Policy Memorandum

International Study Abroad & Travel Protocols

I. Purpose and Scope

To ensure the safety of all travelers, maintain institutional "Duty of Care," and align with the University's assumption of international risk, the following protocols are mandatory for all faculty/staff-led study abroad programs and university-sponsored international travel.

II. Program Approval Timelines & Factors

To allow for adequate student financial planning and institutional risk assessment, the following approval windows are required:

- New Programs: Must be submitted for approval 12 to 18 months in advance.
- Continuing Programs: All preexisting programs must complete a Program Renewal Form by November 15 of the prior year before travel. Approval is not grandfathered and is contingent upon updated safety and budget reviews.
- Mandatory Approvals: No program is authorized without the written signature of the Department Chair, the College Dean/Associate Provost/Associate Vice Chancellor, the OIP Director, and the Vice Provost of Student Success.
- Factors for Approval:
    * Academic Rigor or departmental alignment: Alignment with curriculum and credit-hour requirements or within the mission of your department.
    - Financial Viability: A transparent budget that accounts for all costs.
    - Safety Assessment: Review of U.S. State Department Travel Advisories (Level 1 or 2 preferred).

III. Enrollment & Group Viability Mandates

- Undergraduate Minimum: All undergraduate programs must have at least 10 participants to proceed.
- Graduate/Research Flexibility: Enrollment requirements for Graduate or Research programs are flexible and may vary by specific mission and funding model.
- The "Gap" Protocol (8-9 Students): If undergraduate enrollment reaches 8 participants, the program will proceed with two faculty leaders to satisfy both the 1:5 safety ratio and the 10-person "Group Travel" requirement.
- Financial Priority: When running a program with 8 students and 2 leaders, any budgetary surcharges will be covered by reducing or eliminating student stipends, ensuring the base program fee remains stable for participants.

IV. Supervision & "Gate-to-Gate" Safety

- Chaperone Ratio: Undergraduate programs must maintain a 1:5 faculty-to-student ratio.
- Single-Lead Exception: A faculty member may lead up to 10 students alone only if the destination is Low-Risk (Level 1) and the contracted third-party provider provides 24/7 on-site local facilitation.
- Gate-to-Gate Mandate: At least one designated leader must travel on the same flight itinerary as the undergraduate cohort.
- Faculty Early/Late Travel: OIP funding is reserved for itineraries including student supervision. Faculty traveling early/late for personal reasons do so at their own expense and must ensure a second approved chaperone is present with students during transit.

V. Flight Procurement & Provider Oversight

- Third-Party Providers: All undergraduate programs must utilize a vetted third-party international education company (e.g., Study Abroad Association, Brazil Cultural, or CIEE).
- Group Travel Mandate: Undergraduate air travel must be purchased as a group. "Rogue" or "Self-Booking" is strictly prohibited.
- System of Record: All travel must be booked through the University-approved agency (Direct Travel or an approved study abroad company).
- Non-Reimbursement Penalty: The university will not reimburse expenses booked via unauthorized third-party sites (e.g., Expedia, Priceline).

VI. Mandatory Health & Safety Requirements

- BlueCross BlueShield Global Solutions Insurance: All travelers must be enrolled in BlueCross BlueShield Global Solutions International Health Insurance for the entire duration of the trip.
- Travel Registry: Participants must upload Passport Photo Pages and confirmed itineraries to the OIP Registry 45 days prior to departure: https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=8DbLe-SMQkmUnlMNr9WgiH8nK_4ArzRCkanRu-8rYA9UNVdPSUFIR0kyQktUODFYWDdLMVY0QUU4Mi4u
- Emergency Funding: Costs exceeding insurance coverage will be managed via Academic Affairs' central allocations.

VII. Financial Compliance

- Budget Integrity: Faculty must demonstrate that the program price covers all operational costs. Deficits or currency-related overages are the responsibility of Academic Affairs.

University Faculty Leader Responsibility Checklist

I. Pre-Departure

- **[ ] Recruitment & Academic Integrity:** Recruit students who meet the GPA and behavioral requirements; ensure the course syllabus aligns with the travel itinerary. All designated faculty/staff leads and accompanying faculty/staff chaperones must hold two recruitment/information sessions each semester before travel, totaling four sessions.
- **[ ] Mandatory Training:** Complete **Clery Act** (Annual Requirement).
- **[ ] Student Orientation:** Lead at least two pre-departure meetings covering cultural norms, "Adulting" abroad (budgets, local laws), the Student Code of Conduct, and Airport Expectations.
- **[ ] Logistics Ownership:** Collect and verify that all student passports are valid for at least 6 months *after* the return date.
- **[ ] Emergency Binder:** Create a physical and digital binder with student medical disclosures, emergency contacts, and insurance IDs.

II. On-Site

- **[ ] Behavioral Management:** Address violations of the University Code of Conduct immediately. You are the "Hearing Officer" on the ground.
- **[ ] Crisis First-Responder:** Handle "Tier 2" issues (lost passports, minor illness, local transit strikes) without escalating to OIP unless the student's safety is compromised.
- **[ ] Clery Reporting:** Document any "Clery-reportable" crimes (theft, assault, etc.) in real-time for theOIP's year-end report.
- **[ ] Provider Liaison:** Act as the primary point of contact for the tour provider or local university partner.
- **[ ] Student Survey Completion**: Before the trip ends, students complete a provided survey about their experience abroad.

III. Post-Trip

- **[ ] Financial Reconciliation:** Submit all receipts and final budget spreadsheets within 14 days of return.
- **[ ] Incident Summary:** Provide a written report of any medical or behavioral issues that occurred (even if resolved).
- **[ ] Program Assessment:** Evaluate the provider's performance and the academic success of the site visits with OIP.

IV. Office of International Programs Stipend Assistance Guidelines

Undergraduate program participants requesting financial support from OIP must complete and submit the essay requirements for the Gilman Scholarship application https://www.gilmanscholarship.org/applicants/essays/.

Graduate Program participants seeking additional financial support from OIP will be required to complete a 500-word professional statement that connects their international experience to their career or research.

Graduate programs, please provide your professional statement prompt.

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Outside Funding

Please share stipend and/or funding provided by fundraising, departmental and/or divisional support **per student** _$_____.

Please share fundraising activities planned, if applicable (company, date, action):

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