

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) that take place out-of-country (Study Abroad) or out-of-state (Study Away). For the purposes of this policy both out-of-country and out-of-state programs will be referred to as study abroad. 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.). This policy for faculty-led study abroad programs is based on the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) [Policies for Out-of-Country or Out-of-State Courses, and The Texas State University System's \(TSUS\) Rules and Regulations.](#)

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 weeklong spring break excursions to a semester or yearlong 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 preparing and collecting necessary student paperwork, administering the OIP study abroad scholarship for eligible students, and leading pre-departure health and safety orientations.
- 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 Faculty-Led Program Handbook.
- 2.06 The University may not approve faculty, staff, or student travel for educational purposes to countries that are listed by the United States Department of State as having a Level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory at the time of the request.

3. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

3.01 Academic Departments have the primary responsibility for the academic content, instructional delivery methods, pre-departure academic 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 Faculty-Led Program 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) Office of Academic Planning and Assessment; and 5) 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 submitted to OIP must include:

- a. Application with approval from department chair and college dean (*See Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*)
- b. Syllabi of courses to be offered
- c. Program itinerary
- d. Detailed budget for the program with approval from department chair and college dean (*See Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program 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 OIP 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, the faculty member must request approval from the appropriate 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 (*See Study Abroad Handbook*).

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, the student 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 study abroad courses that count towards their degree.
- 6.04 TSUS Rules and Regulations, Chapter V at 4.85 and 5.5 specifically prohibit faculty and staff from accepting fees or payments 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. Faculty will submit a list of students (name and Sam ID) signed up for the program to the OIP, and students must sign and submit a financial responsibility statement (*see Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program 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, the student's legal guardian must also sign this form.

7. REFUNDING PROGRAM FEES

- 7.01 If the University or department determines that a program should be cancelled or terminated, the process for notification and refunds will be determined by the department in consultation with the Study Abroad Coordinator.
- 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 Faculty-Led Program 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 consider and facilitate requests for accommodations from students with physical or learning disabilities.
- 8.02 It is understood that certain types of programs require students to participate in physically challenging activities that may not be accessible to students with certain disabilities. Any program activities and physical requirements must be stated in the program description, and program literature must 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 Faculty-Led Program 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. Students are covered by the University’s travel insurance while on the program. Additional insurance may be required for preexisting conditions and travel outside of the program dates. 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 when additional insurance is needed.
- 9.03 All students must fill out an Emergency Contact form (*see Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program 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 complete a Pre-Travel Health Survey form (*see Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*) where they are encouraged to disclose any medical conditions that may affect their ability and behavior for the duration of the program. The form should be submitted to the faculty leader and OIP.

10. STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

Students and faculty must review the *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook* prior to enrolling in a study abroad program.

APPROVED: <signed>
Dana G. Hoyt, President

DATED: 12/10/18

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	Review Cycle:	Five years*
Reviewer(s):	Council of Academic Deans Faculty Senate Academic Affairs Council	Review Date:	Spring 2022

Approved: <signed> Date: 12/11/18
Richard Eglsaer
Provost and Vice President
for Academic Affairs

*Effective January 2018, Academic Policy Statements will be reviewed on a rotating 5-year schedule. To transition to a distributed review load, some policies may be reviewed prior to the 5-year timeframe, with subsequent reviews transitioning to the 5-year schedule.