

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY-TEXARKANA STUDY

ABROAD

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL GUIDELINES MANUAL



OFFICE OF THE PROVOST/VPAA
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PURPOSE

Texas A&M University-Texarkana recognizes that the workplace of the future will require students to be creative and critical thinkers, effective communicators, and collaborators with a global perspective. To assist students in preparation for the world after college, an opportunity exists for travel outside of the United States.

To ensure successful travel A&M-Texarkana the International Travel Guidelines Manual was created. The Texas A&M System and the State of Texas travel regulations guide A&M-Texarkana. Strict timelines and requirements exist for the International Travel Coordinator (ITC) who wishes to provide a travel experience for students. The timeline must be followed for the program to be considered for international travel funding.

CREDIT HOURS

Courses with a travel component may be offered at the undergraduate or graduate levels. Each course will be designated as three semester credit hours (3sch). The following criteria must guide the creation of the course:

1. All travel courses shall contain a non-travel as well as a travel component. Travel courses shall be structured with a minimum of 1/3 non-travel time and a maximum of 2/3 travel time. For example, for a 3sch course, a minimum of 15 clock hours should be utilized in the preparation for travel and in the debriefing upon return from the travel experience.
 - a. The non-travel component may be on campus, delivered via a web-conferencing tool, and/or other distance-education tool.
 - b. The non-travel component may be held during normally scheduled class hours, a Saturday class, or any time agreed upon by each member of the class.
 - c. The non-travel component must be split into two sessions: One prior to travel and the other upon return from travel; however, the division of time is not required to be equal.
2. All travel courses must proceed through the appropriate channels for internal approval: department, college dean, college faculty, and undergraduate curriculum committee and/or graduate council. External approval is not required.

3. All travel courses must clearly link the Student Learning Outcomes to the travel activities and itinerary.
4. All travel courses must be designated as undergraduate and/or graduate. A clear delineation of expected learner outcomes and requirements must exist between the undergraduate and graduate syllabi.
 - a. If a course is to be offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the course description must reflect the distinction.
 - b. If a course is to be offered at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels, a separate syllabus must be created and approved through the proper approval process for each.

SIMULTANEOUS ENROLLMENT IN TRAVEL COURSES

A student may not enroll in more than two travel courses (6sch) during the same trip. As such, a student may not earn more than 6sch per international trip.

MAXIMUM ALLOWANCE OF TRAVEL COURSES TO FULFILL DEGREE REQUIREMENTS

While international travel is important in developing a global perspective, an excessive amount of travel courses should not overly represent a student's academic experience. The following guidelines have been established:

<u>Level of Degree</u>	<u>Maximum Credit Hours</u>	<u>Exceed? Approval from:</u>
Undergraduate	12sch	Advisor, Program Coordinator, and Dean
Graduate	6sch	Advisor, Program Coordinator, and Dean

A student at the undergraduate level should not exceed 12sch of travel courses to fulfill degree requirements. If an exception arises, the student may seek approval from his/her Advisor, Program Coordinator, and Dean.

A student at the graduate level should not exceed 6sch of travel courses to fulfill degree requirements. If an exception arises, the student may seek approval from his/her Advisor, Program Coordinator, and Dean.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR FACULTY PROPOSING A TRAVEL COURSE

Faculty who wish to include a travel component to their course should consider the following items and be prepared to provide written justification in support of the offering.

1. Personal or professional faculty qualifications support the creation of the course
 - a. Previous international work, living, or teaching experiences?
 - b. Previous familiarity with the country of destination?
 - c. Language ability in the country of destination?
2. Local contacts or collaborating faculty to assist with program planning and implementation
3. Impact of travel related courses (including timing) on student eligibility for financial aid or health insurance
4. Marketability of course to students
5. Language requirements of country and language ability of faculty and students
6. Description of physical rigor of travel experiences
7. Link to University or College priorities or goals
8. Possibility of non-traditional study abroad programs (e.g. research abroad or collaborative efforts with individuals of other universities or corporations)
9. When planning a study abroad course, the expectation is that the ITC will accompany the participating students in traveling. It is also expected that the ITC will obtain lodging in the same facility as the participating students. All exceptions must receive prior approval from the Dean and Director of University Initiatives or Provost/VPAA.
10. The minimum enrollments for study abroad course are as follows:
 - a. 12 students for an undergraduate course
 - b. 7 students for graduate course
11. Students will be required to provide verification of a valid passport prior to the purchase of airline tickets purchased with university account funds.

12. Students will be required to submit a non-refundable \$200 minimum deposit (or more as determined by the ITC) no later than four weeks prior to trip departure. Confirmation of all deposits must be submitted with the Final Authorization Request for University Sponsored International Student Travel form is due seven (7) weeks prior to departure to the Director of University Initiatives. The purpose of the deposit is to confirm each student's commitment to course enrollment and related travel and to provide accurate information and funds necessary for the ITC to finalize housing and travel arrangements.

SYLLABUS TEMPLATE FOR TRAVEL COURSES

Faculty should use the syllabus format available through the International Travel Guidelines Manual to create or revise syllabi for all travel abroad courses. The link to the required syllabus format is provided on the last page of this manual.

TIMELINE & CHECKLIST

Table 1. Travel Initiated by Faculty provides a timeline reflecting deadlines in which the International Travel Coordinator (ITC)/faculty member must submit documents to the Director of University Initiatives. Please note that the respective Dean will have an earlier deadline allowing ample time for his/her approval. Once approval is granted by the Dean, he/she will forward to the Director of University Initiatives.

Table 1.
Travel Initiated by Faculty

Semester of Travel	<u>Deadline</u>	<u>Forms</u>	<u>Due To</u>
Spring or Summer	Last Friday in October	1. <i>International Faculty & Student Travel Stipend Notification of Intent to Travel (Faculty/Dean)</i> 2. <i>Confirmation of Legal Documentation necessary for Final Authorization of Travel – Obtained via Carla Snyder (Faculty/Dean)</i> These forms MUST be submitted to the respective Dean who will then forward to the DUI.	Director of University Initiatives (DUI)
Fall	Last Friday in May		
	14 Weeks prior to	1. <i>Preliminary Authorization Request (Faculty)</i> <u>OR</u>	DUI

	Departure	<i>Preliminary Authorization Request for Graduate Student Research (Faculty)</i> 2. <i>Copies of all trip advertisement and marketing documents (Faculty)</i>	
	7 Weeks prior to Departure	1. <i>Final Authorization Request OR Final Authorization Request for Graduate Student Research (Faculty)</i> 2. <i>Student International Travel Application (Faculty)</i> 3. <i>Waiver for Liability and Indemnification (Faculty)</i> 4. <i>Out-of-State Travel Cover Sheet (Faculty)</i> 5. <i>Travel Application (Faculty)</i> 6. <i>Request for Foreign Travel (if applicable) (Faculty)</i>	DUI
	20 Days prior to Departure	<i>Request for International Wire Transfer(Faculty)</i>	DUI
	10 Days prior to Departure	1. <i>W-9 Form (Faculty)</i> 2. <i>W-8BEN Form (Faculty)</i> <i>Any revisions to information submitted on any travel document (Faculty)</i>	DUI
	2 Weeks <u>After</u> Return	<i>Confirmation of Travel Expenses OR Confirmation of Travel Expenses for Graduate Student Research (Faculty)</i>	DUI

Table 2. Travel Initiated by Faculty Club Sponsor provides a timeline reflecting deadlines in which the International Travel Coordinator (ITC)/faculty club sponsor must submit documents to the Director of University Initiatives. Please note that the Vice-President of Student Engagement and Success (VPSES) will have an earlier deadline allowing ample time for his/her approval. Once approval is granted by the VPSES, he/she will forward to the Director of University Initiatives.

**Table 2.
Travel Initiated by Faculty Club Sponsor**

Semester of Travel	Deadline	Forms	Due To
Spring or Summer	Last Friday in October	1. <i>International Faculty & Student Travel Stipend Notification of Intent to Travel (Faculty Club Sponsor/VPSES)</i> 2. <i>Confirmation of Legal Documentation necessary for Final Authorization of Travel – Obtained via Carla Snyder (Faculty Club Sponsor/VPSES)</i> These forms MUST be submitted to the Vice-President of Student Engagement and Success who will then forward to the DUI.	Director of University Initiatives (DUI)
Fall	Last Friday in May		
	14 Weeks prior to Departure	1. <i>Preliminary Authorization Request OR Preliminary Authorization Request for Graduate Student Research (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 2. <i>Copies of all trip advertisement and marketing documents (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i>	DUI
	7 Weeks prior to Departure	1. <i>Final Authorization Request OR Final Authorization Request for Graduate Student Research (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 2. <i>Student International Travel Application (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 3. <i>Waiver for Liability and Indemnification (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 4. <i>Out-of-State Travel Cover Sheet (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 5. <i>Travel Application (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 6. <i>Request for Foreign Travel (if applicable)(Faculty Club Sponsor)</i>	DUI
	20 Days prior to Departure	<i>Request for International Wire Transfer (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i>	DUI
	10 Days prior to Departure	1. <i>W-9 Form (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> 2. <i>W-8BEN Form (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i> <i>Any revisions to information submitted on any</i>	DUI

		<i>travel document.</i>	
	2 Weeks <u>After</u> Return	<i>Confirmation of Travel Expenses OR Confirmation of Travel Expenses for Graduate Student Research (Faculty Club Sponsor)</i>	DUI

INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM FEE GUIDELINES

Fees collected under section 54.5132 – International Education Fee, Statute State of Texas, will be used by Texas A&M University-Texarkana (A&M-Texarkana) to assist students and faculty sponsors in international study programs.

1. Usage

Fees collected are to be designated as stipends:

- a. to assist A&M-Texarkana students and faculty who participate in university sanctioned, faculty-led programs abroad,
- b. to assist in the support of university sanctioned, faculty-led international study activities on campus, and
- c. to assist graduate students in conducting research abroad.

2. Eligibility

- a. A&M-Texarkana students eligible to apply for an international travel stipend are those who:
 - i. are enrolled in a university sanctioned, faculty-led course that includes international travel;
 - ii. were enrolled at A&M-Texarkana during the prior semester; and
 - iii. are receiving no other outside stipend or scholarship to participate in the foreign travel program; and/or
 - iv. are a graduate student in good standing with the university and enrolled in a thesis or dissertation writing course corresponding to the time of the research trip.

3. General Procedures

a. International Travel Stipends

- i. Stipends will be distributed equally among eligible students traveling in a study abroad course. Each student, regardless of the international travel program, will receive the same amount in a given semester. Graduate students proposing a

research trip and submitting a budget will be given special consideration.

- ii. Undergraduate stipends will be distributed based on an unduplicated student head count basis (no student may receive more than one stipend per academic year). Graduate stipends will be determined based on the student's proposed budget and the availability of funds.

b. Study Activities

- i. Stipends will be awarded based on an activity budget.
- ii. Stipends will be disbursed to the respective university program budget account.
- iii. Stipends will be subject to all Texas A&M University System expenditure and reimbursement policies and A&M-
Texarkana rules.

c. Allocation Process

- i. No later than the last Friday in October, college deans must submit notification to the Director of University Initiatives of all international course related travel in their respective colleges for which student and/or faculty stipends are requested during the current academic International Program Fee Guidelines year (September 1 through August 31). The notification must include the following information:
 - 1. a description of the proposed program, including the course number, title, course/outline/syllabus, description of the program, and
 - 2. estimated number of student traveling and per student cost.
- ii. A graduate student requesting to travel abroad to conduct research must submit:
 - 1. a statement explaining the research agenda and the student's project objectives;
 - 2. a travel and research budget (*If receiving funds for the research from another grant source, those funds must be revealed in the travel and research budget*);
 - 3. a letter of recommendation from his/her advisor at Texas A&M University-Texarkana; and
 - 4. a listing of grant monies for which they have applied but not yet been granted.

- iii. The Provost and Vice-President for Academic Affairs will notify each dean who has forwarded a recommendation of:
 1. approval/disapproval
 2. if approval, estimated amount of allocated funding including per student allocation for international travel.

GUIDELINES FOR TRAVEL OF GUESTS

Study abroad programs are, first and foremost, academic programs and, like their counterparts on campus, these classes, field trips, and cultural excursions should never be designed to cater to the needs of ancillary individuals who are not part of the academic experience. A faculty member's primary responsibility is that of providing a rich and rigorous learning experience for the students enrolled in the study abroad course.

1. Travelers other than ITC or student
 - a. One adult guest (≥ 18 years of age) may accompany the ITC during the study abroad travel program as long as it does not interfere with the ITC's duties to the program and/or the study abroad students.
 - b. One or more employees of the University may accompany the ITC and student travelers for institutionally related purposes, as approved by the ITC, Dean, and Provost/VPAA.
 - c. Under normal circumstances an adult guest (not enrolled in the course) may not accompany a student participating in the travel component of a travel abroad course.
 - d. Under normal circumstances, children (birth-17 years of age) may not accompany a student participating in the travel component of a travel abroad course.
 - e. Any exceptions must be approved prior to travel by the ITC, Dean, and Provost/VPAA.
2. Financial Considerations
 - a. State regulations require that a faculty member must pay all expenses related to the travel of his/her guest. Current A&M-Texarkana fiscal policies do not allow such expenses to be paid by student program fees or monies mixed into student program fee accounts. This means that separate payments directly from the faculty member will be required for guest expenses. This information must be made transparent for all those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student program fees are, in any way, subsidizing

non-participants. Guests are not guaranteed potential “group discount” prices due to restrictions on such rates (e.g., age limits, student only prices, etc.).

- b. In cases where a faculty member requires a logistical arrangement for a guest that costs more than the price paid by a student, the faculty member is responsible for the cost difference (e.g., if paying for a double room instead of a single room in a hotel, the faculty member would pay the difference between the single and the double to accommodate an accompanying guest).

3. Logistical Arrangements

- a. Program arrangements are not primarily made to accommodate the needs of guests. All program accommodations are made with the understanding that this is an academic program designed to meet the needs of the students and faculty/ITC.
- b. Faculty members are responsible for obtaining health insurance, passports, visas, and any other required documentation.
- c. Faculty members must organize any guest travel arrangements whenever these arrangements deviate from the planned study abroad program, such as but not limited to:
 - i. transportation to and from the study abroad location;
 - ii. excursions in the host country;
 - iii. hotels; and
 - iv. meals
- d. Guests are not permitted to share accommodations with students.
- e. Guests should not compromise the planned academic program in any way, such as but not limited to:
 - i. Preventing the faculty member from attending or leading field trips or other academic elements of the program;
 - ii. Disrupting class or field trips; and/or
 - iii. Preventing students or the faculty member from engaging fully in the academic program and/or teaching responsibilities.

LISTING OF FORMS

The forms listed below are required for International Travel. The forms are listed in the order of submission however refer to the Timeline and Checklist table for deadlines. The forms are accessible by clicking on the hyperlink.

1. International Faculty & Student Travel Stipend Notification of Intent to Travel
2. Preliminary Authorization Request OR Preliminary Authorization Request for Graduate Student Research Travel
3. Final Authorization Request OR Final Authorization Request for Graduate Student Research Travel
4. Student International Travel Application
5. Waiver for Liability and Indemnification
6. Out-of-State Travel Cover Sheet
7. Travel Application
8. Request for Foreign Travel (if applicable)
9. W-9 Form
10. W-8BEN Form
11. Confirmation of Travel Expenses OR Confirmation of Travel Expenses for Graduate Student Research

