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## Background and Context

**Why** should I be interested in study abroad for my students?

A significant cornerstone of Old Dominion's Strategic Plan is international education. Old Dominion is already a recognized U. S. leader in the international composition of our student body – at this writing, over 1400 international students from 110 countries around the globe enrich the diversity of the student population on our campus. These individuals bring a variety of cultural experience that enhances our classrooms and our community in many ways every day. A complementary side of international education is the enrichment of our U.S. students' college experience beyond that provided by their contact with our international students and faculty through a significant international experience of their own. While it would be wonderful if we could say that the number of Old Dominion students from the U.S. who study abroad equaled the number of international students on campus, the current reality is that only 175-200 of them study abroad in any given year, a figure that is consistent with the level of study abroad participation at most of our peer institutions. To more fully meet our stated goal of becoming recognized as "Virginia's international university," we need to encourage and help more of our students achieve an "on location" international experience as a part of their Old Dominion education.

**What** does the term "Study Abroad" mean, anyway?

There are many kinds of experiences that get subsumed under the rubric of "study abroad" or "international exchange" – ranging from the traditional "junior year abroad" to the one-week "if-it's-Tuesday-it-must-be- Belgium" sightseeing tour dashing from one capital city to another in Europe. At most comprehensive universities like ours, it is recognized that a range of opportunities is needed in order to serve the needs and possibilities of a diverse student body, and we have indeed developed a wide-ranging comprehensive set of opportunities (sans sightseeing trips, however – we sponsor neither "trips" nor "tours" at Old Dominion under the "study abroad" label). We provide *true* (i.e., reciprocal, two-way) semester- academic-year *exchange* opportunities at over 100 partner institutions abroad; we send students on other accredited semester- and academic-year study abroad programs, some through our membership in study abroad consortia like the Council on International Educational Exchange; we offer summer programs at selected language institutes abroad; we help students find international internships and work exchange programs; and last, but not least, we offer a number of faculty-led programs. If you are not already familiar with the range of study abroad offerings and services at Old Dominion, we hope you will become familiar with them by requesting and reviewing our comprehensive brochure – and then encouraging your students to do the same! We will only increase student participation in study abroad significantly when faculty members are encouraging their students to consider the many international opportunities available to them (we'll be glad to personally visit your classes to promote opportunities, too!).

Most professionals working in study abroad dream of finding themselves in a situation where

many students at their institution study abroad for an academic year, or, at least, for a full semester, preferably as an exchange student at a partner university. The benefits of a long-term experience substantially integrated into another culture are obvious to us. At present, between 20 - 30 Old Dominion students are realizing this kind of “long-term” education abroad each semester – a number that represents a dramatic increase in recent years, though still shy of the potential we think is achievable. Last year alone we have had exchange students studying in Japan, the UK, Australia, Denmark, Argentina, Korea, Germany, Costa Rica and Spain, and have sent others on study abroad programs in a number of other countries, indicating that Old Dominion students *are* interested in a wide range of international experience and *will* participate in longer-term programs at universities around the world.

But a significant number of our students, for a variety of reasons, cannot or will not commit to a year or a semester abroad, even if they are genuinely interested in obtaining some international experience in college. (Again, this is consistent with the experience of most of our peer institutions.) These are the students who may be best served by a short-term program abroad, typically through a 4-6 week language and culture program, through a summer program offered by one of the numerous universities or consortia that make programs available to students outside their campus, or through programs offered by Old Dominion and led by our own faculty. At present about 100 Old Dominion students are participating in one of these types of “short-term” programs, more than half of them on our own faculty-led programs.

Short-term programs offer the flexibility of focusing on a particular topic in a specific locale and can provide unique and exciting opportunities across the curriculum, from “East Asian Business and Culture in Korea & China” to “Travel Writing in Italy” to “Commerce, Communication and Culture in Brazil.” Ask the Office of Study Abroad for descriptions of recent and current programs.

**When** are short-term programs offered?

Most of our short-term faculty-led programs have traditionally been offered in the summer, the majority taking place shortly after the end of the Spring semester. The advantages of an early summer time frame are several: the weather is pleasant in many places in the world; “shoulder season” (as opposed to “high season”) rates for airfare and hotels are still in effect; the summer tourist season is not yet in full swing; students can anticipate going on the program and returning early enough in the summer to get a job and earn some income; universities abroad are often still in session and connections with faculty and students abroad are therefore easier at this time.

Mid- or late-summer programs, however, can potentially benefit from the availability of low-cost student housing abroad, and may be conducted successfully despite the lack of early-summer advantages noted above. Before settling on specific program dates, it is critical to think carefully about academic and logistical reasons and possibilities supporting the choice.

Most short-term programs range in length between 2-4 weeks and all must offer sufficient contact hours (as well as content) to merit the number of credits attached to the course; since

students often find a smaller credit module unhelpful in making progress towards their degrees, most programs carry 3 credits. Obviously, the longer the program contemplated, the more reason to select summer dates. However, some years the university's calendar provides sufficient time between Christmas and the start of Spring semester to warrant offering a 3-credit program abroad during the winter break. Especially when contemplating offering a program in the Caribbean or the Southern Hemisphere, this time period may be worth considering. In 1997-98, we offered a successful program in Uruguay and Argentina in late December/early January. One negative aspect to Winter break programming is the difficulty of securing affordable airfares for routes in some areas of the world. Spring break (with the program starting a few days before the official start date and additional classes conducted on campus before and after the group is abroad) has also been done successfully.

Consideration must also be given to the question of what other programs are contemplated for upcoming summer or break periods. If a colleague has already planned a program focusing on the development of medieval cities in Iberia, for example, you might want to modify the timing or subject of your program idea for Spain and Portugal. For this reason alone, early contact with the Office of Study Abroad is important to the development your proposal.

Finally, successful program development and execution takes time. Ideally, it is desirable to have an 18-month lead time from conception to realization of the program. A program planned for the summer of 2002 should be discussed with your department, college and the Office of Study Abroad in the winter/spring of 2001. We cannot give your exciting study abroad idea the support it deserves if we don't have sufficient time to do it right!

### **Who** leads short-term study abroad programs?

Enthusiastic and energetic Old Dominion faculty, with appropriate experience abroad, who have the endorsement of the appropriate university officers. Faculty members need the full support of their college and department, as well as the Office of Study Abroad, to succeed in organizing and leading a successful short-term program. The Director of Study Abroad welcomes program ideas, however tentative, at any time and will work with you to develop the idea and, if necessary, help to convince your dean and department chair to support it. Your final proposal must have the requisite academic content and rigor to merit a departmental course designation and assignment of academic credit, cite sufficient background and/or experience in the host country to be able to achieve the intellectual and logistical goals of the course and program, and have a clear idea of who the intended audience is.

All these basic requirements having been met, experience tells us that most faculty-led study abroad programs rise or fall on the ability of the faculty leader to directly encourage students and convince them of the value of participating in the program. Few programs "sell themselves." To be successful, faculty interested in leading programs abroad need to project a sincere enthusiasm for their program and be willing to extend themselves and actively convey their enthusiasm to potential participants.

## Getting Started with a New Program

### Development of the program concept

This is one of the most creative aspects of the process. Brainstorm by yourself and with colleagues, significant others and students. Key questions to answer include:

What educational objectives do you have in mind?

Can they be achieved especially well (or only) in a foreign setting? Why do this abroad?

What special experiences, connections abroad and expertise can you bring to the kind of program you have in mind?

What kinds of experiences (homestays, visits to multinational corporations or unique historical sites) would make the program valuable and appealing to students?

What academic program requirements for the intended student audience would be potentially satisfied by the program?

How many students are optimal for such a program?

Will it be designed for undergraduates, graduates or both?

When would be the most optimal time to offer the program (for you, for students)?

How long a program is optimal?

What might a two-week program optimally include? A three- week program?

What “local expertise” can be obtained and how many “guest presentations” might be appropriate?

Do you have a faculty colleague who might be interested in being a co-leader of a 2-course, 6-credit offering?

How affordable will this destination and type of experience be?

It is helpful at this point to draft one or two day-by-day program itineraries to see how your ideas translate “on paper.” If a significant amount of travel is contemplated, how many different locations are feasible and desirable within the time frame you are contemplating? If you were an ODU student from the “target audience,” what would you find most appealing about the learning objectives, planned activities, locations, requirements, etc.? See the Appendix for some examples from flyers for recent programs.

### Key consultations and necessary approvals

When you have given at least some preliminary thought to these issues, discuss them with the Director of Study Abroad and work together to refine your proposal. This should include a consideration of a tentative budget, since the cost of the program will always be of primary concern to potential participants. The **number of students** to be served, minimum and maximum, needs to be considered at this juncture for three reasons: 1) the program design and pedagogy needs to be in synch with the size of the group -- a program that involves considerable

travel, for example, cannot be effectively managed by one person if the group is too large; 2) a minimal course enrollment is essential for the faculty member to receive a salary; 3) the program budget is based upon the estimated number of participants. For a program that is lead by a single faculty member, the usual minimum is 10-12 students, the usual maximum 14 – 16 students.

Once the two of you are satisfied with the proposal it must be discussed with your department chair, who should in turn discuss it with the college dean or associate dean as appropriate. With their approval the course designation(s) for the program must be agreed upon and listed for inclusion in the Schedule of Classes for the appropriate semester or summer session. Cross-listing the course designations in two or more departments – in some cases across college lines – should be considered and approvals from other department chairs and their deans needs to be sought if the course is to be cross-listed.

In general, you can expect chairs and deans to be receptive and enthusiastic about a proposal to conduct a course abroad, but they will want to support a proposal that demonstrates the same commitment to quality, appropriate contact hours for credit assigned, “fit” in the curriculum, and overall feasibility that an on-campus course proposal addresses. Anything that suggests little more than a pleasant “junket” for someone seeking a break in the routine of teaching on campus will not be well received!

Feasibility must by necessity include a realistic assessment of success: No one wants to commit time and resources to a study abroad program that has little chance of realizing its goals. It is very discouraging – to faculty, staff and students alike – to offer up programs that have to be canceled because too few students want to participate in them. Everyone involved in deciding which programs Old Dominion offers needs to make an honest and frank assessment of proposed programs and share that appraisal with you. For its part, OSA is prepared to encourage creative programming ideas, provide you with our best advice, and support you in reaching a successful outcome.

## **Developing and carrying out a strategy for promoting your program**

Working from your proposal and from suggestions you have received in the consultation and approval stage, sit down with the Director of Study Abroad to develop a plan for promoting your program to potential participants. Since yours is not typically a “routine” or established course, special efforts will be needed to make students aware of the opportunity and motivate them to consider how it can benefit them and their education in a significant way. A few students will “get it” almost instinctively and are eagerly seeking this kind of experience in college, but most need to be convinced of the unique added value of studying “on location” in another culture, and all students have many other priorities and interests competing for their time and financial resources.

**Creating a flyer** or brochure that is attractive and easy to read is a critical step. It needs to have certain essential information conveyed in a complete, accurate, concise and comprehensive

manner. Because the University may be held liable for the contents of written information on any of its offerings, all printed representations of the program must be approved by OSA prior to publication. To the extent possible we attempt to use a similar format for all study abroad programs while striving to make materials as attractive as they can be given limits of time and creativity. For examples of past program flyers that can be used as models, please see the Appendix. OSA will do the layout of the flyer or you may do your own if you prefer. Both you and OSA need to have an original copy on file and available for photocopying when needed. OSA will absorb the cost of printing flyers, but cannot produce large quantities of them without advance notice. If your department's budget allows, you should feel free to print additional copies there. OSA welcomes suggestions for ways to improve on these materials and will be an eager partner with you in developing your flyer or brochure.

For summer programs, **the most effective promotion period** is Fall semester and early Spring semester. Therefore, flyers should be available for distribution at the beginning of the Fall semester. Winter break programs require promotion during the preceding Spring term. Because airlines and other vendors cannot always give price quotes this far in advance, we sometimes must go to press with "estimated" cost figures, but most years we are able to do this with reasonable accuracy. No matter how appealing the program, if students (and their parents) do not have key information about it in a timely fashion they cannot make plans to participate.

**Once you have a printed "vehicle" available, it needs to be distributed** to places where potential participants will see it. While we will maintain flyers in our brochure racks at OSA, give them to students who have advising appointments in our office, and bring them with us to classroom visits, "fairs," and "tablings," we conduct throughout the year, they are undoubtedly most useful in *your* hands. Give them out in your classes, ask your colleagues – especially those teaching courses where interest might be especially high – to do the same, ask the department secretary to post them on departmental bulletin boards and other locations with high student traffic, post copies on your office door, and refresh supplies periodically.

Experience has taught us that making **classroom presentations** is the most effective way to promote study abroad programs. Your enthusiastic presence describing your program in the heart of the academic enterprise, the classroom, has the best chance of attracting students to it. Many faculty are chary of being seen as salespeople or "hucksters" and are reluctant to ask colleagues for 10 minutes of their class time to "sell" their program, but it's worth overcoming one's reticence and making the extra effort to reach students and colleagues with information about a special learning opportunity they should know about! Getting a notice in your college and departmental newsletter and approaching colleagues and departmental advisers one-on-one and discussing your program objectives and attractions in departmental meetings so that others can help you in reaching potential students should be a part of your recruitment effort. If you want additional ideas on how to "get the word out" the OSA staff will be glad to offer some.

**Student clubs, based in your department or outside it, as well as student resident hall programs,** are similar worthwhile venues that ought to be considered. Suggest to the president or programming chairperson of the club that you will be glad to offer a brief presentation and

answer questions at one of their upcoming meetings, and consider including videotapes, films or other “extras” that relate to your destination or the focus of your program – as well as any other “visuals” that can be used to interest students in the region or academic focus of your program. Past program participants – once you have “alums” from a previous offering of your program – can be great “promoters,” assuming they have had a positive experience!

**The off-campus market** should also be considered – although you need to be aware that other colleges’ and universities’ calendars, curricula, and their own study abroad offerings should be considerations affecting who you approach and how you approach them. The Director of Study Abroad will be in communication with colleagues at area universities and colleges to help identify potential interest.

While your efforts in promotion will be of greatest importance in recruiting your group, OSA conducts campus-wide promotion of study abroad throughout the academic year. Our centerpiece events are **Study Abroad Fairs**, which are held in the Webb Center each semester, normally the first Tuesday in October and the first Tuesday in February. We will invite you to staff one of the tables at the fair for as much of the time period (10:30 – 1:30) as you are able to attend (Activity Hour from 12:30 – 1:30 is the period of heaviest traffic). While we try to participate in as many other campus fairs and events as we can, our limited staff size and time constraints do not allow us to devote full attention to a single program, which means that the faculty leader ultimately must be the “point person” for the program and contribute his or her best efforts to promoting it.

## **Role of the faculty leader while abroad**

The faculty leader has overall responsibility for the program from the group’s departure from the U.S. until the end of the program. It is normally expected that the leader will travel with the group. Weather and other factors can result in delayed flights, missed connections, etc., and may require someone to act on behalf of the group. Some students may not have traveled abroad before and occasionally a participant has never traveled by airplane previously. For these reasons it is helpful, if not absolutely essential, that the leader assumes responsibility for the group from the beginning of the experience.

Once at the destination abroad it is important that members of the group understand some basic ground rules (showing up on time, participating in required group activities, etc.) that have been established to assure the best experience possible for all. Depending on the type of program (travel schedule, type of travel, number of participants to keep track of, etc.), it may be useful to establish a “buddy system,” have a “count off” before the bus departs, etc. During orientation it is important to set clear expectations and to remind students that they have chosen to participate in a course in another culture. Things are not supposed to be as they are at home and therefore will require special precautions, adjustments and responsibilities. These need not be onerous, and students should not be made to feel overly intimidated by these challenges and ground rules, but they should be made aware of the special nature and requirements of this kind of learning in

the places you are visiting. The use of drugs or other risky or illegal behavior endangers not only the individual but also the group as a whole, and students should be cautioned that putting the program at risk can result in their immediate termination from the program, after which they will be advised to leave the country immediately.

As an employee of ODU, and the University's on-site academic representative, the faculty leader has the authority to dismiss any student, upon approval by ODU's Director of Study Abroad, should a participant use illicit drugs, violate ODU rules and regulations, the laws of the host country, jeopardize his/her safety, or the security of the program.

In the event a situation develops that may lead to a participant's dismissal, the faculty leader should 1) Notify the Office of Study Abroad as soon as you suspect a behavior may be cause for dismissal. Do not wait until the situation intensifies! 2) Put the dismissal notice in writing and present it to the student, keeping a copy for OSA. The student is not required to sign the letter to indicate acceptance of the dismissal action. 3) A student who is dismissed is no longer allowed to participate in any official activities related to the study abroad program. The accommodations facility should be informed and keys returned.

A course offered "on location" abroad provides unique opportunities not available in the usual classroom situation. You can take advantage of these opportunities by encouraging and building in activities that fully engage participants in the new setting and culture. Homestays with local families can be an ideal way to learn about another culture, although this is more feasible in some circumstances than others. Nevertheless, maximizing opportunities for contact with "the locals," is something to be sought after, and working with colleagues abroad to achieve this for your group can be key to the fullest achievement of your objectives. (Securing the services of good local guides or "cultural informants," for instance, can turn what might otherwise be mere sightseeing into insightful and thought-provoking experiences.)

Helping students have a meaningful "hands on" experience without extensive classroom "seat time" can be enhanced in several ways: requiring students to keep journals in which they reflect on what they have observed and learned, holding "debriefing sessions" on several evenings during the program, requiring students to prepare a site briefing for the group before visiting a place, providing for informal one-on-one discussions with students while on the bus between sites, etc. Quizzes, tests and papers may be just as appropriate in this non-classroom setting, but consider ways in which you might make on-going and final assessment fit the unique situation.

Especially when a program is "on the move," it's critical to keep participants informed of plans for the day, changes in the schedule, etc. Uncertainty, especially in an unfamiliar environment, can create unnecessary anxiety. It is advisable to also allow some time during the period abroad where students can do some exploration and reflection on their own (or with one or two others). "Free time" at selected points in the program need not detract from the educational experience but can enhance it. Students – and faculty leaders, too – need a break or two from the more intense togetherness of the group. Stimulation from new sights and sounds and even smells can be overwhelming at times. Pace your activities – including travel – in such a way that the

learning is manageable and pleasurable as well as challenging. There is a natural tendency to want participants to be exposed to *all* the wonders of a new place, but with time being limited it is necessary to be selective. One option is to make some activities “optional” or “suggested.” Then more “compulsive” learners can add to their schedule while others can take their needed break from programmed activities.

Recognizing that most leaders are neither doctors nor lawyers, it is part of the role of the faculty leader to oversee the general well-being of the group, to supervise any inherently dangerous activities, and to help out in case an emergency of any kind arises. Participants are asked to fill out a Health Information Form (see appendix) and provide information that can be shared with the leader, in confidence. This allows a student, for example, to alert us to the fact that she is diabetic, information that could be important in an emergency situation. Students are required to have medical insurance that provides at least basic coverage while they are abroad, but they still may require assistance in securing assistance in an emergency situation. It is therefore important that each faculty leader have some knowledge – or access to someone else who has it – on where to turn in such an eventuality. Unless you are a trained medical professional, it is not advisable for you to dispense medical advice or sophisticated medications, but taking and maintaining a small basic first aid kit with some bandages, ibuprofen, motion sickness pills, tweezers, safety pins and a small flashlight can help in the case of minor problems.

Coaching on personal safety issues (how to avoid making oneself a target for pickpockets, using taxis at night, locking doors and windows, being observant of your surroundings, avoiding crowds or political demonstrations, etc.) as well as health issues related to the specific country or region (drinking tap water, anticipating sidewalks with potholes, “looking left” crossing streets in the UK, etc.) may be essential information for participants coming into an unfamiliar environment. In this regard, participants with previous experience abroad, in addition to the faculty leader, can often be helpful to those who may have little or no experience living or traveling in a new environment.

At the conclusion of the program, the faculty leader normally accompanies the group flight back to the U.S., although in some circumstances arrangements can be made to permit the leader to extend his or her stay in the host country (and some of the students may wish to extend “on their own” as well). Any such modifications need to be discussed with, and approved by, the Director of Study Abroad.

### **Handling Emergency Situations**

Prior to Departure: Participants need to have full information regarding the risks of activities related to the study abroad experience in order to make a truly informed decision about participation. In our written information, in our advising sessions, and in oral presentations during predeparture orientations we need to be obvious and direct in our warnings about risks participants may face so they can make an informed decision regarding their participation. Because they may have little experience traveling or living in another country, it is important to inform them of general health and safety precautions and specific precautions related to the sites

visited. OSA staff are prepared to provide this information but it is important that the faculty leader is also informed and prepared to reinforce appropriate cautions and warnings during the duration of the program.

Providing emergency contact information: The Office of Study Abroad prepares a card with emergency contact information abroad (U.S. embassy phone number, “911” equivalent number, etc.) and at ODU. Two cards are given each participant and each faculty leader, one to keep with them during the program and one to give to a family member or friend at home. In addition, where feasible, faculty leaders are provided with, or asked to acquire at the program’s expense a cellular phone for use in an emergency situation. The home phone of the Director of Study Abroad will be provided to the faculty leader and other staff are available through the ODU Police phone number, which is provided on the emergency contact card.

U.S. Embassies have an American Citizens Unit within their Consular Affairs Office charged with assisting U.S. citizens living and traveling in the country. Responding to injury/missing persons/arrests/stolen or lost passports, etc., is a primary concern of the unit. Within the diplomatic constraints imposed, the Department of State policy is to assist any U.S. citizen in trouble, and embassies routinely maintain lists of reputable attorneys, doctors, etc. in the event such services are required.

#### Actions to take while abroad:

Accidents (especially those involving moving vehicles) and illness are more likely to occur than is crime. Review information sources (guidebooks can be very useful and so can “ground operators” and hotel reception staff) about medical services and facilities available in case of an emergency. Know how to reach the local law enforcement authorities should they be needed.

Provide all assistance possible to the participant having difficulties. If necessary you may need to act as translator. Ask one of the more mature participants to coordinate communications and temporary direction for the remaining members of the group during your absence. Contingency funds will have been made available to you to help with any initial extra expenses, but you can depend on the University to reimburse reasonable expenses you incur in responding to the emergency.

Once you have dealt with the immediate concern (seeing that a participant has been taken to the hospital and has been seen by medical professionals, for example), it is essential that you contact the Office of Study Abroad (day or night) to brief the staff about the situation. The Office can help with notification of relatives, inform other university staff who may need to be aware of the situation, and assist you in making decisions regarding the most appropriate next steps.

#### **Liability**

In your capacity as a faculty leader you are representing the University. As long as you are

acting within the scope of your employment, you are covered by the Commonwealth's liability insurance coverage, which provides protection for acts and omissions that give rise to damages to third parties. Intentional wrong-doing and illegal actions on your part are not protected. You protect yourself and the University by exercising good professional judgement and care. Higher education legal professionals report that there are very few lawsuits that arise from study abroad situations and advise that using "good common sense" and trusting our instincts will serve us well in most situations. Obviously, when dealing with other cultures, it is helpful to have a general awareness of their laws as well as those of the Commonwealth and the U.S., and it is important for leaders and participants alike to remember they are guests in the host country(ies) and are expected to abide by their laws.

## **Responsibilities upon Return**

Grades for the student participants need to be submitted according to the deadlines for the semester or session to which the course(s) is attached. As noted above, expenditures requiring receipts need to be submitted to the Office of Study Abroad within five days of your return. OSA Office Manager Patti Thorner will assist you with this task. A report on the positives and negatives of the program and recommendations for future planning, either orally or in writing, should be given to the Director of Study Abroad within ten days of return. Evaluation forms will be sent from OSA to all participants and their remarks will be shared with the leader. Finally, it is useful as well as enjoyable to plan a gathering of the participants a few weeks following the return, providing a chance to share photos, memories and reflections in an informal setting (often participants or leaders offer their homes for an evening or a Sunday afternoon, but University space can be used as a venue as well). Students and faculty often find their time together abroad has resulted in new friendships that often continue beyond the experience itself.

## **Logistics**

### **Host country contacts and contracts for services such as airlines, hotels, etc.**

Faculty program leaders are often involved in making decisions regarding arrangements of various kinds in the locations to be visited. They are usually the most logical persons to set up lectures, visits to universities, etc., utilizing personal or professional contacts to help with these aspects of the program. It is critical, nonetheless, that contracts with anyone receiving payment for services – especially airlines and "ground operators" providing hotel accommodations, land transport and the like – be negotiated with the Office of Study Abroad and not you as an individual faculty member (unless you wish to assume *personal* liability for anything that transpires as a result!). Honorariums, tips or similar payments to individuals should be anticipated and incorporated into the program budget. Flight arrangements may benefit from a faculty director's past experience and contacts with "specialty" travel agencies, but contracting air space for a group may involve special concerns (schedules, cancellation penalties, price considerations, etc.) and must by university policy be negotiated with CI Travel (which will waive their option when they cannot match airfares by other agencies, but must nevertheless

receive a formal request to do so), and cannot be conducted by the faculty member acting as an individual agent. While you should feel free to suggest preferred agencies, airlines, flight schedules, hotels, transport while abroad, etc., the final arrangements must be negotiated by the Office of Study Abroad on behalf of the University.

### **Finances Related to Faculty Leaders**

Study abroad program costs paid by participants include the cost of the instructor's expenses, determined as a part of the initial program budget. Meals not included in the program are budgeted at a per diem rate determined by the OSA director and any other program-related anticipated expenses (which typically includes "contingency funds") are figured in as well.

Salary is provided by the college in the same manner as a class offered on-campus and is contingent on minimal enrollments being achieved (see "Go/No Go considerations, below). Faculty need to make the course connected with the study abroad program a part of their teaching load for the term in which it is offered.

### **Faculty Family Members**

Faculty leaders' family members are eligible to participate on the program as regularly registered students, but due to liability and other concerns are not normally eligible to simply accompany the faculty member as a non-student participant.

### **The student application process**

Students who wish to sign up for the program need to complete an "**Application for Short-Term Study Abroad**" form (see appendix), to which a non-refundable (within 90 days of departure and unless the program is canceled by Old Dominion) deposit of \$125 must be attached in order for the student to be considered for acceptance. The faculty program director is asked to sign the form (which is forwarded to him/her by OSA) indicating acceptance of the student as a participant. Reasons for refusal will be primarily academic (ODU policy states that students should have a 2.5 gpa to be eligible for studying abroad), although evidence of a condition or behavior that might endanger or otherwise jeopardize the program or other students should be considered grounds for refusal as well. When concerns about an individual are raised, they should be discussed with the Director of Study Abroad so that the concerns can be addressed in the broadest university context and the appropriate "official" university decision can be made. When you approve a student's participation, the form needs to be returned to OSA for filing in the central program file. (It may be helpful for you to keep a photocopy in your own "participant file" for easy future reference.) Applicants are accepted on a first-come, first served basis, and OSA will maintain a "wait list" once the number of participants reaches the maximum number.

**Students are normally also required (as will be stated on the program flyer) to register for one of the approved course numbers** during the appropriate term in order to participate. As the course instructor you will need to monitor registration for the course(s), remind students of this requirement when necessary, and make certain that all participants have registered for the course(s) by the appropriate class registration deadline.

**Non-ODU students** wishing to participate will also need to complete an ODU Non-Degree Entry /Registration Form (see appendix, no additional fee required) in order to become a part of the ODU “system.” Students who are at **Virginia Tidewater Consortium institutions** register by completing a “Virginia Tidewater Consortium Student Cross-Registration Form,” which requires the permission of the student’s academic adviser (see Appendix).

**Spouses and other potential non-student participants** (faculty colleagues, spouses of students, etc.) may be eligible for participation when there is space available and you and the Director of Study Abroad determine that student “demand” has been met. These participants may be required to register for the course like other “Non-ODU students” (see above), depending upon the minimum number of course registrants required for a program to take place. Consult with the Director of Study Abroad when and if you want to – or are asked to – consider such potential participants.

### **Deadlines**

“Priority” deadlines for program sign-up are normally set at the time the program flyer is written. For summer programs, this deadline is normally around February 15. It is a “priority” deadline in the sense that students are encouraged to think of this as a deadline that they should adhere to if they want to have the best chance to be included in the program. While a popular program with limited spaces could “fill” at any time, it is our experience that a few eager students may sign up during Fall term (for a summer program) but most will not do so until after the Winter break. The more actual signups we have by February 15, the easier it will be to conclude air and ground arrangements and contracts, which often require a certain committed number of passengers/participants (and actual names of passengers in the case of airlines).

We also use the term “priority deadline” in the hope that latecomers will enquire after the February 15 date to see if space remains on the program (which, in fact, is normally the case). Because attrition is also a normal fact of life, being early on the wait list usually means a student will eventually be included in the group, so all interested students should be encouraged to sign up even if the program appears to be full (OSA will also suggest alternative programs to them, where and when appropriate).

### **Payment schedules for students**

A payment schedule for the typical summer short-term program is normally sent out to signed up participants by late February or early March. The invoice indicates the \$125 deposit as credited to the total program fee and the remainder due is typically divided into two equal payments, with payment deadlines indicated. Students who wish us to bill their student accounts for these payments are given information on how to arrange to have this done. Students wishing to pay via credit card can only do so if they have a student account at ODU and can therefore have the billings charged to their account. Students awaiting financial aid disbursements in order to make payment can discuss their situation with OSA, which also prepares budgets for students to use with the Office of Financial Aid to help determine available support for their registration in the course and program. (Students receiving financial aid may be eligible for additional support – usually in the form of loans – based on the cost of the program.)

**Refunds** (aside from the non-refundable \$125 deposit) are dependent on “recoverable funds” from airlines, ground operators or others who may have already expended funds on behalf of the group or individual participants. Students withdrawing within the 90 day prior to departure period need to contact the Office of Study Abroad, which will in turn contact the necessary suppliers, host institutions, etc., and pursue recovery of costs to the extent possible.

At the time billing statements are sent out to participants, we like to provide information concerning **predeparture meetings** of the group. As early as possible, but no later than February 15 for May programs, times and places for these meetings (normally one or two, held before classes end in the term before departure) should be determined by the faculty leader and the Director of Study Abroad (OSA staff will participate in at least one of the predeparture meetings to cover logistical matters).

### **“Go / No Go” considerations**

No one wants to put work into a course or program offering (whether on- or off-campus) only to see it canceled. Two situations, however, warrant special attention in this regard: The safety of the students and faculty participants and the number of students/participants enrolled.

Proposed programs to destinations **where safety concerns have arisen** – even if they arise at the last minute – may have to be canceled. Political developments (such as those which arose following the bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Yugoslavia) or weather or other natural disasters may make it prudent to cancel a program for safety reasons. Normally the University will not let a program continue to a region or country where the U.S. State Department has advised against travel to the planned destination. The Office of Study Abroad monitors such developments and consults with appropriate University Officers (including the faculty director) concerning any decision to cancel a program based on safety considerations.

**Undersubscribed courses/programs** and a decision to cancel or continue require consultation with the dean of the college offering the course(s) that provide academic credit for the study abroad program and with the Office of Study Abroad and Office of International Programs, which budget the programs. Lower than anticipated enrollments potentially affect both the program budget (which has been based on a projected minimum number of participants) and the faculty salary (which is based on a minimum course enrollment, usually 10 - 12 students). Consulting with the appropriate college deans, OSA and OIP will make every effort to see that programs are realized. Programs that have not attracted more than a few students, however, are not usually feasible to run. Both faculty leaders and already signed-up students need to know with reasonable lead time that the program is going or not going, so that they have sufficient time to make alternative plans if necessary. Assessment of the program status normally begins, for May-departing summer programs, at the February 15 “priority deadline” date, with a final determination made by the first week in March. Programs scheduled to depart at other times of the summer or year are assessed within a similar time frame.

### **Required Predeparture Travel Forms for Study Abroad Program Leaders**

### 1. Request for **Approval of Travel Outside the Boundaries of the United States** and its Territories

Completion of this form is the first step in the travel approval process. It must also be accompanied by the "Estimated Request for Travel Exceeding \$ 500" form. These forms are prepared by OSA's Office Manager, Patti Thorner, for your signature and the signature of the Director of Study Abroad and then forwarded to your Dean and subsequently to the Provost's Office for the Provost's signature. The signed forms are returned to the Office of Study Abroad and maintained in the program's file.

### 2. **Request for Travel Advance and Summary of Travel Expenses**

Completion of this form is required for funds to be advanced for travel. The program leader should obtain an American Express Corporate Travel Card several months before travel begins (send request for application to [Rbreathw@odu.edu](mailto:Rbreathw@odu.edu)).

The credit card application will be signed by the program leader's supervisor. The card is to be used only for Old Dominion University related travel expenses. If the program leader is not eligible for the American Express Corporate Travel Card, a "**Request for Cash Advance**" form must be completed and signed by program leader and the Director of Study Abroad. This form should be submitted to Office of Finance at least two weeks prior to departure.

### 3. **Travel Expense Reimbursement Voucher**

Upon return this form is prepared by Patti Thorner based on expense receipts provided by the faculty leader and is then submitted to the Office of Finance for reimbursement. The faculty leader therefore needs to maintain complete records (with receipts) on a day by day basis. If a receipt is not available a separate memo to Rosa Breathwaite stating the expense, date and amount is required. University policy requires the reimbursement form be completed within 5 work days of the leader's return.

### **Predeparture Orientation Meetings**

In general, the faculty leader is responsible for preparing the participants academically for the experience abroad. This can be done in a number of ways: development of a syllabus or course pack, a list of required and/or optional readings, assignments to research specific sites or topics in advance of the program; background lecture(s), videos, slide presentations, etc.

In general, the OSA staff is responsible for preparing the participants logistically and for getting information to the students regarding such requirements as visas (not always required), International Student Identity Cards, Liability Waiver forms, travel documents and tickets, health information forms, roommate assignments, hotel and emergency contact information, etc.

Both the faculty leader and OSA staff share responsibility for preparing participants for a cross-cultural experience, which includes basic reminders that "things will be different" in the host culture as well as culture-specific tips that will help them function in and enjoy the visit to the greatest extent possible. See the Appendix for "The Art of Travel (Focus on Italy)" by ODU English Prof. Joseph Cosco.

An important goal of the meetings for everyone should be the creation of realistic expectations (including norms of behavior, responsibilities to each other, health and other preparations to assure comfort and safety, etc.) for the program and building esprit de corps among group participants.

Programs normally require scheduling at least two predeparture meetings of at least one hour each. When the size of the group is 20 or under, the Dragas Center Conference Room may be available for orientation meetings if desired.

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## Appendices

- ODU/VTrip Sample program flyers
- ODU application for short-term study abroad form
- Virginia Tidewater Consortium student cross-registration form
- ODU acknowledgment of risks and insurance statement
- ODU health information form
- The Art of Travel (focus on Italy), Joseph Cosco, ODU faculty leader
- Sample program information/emergency information card
- ODU request for approval of travel outside the boundaries of the US
- ODU estimated request for travel exceeding \$500
- ODU special travel cash advance request
- ODU welcome home cover letter
- ODU evaluation for returning study abroad students form