

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide specific guidance and procedures affecting students, faculty, and others who may be involved in Study Abroad and Study-in-USA courses. Study Abroad and Study-in-USA courses do not include clinical placements, practicums, or internships.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.01 The following definitions have been adapted from Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) definitions:
- a. Study Abroad Courses—off-campus, academic credit instruction that is delivered outside the United States primarily to regular on-campus students.
 - b. Study-in-America Courses—off-campus, academic credit instruction that is delivered outside Texas but in the United States primarily to regular on-campus students (referred to as Study-in-USA Courses at Sam Houston State University (SHSU).
 - c. Regular On-Campus Student— a student who is admitted to an institution, the majority of whose semester credit hours are reported for formula funding and more than 50 percent of coursework is primarily taken at one of the institution's campuses.
- 2.02 Faculty-led Study Abroad and Study-in-USA courses are academic experiences that take place out-of-country or out-of-state, respectively, and are initiated, organized, and carried out by members of the SHSU faculty, with assistance from the Global Engagement Center (GEC). The primary purpose for creating a Study Abroad or Study-in-USA course is to create a unique educational experience that, for example, may consist of cultural immersion (language, cultural, social, etc.), academic content related to a geographic area, or natural environment studies (biology, botany, geography, geology, etc.).
- 2.03 A faculty-led course is categorized as Study Abroad or Study-in-USA if any portion of the course is held out-of-country or out-of-state, respectively.

3. PROCEDURES

- 3.01 Study Abroad/Study-in-USA courses are designed and evaluated similarly to on-campus courses, including following the university curriculum process and administering student perceptions of teaching.
- 3.02 A faculty-led Study Abroad or Study-in-USA course proposal must carry written approval of the appropriate department chair and college dean.
- 3.03 Time abroad or out-of-state may vary in length depending on course structure. Depending upon the proposed length and complexity of the course, a maximum lead-time of 12-18 months prior to the commencement of a course may be needed.
- 3.04 Each Study Abroad/Study-in-USA course must be applicable to an SHSU approved degree or certificate program and meet the minimum contact hours required by the THECB.
- 3.05 All Study Abroad/Study-in-USA courses must be listed in the university's course inventory.
- 3.06 All requests for courses follow the submission guidelines found on the SHSU Study Abroad website.
- 3.07 By submitting a proposal for a faculty-led Study Abroad or Study-in-USA course, the faculty leader agrees to abide by all THECB and Texas State University System (TSUS) rules, as well as all University policies enumerated in the SHSU *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*.
- 3.08 Faculty, staff, and student travel for educational purposes to regions of a country listed with a travel advisory of "Level 4" and student travel to regions of a country listed with a travel advisory of "Level 3" by the United States Department of State are prohibited except in limited circumstances (see TSUS *Rules and Regulations*, Chapter VI, Subsection 14)

4. GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.01 Academic departments have the primary responsibility for the pre-departure academic orientations and onsite arrangements for the course. Faculty leaders have the primary responsibility for the academic content and instructional delivery methods.

- 4.02 The GEC, in conjunction with the faculty, will also be responsible for preparing and collecting necessary student paperwork, administering the GEC Study Abroad scholarship for eligible students, and leading pre-departure health and safety orientations.
- 4.03 The GEC will work with academic departments to:
- a. assist in the development of a course to ensure compliance with University policies, best practices, and health and safety requirements;
 - b. assist in setting up accounts and budgets for travel;
 - c. coordinate payments from students on a pre-determined schedule through Student Account Services;
 - d. coordinate with faculty leaders and the Registrar's Office to confirm registration status prior to and after students are abroad or out-of-state (see *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*);
 - e. assist with marketing by hosting a Study Abroad Fair, posting information about potential courses on the GEC website, and holding informational meetings;
 - f. train faculty on health and safety issues and best practices for Study Abroad and Study-in-USA 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/Study-in-USA courses and participants.
- 4.04 The faculty leader or on-site coordinator will be present and on-site for the duration of the course and will be accessible to the students.
- 4.05 Any free tickets for travel, accommodations, or other expenses, or incentives provided by travel agents, carriers, or hotels must be applied to direct support of the Study Abroad/Study-in-USA course and may not be made as gifts to faculty or staff members or their families.

- 4.06 Advertising or marketing for Study Abroad/Study-in-USA courses should emphasize the instructional nature of the courses and may not emphasize or create the impression that the courses are primarily credit-for-travel experiences.

5. APPROVAL PROCESS

- 5.01 All Study Abroad and Study-in-USA courses must be reviewed and approved by the following: 1) sponsoring department chair; 2) college dean; 3) GEC; and 4) Texas State University System (TSUS) Board of Regents. Once approved, the information will be reported to the THECB.
- 5.02 All proposals submitted to the GEC-must include:
- a. Application with approval from department chair and college dean (see *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*)
 - b. Course syllabus
 - c. Travel itinerary and course schedule
 - d. Detailed budget for the course 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.
- 5.03 A new proposal must be submitted each time the course is offered.

6. STUDENT REGISTRATION

- 6.01 Departments should build the courses with departmental restrictions preventing open registration into the courses. Prior to early registration, the GEC will manually override the registration restrictions for the students who have been accepted into the Study Abroad or Study-in-USA course by the faculty leader and have paid the associated course fees according to the designated payment schedule.

- 6.02 In general, students are not allowed to audit Study Abroad or Study-in-USA courses. If a faculty member would like a student to audit the course, the faculty member must request approval from the appropriate department chair and dean.
- 6.03 To register for a Study Abroad or Study-in-USA course, students must comply with SHSU admission requirements and policies, including vaccinations.
- 6.04 Students are required to notify the faculty leader prior to withdrawing from the course once they are abroad/away (see *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*).

7. TUITION AND FEES

- 7.01 Faculty-led Study Abroad/Study-in-USA courses are considered regular SHSU courses and are subject to the normal tuition and fees based upon a student's residency, with the exception of the Recreational Sports Fee and Student Center Fee. However, if a student is enrolled in another SHSU course during the same semester as the Study Abroad/Study-in-USA course, the student will be required to pay all appropriate fees.
- 7.02 Each student enrolled in a Study Abroad course will be assessed a non-refundable Study Abroad fee.
- 7.03 Subject to financial aid rules and regulations, financial aid is available to students participating in Study Abroad and Study-in-USA courses that count towards their degree.
- 7.04 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 course costs, and student payments must be made directly to the Cashier's Office. Faculty will submit a list of students (name and Sam ID) signed up for the course to the GEC, and students must sign and submit a financial responsibility statement (see *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*) to the GEC. 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.

8. REFUNDING COURSE FEES

- 8.01 If the University or department determines that a course should be cancelled or terminated, the process for notification and refunds will be determined by the department in consultation with the Assistant Director of Study Abroad.
- 8.02 Students who withdraw from the course 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*).
- 8.03 Students who wish to withdraw from the course after departure, or who are expelled from the course for any reason will not be refunded any of the course 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.

9. STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- 9.01 SHSU must consider and facilitate requests for reasonable accommodations from students with qualifying disabilities to ensure meaningful participation in the educational activities and access to educational benefits as appropriate to the educational course and as required by law.
- 9.02 Some courses may require students to participate in physically challenging activities that may not be accessible to students with certain disabilities. Any course activities and physical requirements must be stated in the course description, and course literature must include a statement relating to accessibility concerns:

“This course 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 both the faculty leader of the Study Abroad/Study-in-USA course for which you want to apply and Services for Students with Disabilities.”

10. STUDENT REQUIREMENTS

- 10.01 All students must sign a behavior contract (see *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*) that states that the faculty member has the ultimate authority to determine whether the student may remain enrolled in the course or not. Students must adhere to the code of conduct and may be prevented from participating in the course if their conduct

prior to departure is not congruent with the guidelines set forth in the code of conduct.

- 10.02 Health insurance is required for all students enrolled in the Study Abroad/Study-in-USA course. Students must purchase the University's travel insurance for coverage while abroad/away. Students may obtain additional coverage through a third-party affiliate. Additional insurance may be required for preexisting conditions and travel outside of the course 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.
- 10.03 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 GEC.
- 10.04 For Study Abroad courses, copies of each student's passports must be collected and kept on file by the faculty leader and GEC. In addition, students should be encouraged to carry a high-quality color copy of their passport while traveling.
- 10.05 Students are asked to complete a confidential Pre-Travel Health Survey form (see *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook*) where they are encouraged to disclose any medical issues that may affect the student during participation in the course. The form must be submitted to the faculty leader and GEC.
- 10.06 Students must comply with all course, host country, and/or regional vaccination requirements.

11. STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

Students and faculty must review the *Study Abroad Faculty-Led Program Handbook* prior to student enrollment in a Study Abroad/Study-in-USA course.

APPROVED: _____ <signed>
Alisa White, Ph.D., President

DATE: _____ 2/10/2025

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 Affairs Council

Review Cycle: Five years*
Review Date: Spring 2027

Approved: <signed>
Michael T. Stephenson, Ph.D.,
Provost and Sr. Vice President
for Academic Affairs

Date: 1/15/2025

*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.