1. PURPOSE

Faculty-led study abroad programs are academic experiences/programs initiated, organized, and carried out by members of SHSU faculty, with assistance from the Office of International Programs (OIP). The primary purpose for creating a study abroad is to create a unique educational experience which may range from cultural immersion (language, cultural, social, etc.), to academic content related to a geographic area, to natural environment studies (biology, botany, geography, geology, etc.). The following guidelines for faculty-led study abroad programs are based on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) Policies for Out-of-Country or Out-of-State Courses and suggestions from the Forum on Education Abroad.

2. PROCEDURE

2.01 A faculty-led study abroad program proposal must carry the endorsement of the appropriate department and college.

2.02 Programs may range in length from week-long spring break excursions to a semester or year-long comprehensive experience. Depending upon the proposed length and complexity of the program, a lead time of 12-18 months prior to the commencement of a program may be needed.

2.03 Faculty leaders have the primary responsibility for the academic content and instructional delivery methods of study abroad programs. Each course offered in a study abroad program must be a part of an SHSU approved degree or certification program and will meet the minimum contact hours required by THECB.

2.04 OIP, in conjunction with the faculty, will also be responsible for the pre-departure and on-site arrangements for the program.

2.05 By submitting a proposal for a faculty-led program, the faculty leader agrees to abide by all System and University policies enumerated in the Sam Houston State University Study Abroad Handbook.

3. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.01 Academic Departments have the primary responsibility for the academic
content, instructional delivery methods, and pre-departure (with the exception of safety and security pre-departure orientations) and onsite arrangements for the program.

3.02 OIP will work with academic departments to:

a. assist in the development of a program to ensure compliance with university policies, best practices in study abroad programs, and health and safety requirements;
b. assist in setting up accounts and budgets for the trip;
c. coordinate payments from students on a pre-determined schedule through the Bursar’s Office;
d. coordinate with faculty leaders and the Registrar’s Office to confirm registration status once students are abroad (see Study Abroad Handbook);
e. assist with marketing by hosting a Study Abroad Fair, posting information about potential trips on the OIP website, and holding informational meetings;
f. train faculty on health and safety issues and best practices for study abroad courses;
g. provide pre-departure health and safety orientations for participating students;
h. provide scholarship information to eligible students;
i. maintain centralized records of all faculty-led study abroad programs and participants.

3.03 The faculty director or on-site coordinator will be present and on-site for the duration of the program, and will be accessible to the students.

4. APPROVAL PROCESS

4.01 All study abroad programs must be reviewed and approved by the following: 1) sponsoring department chair; 2) college dean; 3) Office of International Programs; 4) Texas State University System Board of Regents (TSUSBR). Once approved, the information will be forwarded to The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB).

4.02 All proposals need to include:

a. Application with approval from department chair and college dean (See Study Abroad Handbook)
b. Syllabi of courses to be offered

c. Program itinerary

d. Detailed budget for the program dean (*See Study Abroad Handbook*)

e. Supporting documentation, when applicable, including contracts and/or publications on physical facilities including housing, institutional affiliation, classroom space, study space, travel agency, etc.

5. STUDENT REGISTRATION

5.01 Departments should build the courses with departmental restrictions preventing open registration into the courses. Prior to early registration, the Study Abroad Office will manually override the registration restrictions for the students who have been accepted into the study abroad program by the faculty leader and have paid their program fees according to the designated payment schedule.

5.02 In general, students are not allowed to audit out-of-country courses. If a faculty member would like a student to audit the course, he or she needs to request approval from their chair and dean.

5.03 All students must comply with SHSU admission requirements and policies, including vaccinations. More information can be found at: http://www.shsu.edu/~uhc/www/meningitis_vac.html

5.04 Students are required to attain faculty permission to withdraw from the course once they are abroad.

6. TUITION AND FEES

6.01 Faculty-led programs are considered regular SHSU courses and are subject to the normal tuition and fees based upon student’s residency, with the exception of the Recreation Fee, Lowman Student Center Fee, and Health Center Fee. However, if a student is taking another course during the same semester as the study abroad course, they will be required to pay all appropriate fees.
6.02 Each student participating in a study abroad program will be assessed a Study Abroad fee.

6.03 Per financial aid rules and regulations, financial aid is available to students participating in either faculty-led study abroad programs or on-campus courses.

6.04 TSUS Rules and Regulations, Chapter V at 4.85 and 5.5 specifically prohibit faculty and staff from accepting money from students. The student’s SHSU account will be charged based upon the published program costs and student payments must be made directly to the Bursar’s Office. Prior to charges being applied, faculty will submit a list of students (name and Sam ID) signed up for the program to the Study Abroad Office, and students must sign and submit a financial responsibility statement (See Study Abroad Handbook) to OIP. This statement serves to notify the student of the deadline for payments and refunds, if any. If the student is under the age of 18, their parents must also sign this form.

7. REFUNDING PROGRAM FEES

7.01 If the University determines that a program should be cancelled or terminated due to low enrollments or to an emergency or crisis situation, the process for notification and refunds will be determined by the department.

7.02 Students who withdraw from the program prior to departure may be held accountable for some or all charges, based on the Student Financial Aid Budget Increase Form. (See Study Abroad Handbook)

7.03 Students who wish to withdraw from the program after departure, or who are expelled from the program for any reason will not be refunded any of the program fees, unless there are extenuating circumstances and the faculty leader and department agree to the refund. Tuition and fees will be refunded according to the regular state refund schedule.

8. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

8.01 The program must attempt to make reasonable accommodations for students with physical or learning disabilities by addressing mobility and other amenities at the site.
8.02 It is understood that certain types of programs require students to be able to participate in physically challenging activities that may not make them accessible to students with certain disabilities. As long as the program requirements are stated in the program description, there is no problem in designing this type of program. However, program literature should include a statement relating to accessibility concerns:

"This program includes activities that may involve using public transportation, negotiating stairs, taking long walks, and attending scheduled classes. If you have any concerns about your ability to perform any of these activities or have other special needs or disability-related concerns, contact the faculty leader for the study abroad program in which you want to apply."

9. STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

9.01 All students must sign a behavior contract (See Study Abroad Handbook) which states that the faculty member has the ultimate authority to determine whether the student can continue on the trip or not. The students must adhere to the code of conduct and may be prevented from going on the trip if their conduct prior to departure is not congruent with the guidelines set forth in the code of conduct.

9.02 Health insurance is required for all program participants. Proof of insurance and a summary of benefits indicating that the student is covered for accident and sickness, emergency medical evacuation, and repatriation of remains are required.

9.03 All students must fill out an Emergency Contact form (See Study Abroad Handbook) and provide a copy to the faculty leader and OIP.

9.04 Copies of each student’s passports should be collected and kept on file by the faculty leader and OIP. In addition, students should be encouraged to carry a high quality color copy of their passport while traveling.

9.05 Students are required to have a doctor confirm they are physically fit for international travel, and should disclose any medical conditions which may affect their ability and behavior for the duration of the program. The Student Health Travel Release form (See Study Abroad Handbook) should be submitted to the faculty leader and OIP.
9.06 Students must sign a statement that they have received and understand the orientation materials, including the emergency protocol.

10. STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

Students and faculty must review the Study Abroad Handbook prior to enrolling in a study abroad program.

APPROVED: Dana Gibson, President

DATED: 10/9/13

CERTIFICATION STATEMENT

This academic policy statement (APS) has been approved by the reviewer(s) listed below and represents SHSU's Division of Academic Affairs' policy from the date of this document until superseded.

Original: April 24, 2013
Reviewer(s): Academic Policy Council
Council of Academic Deans

Approved: Jaimie L. Hebert
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Review Cycle: April 1, ONY*
Review Date: April 1, 2015
Date: 10-14-13

*ONY = Odd Numbered Year