

Information for Faculty Leading Short-Term Travel/Study Courses Abroad

The following information is designed to help leaders of Short Term travel/study courses and other student trips comply with Hollins policies and to address the special health, safety, legal, insurance, and crisis management concerns that arise with travel.

If you have questions about any of the information in these guidelines or in the addenda, please contact either the International Programs (IP) office or the Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). We are happy to serve as a resource to faculty on any of these issues and to attend orientation sessions to review the student information and forms with your participants.

Academic Guidelines

As the Short Term travel/study course is first and foremost a course in which students will earn academic credit, regular guidelines regarding academic integrity apply. This includes ensuring that the course has a focused academic component and occupies student time for the full duration of short-term. Pre- or post-travel seminars that complement the travel experience should be planned in cases where the trips themselves last less than the full duration of short-term (see Faculty Handbook page II-4).

In addition, a full syllabus which includes details on how the grade for the course will be calculated must be submitted to the VPAA by the Thanksgiving break, unless asked for earlier. Each travel/study course must include a mandatory orientation for students. Any student not in attendance should be dropped from the course.

We suggest that you develop an application process in order to fully screen students before accepting them on your course. This should include a student application and essay, at least one faculty recommendation, screening prospective students through both Dean of Students (Residence Life staff especially) and Academic Services. Any student who is currently on Academic Probation or has past serious disciplinary infractions should not be allowed to participate in a short-term travel/study course. If prospective student lists are provided to the director of international programs, Kirsten McKinney, by October 15th for short-term courses (or at least 2 months prior to the international trip for other courses) she can assist in screening students with respective offices on campus.

General Guidelines

Student Forms and Information: Along with these guidelines you are receiving a packet of information and forms (developed by the Hollins legal team) from IP that must be copied and distributed to each course/trip participant. Please review the information in the packet so you'll know what the students have been told. With the Behavior Contract and Liability Waiver form, the student agrees to abide by standards of conduct and acknowledges the consequences of disruptive or dangerous behavior. If a student disobeys this contract at any point in the trip, they may be dismissed (after consultation with the director of international programs and the vice president for academic affairs) at their own expense (see the section on "Disruptive or Dangerous Behavior" below). On the Health Report and Release, the student provides information on medical conditions, permission to notify parents about physical or mental health concerns while abroad, and authorization for emergency care. We recommend that you become familiar with these forms prior to the trip and consult with the health and counseling center if you require further information regarding any medical condition or medication. With the Health Information Release, the student gives permission to the director of health and counseling services to inform you of any significant medical or psychological concerns. If there are concerns about a student's physical or mental health, health and counseling services can work with you to make sure you have appropriate information and that the student is aware of what services are and are not available at the destination. In most cases, a student cannot legally be excluded from a program because of a medical or psychological condition, but

we can work with students and parents to discourage participation, where appropriate, particularly if services that the student may require are unavailable or the student's situation will make it difficult or impossible for her to participate successfully.

Staffing: There must be more than one responsible adult accompanying each travel/study course so that there will be someone to remain with the group if the faculty leader needs to attend to an individual student emergency. Students enrolled in the course should not be expected to provide services to the group (i.e., they should not drive rental vehicles, be expected to accompany peers to the doctor or hospital, etc., except in cases of extreme emergency when there are no other options).

Liability and Insurance Coverage: Hollins University carries a general liability policy covering faculty and other university employees on official university business. The policy covers most liability expenses for bodily injury or property damage. If you will be traveling in a rental vehicle, you should have or purchase vehicle rental insurance that includes liability, collision, and physical damage. In case of an accident, the vehicle's insurance is primary, the Hollins liability policy secondary. Faculty leaders are not covered by the Hollins liability policy when acting outside the scope of their official responsibilities or when willfully engaging in misconduct or criminal conduct.

All faculty and staff members on Hollins-sponsored travel are also covered under our Executive Assistance policy with Worldwide Assistance. Coverage includes medical, travel, risk control, and personal assistance before and during overseas travel. Before leaving the U.S., you should request a current ID card for this policy from Barbara Adams, Assistant to the VP for Finance and Administration.

University policy requires that all students have adequate medical insurance while enrolled at Hollins. You will have each student's Health Report and Release form, which documents her insurance carrier and policy number. Please tell each of your students that they should confirm whether their health insurance covers them outside the U.S. prior to departure. The Hollins student insurance policy does, but family policies vary. If a student is not covered while abroad, the IP office can provide a list of short-term study abroad insurance providers and the student should be advised to sign up for one of these prior to departure. A small amount of additional health insurance and the coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains that is required by the university's insurer is provided by the International Student Identity Card (see below). As you are probably aware, in most cases, physicians and medical facilities overseas will require that medical services be paid for out-of-pocket. Students can request reimbursement from their insurance companies upon return to the U.S.

International Student ID Card: Hollins requires that all students who go abroad under Hollins sponsorship have an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) to meet requirements of one of the university's insurers. The card also provides other benefits, including a toll-free 24-hour helpline for assistance with medical, legal, or financial emergencies and a wide range of discounts in the U.S. and abroad. IP is authorized to issue ISICs. An application (in the student packet) and photograph are required and a \$22 fee is charged to the student's Hollins account. Hollins is not authorized to issue International Teacher Identity Cards, but they can be purchased at www.myisic.com.

Reasonable Care: "Reasonable care" is the conscious exercise of good judgment and common sense on the part of the faculty leader and the institution in the planning and implementation of a program. It is also the standard by which questions of liability are generally judged. Exercising reasonable care includes careful planning, anticipating and preparing for potential problems, preparing students adequately, including informing them of risks, laws, penalties, and responsibilities (preferably before they make any nonrefundable deposits), obtaining waivers, and doing what a "reasonable person" would do in handling problems or emergencies. In a crisis, do not let fear of legal consequences prevent you from acting quickly and responsibly.

Health and Safety: Faculty members cannot be experts on all of the health and safety issues which may come up during the course of a program. However, students, their parents, and Hollins can reasonably expect that university-sponsored activities organized by faculty members will be relatively free from predictable harm, that students will be informed before and during the course of reasonable precautions, and that students will receive appropriate support and guidance should an unexpected medical condition, political situation, or other crisis occur. All arrangements for any course involving travel should be made taking relative freedom from predictable harm into consideration. Faculty leaders must be prepared to serve as resources to students who express concerns about their safety or security and to students who may require medical care and referral. Health and counseling services can provide a first-aid kit for minor ailments, if you wish. Resources to assist in identifying students in distress and in managing individual student crises are attached to this document, as is the Crisis Management Plan for Short Term Travel/Study Courses, which provides procedures for dealing with a crisis that affects the entire group. In all cases, your first responsibility is to attend to the safety and well-being of students.

Parents may ask if you can guarantee their daughters' safety while participating in your course. An appropriate response is that while we take all reasonable precautions, we cannot guarantee anyone's safety either on campus or on an abroad program. A student is much less likely to be endangered by terrorist or anti-American activity than she is by her own personal behavior choices. You will set appropriate expectations, but you cannot control her choices, nor can you prevent her from engaging in illegal, dangerous, or unwise activities.

Alcohol and Illegal Drug Use: In most other countries, all but the youngest Hollins students are of legal drinking age. Excessive drinking is one of the greatest risk factors to students abroad. It makes them more likely to ignore their common sense instincts and make poor decisions about where to go and what company to keep. In particular, it renders them more vulnerable to mugging and sexual assault. This information is included in the participant packet and should also be reinforced at orientation and regularly while you are abroad, especially if you become aware that one or more students are drinking heavily. While Hollins policy does not strictly prohibit faculty/course leaders from drinking socially with students who are of drinking age, you should be aware that such activity may increase your liability if there is a problem.

Use or possession of drugs which are illegal in the U.S. or the host country is strictly prohibited by Hollins University policy. In addition to Hollins sanctions, anyone possessing illegal narcotics is subject to the laws of the host country, which may be much harsher than those in the U.S. U.S. consulate and embassy staff are not able to provide legal assistance to U.S. citizens arrested for drug possession. For more information from the U.S. Department of State on the dangers of drug use overseas, go to http://www.travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs_1237.html.

As noted previously, the Hollins liability policy does not cover faculty or staff who are acting outside the scope of their official responsibilities or who willfully act irresponsibly themselves.

Disruptive or Dangerous Behavior: Occasionally a student's behavior, though not illegal, is highly inappropriate or disruptive to the successful running of a program. By signing the Behavior Contract, students have agreed to behave appropriately. In most cases, expelling a student from the course should not be the first solution. Often warning the student and/or having her agree to and sign a written contract that makes requirements for her behavior and the consequences of noncompliance clear will suffice. The director of IP, in consultation with the dean of academic services, can assist you in writing the contract, if you wish. In egregious cases, particularly where the student or others in the group have been endangered or laws have been broken, immediate expulsion may be warranted. The Information for Participants includes a section on grounds for expulsion. If you decide to expel a student, you should notify the IP office of the details of the situation and the plans that have been made for the student to return to the U.S. so other offices on campus and the student's parents can be notified. It is important to prepare a written report documenting the reasons for your decision.

Refund Policy: You should have a clearly-stated refund policy to give students before they make any non-refundable deposit or other payments. It doesn't need to be specific, only clear. An example from Klaus Phillips: "In general, both deposits and fees are non-refundable. In cases of serious medical conditions or similar emergency, every attempt will be made to refund as much as possible. However, because payments we have made on your behalf are often non-refundable, any refund is likely to be limited to no more than half the program fee and is often less." If you are working with a third-party provider, they are likely to have a refund policy of which the students should be informed. In all cases, the policy should also indicate that any student expelled from the program is not eligible for a refund.

Procedures

Before Departure

Provide participants with:

- copies of the Information for Participants in Short Term Travel/Study Abroad, the required student forms, and the Short Term Travel/Study Abroad Participant Checklist. Complete the box at the top of the checklist before copying and distributing it to students.
- an orientation that covers
 - > a detailed itinerary
 - > financial information (the course fee, when it is due, what is and is not covered, the refund policy, how much additional money they will need)
 - > deadlines for submitting all forms
 - > passport and visa requirements and deadlines
 - > country-specific information, including information on cultural, behavioral, and dress norms and on any site-specific safety precautions
 - > any general climatic or public health conditions for which they should be prepared, including required immunizations, dietary considerations, etc.
 - > the academic, behavior, and other expectations you have of participants
 - > safety precautions they should follow (general information on safety is included in the student information packet)
 - > how much independent activity and travel will be allowed and under what conditions
 - > what they need to take with them
 - > how to access funds while at their destination
 - > what to expect in terms of communications—how much telephone/cell phone and e-mail access there will be

Submit to IP (as noted on Short Term Leader's Checklist):

- a detailed course syllabus and travel itinerary with flight information, daily contact information for you, and all overnight accommodations. This information will be on file in the IP office, the VPAA's office, and the campus safety office, in case of emergency.
- all of the materials on the Short Term Travel/Study Abroad Leader's Checklist. **These materials are due to IP no later than the Monday of Thanksgiving break.** If they are not received on time, the VPAA will be forced to cancel the course. Most faculty leaders designate a staff member (usually the department or division secretary) who will collect the documents, forms, and photos from students, check to be sure the forms have been completed properly, track down any that are missing, and assemble the materials as noted on the checklist. **It is important to emphasize to all students that in order to remain on the participant list, they must complete and submit all required documents by the deadline.** If absolutely necessary, the photocopy of the passport ID page can be turned in after the deadline but we must have it before the student leaves campus at the end of the fall term. Students should be encouraged to obtain passports as early as possible.

Familiarize yourself with:

- conditions in the country to which the group will travel. Review the consular information sheet on the country and any relevant public announcements or travel warnings at www.travel.state.gov and information on health conditions on the Travelers' Health page at www.cdc.gov.
- procedures for medical care, payment, and insurance in the host country and resources on physicians and hospitals where English is spoken (this information is available from the U.S. embassy).
- procedures for changing a participant's return ticket in case an early departure is necessary due to illness or other problem.
- the Crisis Management Plan for Short Term Travel/Study Courses and the Emergency Response Procedures.

Also:

- make arrangements to have a cell phone while you are overseas. Hollins requires that leaders of trips abroad have cell phones or continual access to cell phones that will function at their destinations. The cost of the phone can be built into the program budget.
- devise an emergency communications plan which will enable you to contact each participant and co-leader in an emergency (see the Crisis Management Plan for an example).
- register your trip with the local U.S. embassy through the Department of State's secure online travel registration website (<https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>). The Information for Participants encourages students to do the same.

While Abroad

You or another responsible adult should have available at all times:

- 24-hour contact information for the IP director and campus safety (IP provides a wallet-sized card with this information for each faculty leader),
- the Health Report and Release form, emergency contact information, and passport ID page photocopy for each student,
- the Hollins University Crisis Management Plan for Short Term Travel/Study Courses (see the accompanying pamphlet)
- contact information for the U.S. embassy or consulate closest to the study site (available at <http://usembassy.state.gov>,
- contact information for local medical facilities and physicians' offices where English is spoken,
- contact information for any travel or tour providers (includes airlines, travel agencies, tour companies, etc.).

You should:

- notify, or have a designated party notify, IP within 24 hours of arrival overseas that you and all participants have arrived safely,
- notify, or have a designated party notify, IP if a student withdraws from the program after arrival and provide details of the student's travel plans,
- notify participants and IP of any changes in the information provided them about itinerary, accommodations, etc.,
- provide participants with your cell phone number, contact information for local emergency services and the U.S. embassy, details of the emergency communications plan and any other emergency procedures,
- instruct students to contact you immediately if at any time they feel their safety is threatened,
- maintain regular contact with all course participants and be available to them at all times in case of emergency,

- meet with participants regularly to discuss non-academic concerns, including cross-cultural observations, inappropriate behavior, safety issues, frustrations, homesickness, etc.,
- as much as is possible and reasonable, be aware of participants' general whereabouts at all times,
- respond to any emergency situation that may arise, following the procedures outlined in the Emergency Response Procedures.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of these guidelines, please contact the international programs staff.

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