specialize in providing customized, faculty-led program support. They arrange the various components and details of your program. For first-time faculty leaders, and especially for faculty leaders without a program assistant, the use of a program provider is strongly encouraged. Providers allow faculty leaders to focus on the academic components of their program while they organize housing, classroom space, and any excursions or activities you may request.

While working with providers simplifies the program development process immensely, it does come at a cost. This is important to consider, as it may necessitate a larger group size, or a higher per student cost. OIP has worked with the providers listed below but you are welcome to work with any other provider that has been recommended to you.

Customized Educational Programs Abroad (CEPA); Contemporary Tours; Study Abroad Association; CIS; EF Educational Tours
What should I consider when deciding the program length?

Short programs are especially attractive to first time travelers and students with family or job commitments. Keep in mind that the length of your program will need to correlate with the number of contact hours needed to award the academic credit for the course.

Academic contact hours can include lectures, classroom discussions, and course-related activities, performances, and excursions. Purely tourist activities should not be included in calculations of contact hours. If contact hours cannot be fully satisfied abroad, consider including course contact hours on campus or online either before or after the travel portion of your program.

Who purchases the airfare?

There are several options for airfare purchase: (1) OIP purchases a group flight following faculty instructions. Program leaders must travel on the group flight. The cost of the international flight is included in the program cost. (2) The provider makes the flight arrangements and its fee includes the airfare cost, Program leaders must travel on the group flight. (3) Faculty recommends flight itinerary and students purchase their own airfare, the student airfare cost is not included in the program fee but the program brochure provides an airfare cost estimate.

What is the average cost of a program?

Program fees generally fall within a range of $2,700 to $5,000, exclusive of SFA tuition and fees and out-of-pocket expenses that students may need to incur. Location, duration, excursions, and lodging options all significantly affect a program’s fee. We recommend that program fees fall within this range to make them more affordable for students.

Are students able to use Financial Aid?

Summer term faculty-led programs pose a special challenge for some students interested in using financial aid. If your program offers three credits or fewer, it alone will not allow students to qualify for aid. Students may enroll in other summer-term courses, however, that allow them to reach the six-credit threshold for aid qualification. As a result, you should not feel pressured to offer a six-credit summer program. Simply recommend to students to enroll in another course that will earn them six or more credits for the summer term.

Are faculty paid for leading faculty-led programs abroad?

Salary/stipends must be worked out with the department of each faculty member individually. Travel costs of the program leader are included in the program budget and shared equally among the student participants.

Why do programs typically fail?

(1) Courses that are too specific in content to develop enough student interest. (2) High program fees. (3) Program locations that do not appeal to students or that they (and their parents) may consider risky or unsafe, even if they are not under a U.S. Department of State travel warning. (4) Not enough time/effort invested on promotion/recruitment.

Do I have to cancel if my program has low enrollment?

The main reason we cancel a faculty-led program is that it does not reach the minimum number of students it needs to be financially solvent. If your program does not reach its minimum and you receive approval to lead a short course, it is possible to continue the program via other means. For example, your college or department may subsidize the program, or we may find economies in the faculty-leader expenses. We cannot increase the program fee once it is announced, nor can you significantly alter the program's academic content in order to economize on the budget.

You may have to cancel for other reasons, such as an unforeseen international development or illness on the part of the faculty leader. We encourage you to consider a robust contingency plan in advance of your program’s approval to avoid last-minute changes to program content or costs.

When will it be decided if a program is cancelled?

Program statuses are evaluated in early March (or earlier if we need to take into account contract cancellation policies as we cannot risk non-recoverable payments to third party providers). All student payments have to be refunded in full.