

Proposal for LSU Short-Term Group Program International Summer Program

The purpose of LSU group study abroad programs is to complement and expand on the lessons and opportunities students have on campus and to provide students with a unique learning experience they would be unable to gain on campus. The best study abroad programs provide participants with a combination of course work and cultural experiences. These programs incorporate their settings into their curricula and provide students with a unique perspective through which they synthesize what they have learned through formal and informal instruction. Whether a program is developed for students in one field or incorporates several academic disciplines in its course offerings, the opportunities afforded through study abroad are ones that cannot be duplicated here on campus.

The key role in any group study abroad program is the Program Director. Program Directors organize every part of the program, draft the program proposals and gather submissions from program faculty for course offerings. In general, the more detailed and specific the proposal, the greater the likelihood of its approval. Proposals for both new and continuing programs must be submitted to Academic Programs Abroad (APA) and will be reviewed by APA and its academic advisory council. The selection committee sometimes asks those making proposals to meet with the committee and discuss the proposal, especially if the Program Director is a new director and/or the program proposed is new.

Proposals for international summer programs should be ready for the selection committee by the end of August of the year before. In other words, the proposal for a summer 2010 program should be submitted at the beginning of the fall 2009 semester. Completed proposals for summer 2010 should be turned in to Academic Programs Abroad (106 Hatcher Hall) by **September 11, 2010**.

All proposals must include the following:

1. A completed program proposal form and questionnaire
2. A program budget (with minimum and maximum numbers of enrolled students)
3. Completed course proposal forms (one for each course)
4. Syllabus for each course proposed
5. Completed signature page (one for each course proposed)

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How does a potential Program Director get started?

Anyone interested in directing a group study abroad program or in teaching on a group study abroad program should contact Academic Programs Abroad to discuss potential sites, the steps and responsibilities involved in developing a program or teaching abroad, networking with other faculty involved interested in working with the program, and the policies and procedures governing study abroad at LSU.

Who can become a Program Director?

Any faculty member can submit a program proposal: full professors, associate professors, assistant professors and instructors. There are no restrictions on the subject matter. APA would welcome the opportunity to develop programs with faculty members from the sciences, engineering, education, and business.

How many faculty members should a program have?

Ideally, there would always be two or more faculty members for every program. This makes recruiting easier and enables Program Directors to offer a wider variety of courses. This also helps with on-site management of the programs while abroad. Program Directors are encouraged to have at least one additional faculty member participate in the program.

Who initiates the approval process?

Program Directors submit proposals to APA. The Program Director should gather the requested information on courses from faculty interested in teaching on the program to include in the final proposal and should obtain the approval of his/her Department Head (and, if courses are being offered across multiple disciplines, the approval of all the Department Heads of all courses proposed). Once the proposal is complete and submitted to APA, the Summer Programs Coordinator will submit it to both the selection committee, comprised of administrative staff from APA and the APA academic advisory council, who will review the administrative and academic components of the program.

Why do programs have to be approved every year?

All group study abroad program sponsored by LSU must be approved by APA. APA reviews the programs annually to ensure that programs adhere to LSU policies concerning study abroad. The approval process also serves as a “checks and balances” to ensure that appropriate provisions have been made for the program’s implementation. APA does reserve the right to decline programs; however, the selection committee is more concerned with strengthening programs than completely rejecting them and will often make suggestions for changes in the proposal, rather than rejecting the proposal in its entirety.

Are there locations that APA will not approve for group study abroad?

Yes. Per LSU policy, approval will not be granted for any program that involves taking students to a country or area within a country for which there is a current State Department travel advisory. In addition, programs previously approved will be cancelled if a State Department travel advisory is issued for the proposed site(s). Please check the State Department’s website

(http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html) for a list of countries and areas for which travel advisories have been issued.

What services does APA provide to faculty members?

APA assists before and during the approval process and assists Program Directors in developing a budget and in the fiscal management of the program. In addition, APA assists with the marketing of programs to students, including arranging opportunities for presentations on campus. APA receives and processes student applications as they are submitted, updates Program Directors on program and course enrollments, trains Program Directors and faculty on risk management and on-site responsibilities, collects student waivers and medical disclosure forms, and conducts orientations for students on insurance, health and safety, and registering for courses. It also orients students on issues related to adjusting to a foreign environment, such as culture shock, “dos and don’ts” in a foreign country, etc. In addition, APA conducts annual orientations for parents of program participants and registers students for the courses they will take while participating in the group study abroad program. All courses offered as a part of a group study abroad program will be set up and APA; individual academic departments should not set up courses for study abroad programs.

How are Program Directors notified of the selection committee’s decision?

The Summer Coordinator will meet with each Program Director applicant to discuss the selection committee’s comments, suggestions, and ultimate decision concerning the proposal. If recommendations have been made for changes in the program, the Summer Coordinator will detail those changes, along with any concerns the selection committee may have expressed.

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Here are a few things to keep in mind when planning your proposal:

Program Site

Several factors warrant consideration in settling on the locale of your program. The availability of affordable but appropriate housing is a priority for all programs. Safety and security inside and around housing sites merit careful attention as well. The question of where the group will stay must be answered satisfactorily before giving serious consideration to further program development.

Transportation, cultural and academic attractions, cost of living factors, climate, and accessibility to public transportation also need consideration. Although a charismatic faculty member may be able to get a group to go almost anywhere, the majority of students who go on group programs have limited travel experience and foreign language abilities and, therefore, have different expectations of site locations than more seasoned travelers. While every wish cannot be granted, the students generally do not have international travel experience. This must be remembered when deciding on sites and amenities.

Program Faculty

The choice of which faculty will participate in a study abroad program is very important and will do much towards shaping the study abroad program. Here are some guidelines for selecting faculty for group study abroad programs:

- Personal, onsite experience with the locale of the program
- Ability to develop academic coursework directly related to the program site
- Good rapport with students
- Time and willingness to recruit several hours per week, especially in the fall
- Ability to work easily with students and faculty in group settings
- Full commitment to the program
- Willingness to live with the group and participate fully in group life and activities for the duration of the program.

Training and Marketing

Directing a study abroad program is a rewarding, but time-intensive, undertaking. Marketing is one of the most time-consuming aspects of study abroad, especially during fall semester. In addition, all Program Directors will be required to attend risk management and budgeting training during spring semester. Before you propose a study abroad program, make sure that you have a realistic understanding of the time commitment that is required of directors of a study abroad program.

Budget

Program Directors work closely with APA to develop a budget and program price. Setting a program price requires both advance knowledge and guesswork. Programs that advertise a set cost, however, gain more credibility than those with estimated costs, so budgetary planning is key in compiling a program proposal.

Program budgets derive from two factors: anticipated costs of services and a projected number of participants. Budgets submitted with program proposals should clearly indicate both the minimum number of participants needed in order to cover all program costs and the maximum number of students allowed, based on available amenities at the host site.

Projected Numbers of Student Participants

Determining the minimum number of students needed requires consideration of the following:

- Is the cost per student too high to attract a large number of interested students?
- Is the price substantially lower or higher than comparable programs at other universities and at LSU?
- If this program has run before, does its history indicate sufficient student interest to generate the minimum number of participants needed? (information on past program demographics can be obtained from APA)
- Realistically, will you have sufficient time to devote to recruitment to enroll the needed minimum number of students?

The maximum number of participants must also be established at the time the budget is drafted so as to ensure that sufficient space is held by overseas service providers. Nobody can guarantee extra rooms will be available later! Also, maximum numbers must be set and clearly conveyed to APA, so as to avoid confusion as programs begin to fill.

Exchange Rates

There is no way to know what the exchange rate will be on the day APA pays for services overseas. Therefore, erring on the side of caution is always preferred. Even with the disclaimer “prices subject to change due to fluctuations in exchange rate” (anytime you mention the cost of your program, you should include this disclaimer!), students will be less than pleased if you have to ask them for more money later on. Apart from that, program fees must be established firmly early in the calendar year for the administrative process to function. Program fees must be finalized by **January 29, 2010**. Making sure that you have budgeted at a realistic exchange rate is crucial to the success of a study abroad program.

There are several websites that can help you project costs and follow trends in the exchange rate. To get an idea of how the exchange rate for the currency you will be using has fluctuated, you can consult LSU’s Travel office website at <http://www.fas.lsu.edu/AcctServices/travel/default.htm> You can also want check with Ruesch International (<http://www.ruesch.com/na/marketnews/currency/>) or xe.com (<http://www.xe.com/ict/>)

Template for Budgets

A budget template will be provided to you by APA. This template lists common expenditures, such as housing, meals, excursions, faculty airfare, insurance, etc. All study abroad programs must use this template when submitting a budget and proposal for a study abroad program. Space has been provided in the template for you to list additional costs not covered by the template. If you are using a travel agent or other service providers for multiple services, please ask these providers for a detailed invoice that lists prices for services individually, rather than as a lump sum. A few points to remember when filling in the budget template:

- Because faculty expenses are divided equally amongst all students, faculty costs must be presented separately from student costs (in other words, even if the cost of faculty housing is the same per person as student housing, the faculty rooms should be listed separately in the faculty section of the template, rather than included in the student section)
- The template is set up in Excel and includes multiple pages, so that you can project costs based on different numbers of students. You should clearly indicate which number of students is the minimum number needed and which is the maximum number of allowed students.
- LSU requires that students traveling on university-sponsored programs be covered by LSU's travel insurance. The cost of the travel insurance is \$0.08 per student per day. Faculty is not included in this travel insurance. However, APA also has a health insurance policy that is mandatory for all students. The cost of this health insurance is \$1/day for each student. Faculty can decide whether or not they want to be covered on this health insurance. Any faculty member who opts out of the health insurance must provide proof that he/she has full coverage health insurance that will cover him/her overseas, as well as proof of medivac/repatriation coverage. Please remember to calculate the cost of both of these insurance policies into your program budget.
- Every study abroad program is assessed an administrative fee of \$100/student by APA. The space for this fee is allotted in the budget template.

Faculty Costs

Calculations of faculty costs should include not only all amenities that students receive, such as housing and in-country transportation, but should also cover additional costs, such as faculty per diem and faculty airfare. A per diem is an amount of money for meals to help travelers cover their expenses for eating. It is not meant to cover the entire cost of food, but rather to help with the additional cost of eating outside the home. Faculty members are only entitled to per diems when they do **not** eat with the group. If, for example, a hotel provides breakfast to its guests, the per diem has to be calculated just for lunches and dinners. If the group has a welcome or goodbye dinner, the per diem may not include these events. APA cannot pay more than the established per meal rate for per diems. Currently, these rates are \$13 for breakfast, \$18 for lunch, and \$29 for dinner. Program Directors can opt to pay less per meal than these rates, but cannot pay more. Anyone who wishes to request State Department rates for meals may do so, but will have to provide itemized receipts for every meal that is claimed at the State Department rate.

Faculty salaries are not paid out of the program budget. Monies for faculty salaries are generated from the tuition that students pay for the courses they take while participating in the program. The more students a program has, the more money it will generate for faculty salaries. Program Directors will be expected to meet with APA individually to discuss salary arrangements once the study abroad program has met its minimum number of students and/or the deadline for student applications has passed.

Program Proposal Form for LSU Short-Term Group Program International Summer Programs

To be completed by the Program Director

I. Personal Information

Please Circle the Appropriate Title: Dr. Mr. Ms. Mrs.

Program Director's Name: _____

LSU ID Number: _____ Rank/Title: _____

College: _____ Department: _____

Campus Mailing Address/Office: _____

Office Phone: _____ Fax: _____

LSU Email Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Alternate Email Address (if applicable): _____

II. General Program Information

Name of Program: _____

Location(s): _____

Dates of Program: _____

Eligibility Criteria for Students (eligibility for entrance to the program; do not include prerequisites for individual courses at this point): _____

*Please remember that eligibility requirements for study abroad must (1) be quantifiable and (2) cannot include criteria other than that used to determine student eligibility to enroll in courses here on campus. Examples of acceptable eligibility criteria: minimum GPA, minimum language competency (for language-based programs only), completion of a minimum number of credit hours. Examples of unacceptable eligibility criteria: maturity, prior travel experience, personality, etc. If a Program Director or faculty member has reason to believe that a student may not be suitable to participate in a program, she or he must inform APA in writing and provide evidence to substantiate this point of view; the case will then be reviewed by APA and the Office of the Dean of Students.

III. Program Specifics

For any of the descriptions below, please attach additional pages if needed

Type of Housing (circle one): hotel dormitory home-stay other

Please describe the housing arrangements for students and faculty – location, amenities provided, how host families are selected (if applicable), location in relation to transportation and medical facilities, etc.

Emergency Services Please describe what sort of emergency services, medical and otherwise, will be available to students and faculty on the program. Items to consider would include medical care available in region, proximity to emergency medical services, whether or not 24 hour security is available on premises, if the Program Director will have access to a cell phone, proximity to police and/or ambulatory services, etc.

Meals Are meals included in the program cost? If so, which ones? If not, what sort of options will students have for meals (restaurants nearby, eat with host families, etc.) Will faculty meals be included? Are menus set or do participants have an option? If some or all meals are not provided, how much additional money are participants expected to budget to cover meals? This last point is very important. Without guidance, students consistently underestimate the amount of money they need to have for food. This can lead to serious problems while abroad.

Transportation Are transportation costs covered in the cost of the program? If so, which ones? If not, how much should participants budget to cover transportation? What transportation services will be available? Are program faculty familiar with local public transportation? **Important:** When booking flights, faculty members must follow all LSU rules. This means that they have to book flights through the state travel agency. APA strongly discourages Program Directors from including student plane fares in their budget or doing

group travel to and from the program site. Group flights have proven to be highly problematic, unless the groups are very small and all members travel on the same dates, or a service provider offers a complete packet. Group travel also deprives students of the opportunity to travel at different dates, use frequent flyer miles or lower airfares.

IV. Program Objectives

Please describe the academic and cultural objectives of the program. What provisions for significant and structured cultural immersion, including contact with citizens of the host country, does the program feature? What excursions and/or cultural events are planned as part of the program? How does the cultural program support the academic objectives?

V. Faculty Details

Please describe the qualifications of the Program Director and teaching faculty with regards to the host site(s) and language(s). Include any previous experience teaching in group study abroad programs.

Realistically, how much time do you feel you will be able to devote to recruiting students each week? What types of recruiting activities are you considering in order to let students know about your program?

Course Proposal Form for LSU Short-Term Group Program International Summer Programs

* One copy of this form should be completed for each course proposed; form should be filled out by the faculty member offering the course

I. Personal Information

Please Circle the Appropriate Title: Dr. Mr. Ms. Mrs.

Name of course instructor: _____

LSU ID Number: _____ Rank/Title: _____

College: _____ Department: _____

Campus Mailing Address/Office: _____

Office Phone: _____ Fax: _____

LSU Email Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Alternate Email Address (if applicable): _____

II. General Course Information

Course Title: _____ Course Number: _____

Prerequisites Required by this Course: _____

III. Course Integration with the Host Culture

Please describe how you intend to incorporate the host culture/country into the curriculum for this course.

Please list any/all sites under consideration as fieldtrip sites for this course. Please indicate whether these plans are tentative or established. Take into account that field trips may be very time consuming. Please describe how much class time you intend to allocate to individual excursions.

What measures are planned to ensure that the academic integrity and rigor of this course are maintained during the program? How will student performance be evaluated in this course? Describe methods of instruction, testing, and evaluation and attach a copy of the syllabus for this course. The syllabus must clearly establish the number of class hours the students will have. The instruction time on excursions may be part of the syllabus. Be aware, however, that instruction must be active and related to the course content. Site or museum visits with no specific faculty instruction related to the course should not be included in the syllabus.

Course Approval for LSU Short-Term Group Program International Summer Programs

Please obtain the following signatures to signify that the courses proposed have been approved by the necessary departments.

Faculty Member Teaching Course

Date

Department Chairperson

Date