



Office of International Programs

Creating a Faculty-led Education Abroad Program

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Introduction

UNCW's Office of International Programs wishes to thank you for your interest in leading a faculty-led education abroad program. Studying abroad plays an integral role in preparing our students to become global citizens, and faculty-led programs hold a unique and valued place among UNCW's education abroad offerings. Creating and leading a faculty-led education abroad program is both a challenging and rewarding endeavor. Many program leaders describe their experiences leading faculty-led education abroad programs as their most enriching and impactful professional endeavor, and have utilized their role leading a program to engage students in discipline specific research, and to gain service experience toward their portfolios for promotion and tenure.

Ideally, those considering leading a faculty-led program should be flexible, adaptable, organized, enthusiastic, experienced working with students outside of the classroom, ready to handle the physical and emotional demands of leading a program, and eager to provide an educational experience that cannot be achieved on campus. This resource has been created to guide you through some of the considerations and steps related to creating a faculty-led education abroad program. It includes a compilation of ideas from UNCW faculty, administrators, and OIP staff, as well as publications and resources created by colleagues within the field of international education. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you in facilitating an international educational experience for our students.

Program Considerations

As you begin to conceptualize and plan your faculty-led program, there are many factors that should be taken into consideration. The guide below introduces many of these considerations, including the who, what, when, where, why, and how of leading a faculty-led program.

Who?

Students:

- Is program participation limited to UNCW students, or can students from other institutions apply to participate?
- Is there a minimum or maximum number of students who can participate? What is the ideal number of participants that you would like to have participate?

UNCW does not have a minimum number of students who must enroll in a program. Keep in mind that while having a larger number of students will generally bring down the total cost of the program, it may affect other factors including the type of transportation that can be utilized, the type of housing that can accommodate your group, the number of guides needed, and the amount of time required for activities like group meals.

- Do students need to be at a certain academic level or age to participate? Will freshmen, early college students, or graduate students be welcome to participate?

As certain program providers or partner institutions may have minimum age requirements as part of their policies, be sure that you have reviewed the policies of all entities with whom you partner.

- Will program participants have to have been accepted to a specific program or have declared a specific major in order to participate? Is completion of specific course prerequisites a requirement for student participation, or is the program open to students from any major?

When considering academic requirements for participation, keep in mind the number of students on campus who meet those prerequisites. Creating specific academic requirements may limit the pool of students from which you can recruit, and therefore the number of potential participants.

- Are there non-academic program requirements for participants (i.e. must be able to hike 5 miles, must be SCUBA certified, etc.)?

- Can your program accommodate students with disabilities?
- Will participants be able to bring family members (i.e. spouses or dependent children) along on the program? If so, will childcare or other activities be available?

Program Leaders:

- Who will serve as the primary program leader? The primary program leader will be the main contact for the Office of International Programs (OIP) regarding program budget and financial matters.
- Who will serve as secondary program leader? It is important that every program has a secondary program leader who can take over in the event the primary program leader cannot lead the group or must return early. Depending on the program, various support options exist:
 - A second program leader may be added, who may also contribute to the academic, cultural, linguistic, and/or logistic development of the program. Secondary program leader options include UNCW faculty or staff members. Program leaders are not required to teach courses, and can be utilized to help manage logistics or fill other programmatic needs.
 - Some faculty-led programs utilize a program provider, who may be able to fill this role. In addition to coordinating logistical arrangements and serving as guides or translators, program providers can also assist with risk management needs. Please contact [Kara Pike Inman](#) in UNCW's OIP to inquire about program providers.
 - UNCW has a network of partner institutions around the world, many of whom can assist with arrangements related to faculty-led programs, and assist in crisis situations. [Kara Pike Inman](#) in OIP can assist you in getting connected with colleagues at partner universities abroad.

Accompanying Family Members:

- Since some faculty-led programs require that you be away from home for an extended period of time, UNCW permits that family members may accompany you on the program. However, we encourage you to consider the pros and cons of having family members or other companions accompany the program. Program leaders must remember that their first priority is to be available to the students in any potential emergency (or perceived emergency) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, when the program is in session. If your family plans to join at any time during your program, please inform OIP several months in advance. Family members (spouses, partners, or children) not enrolled as full participants in a UNCW Education Abroad program are not considered participants of the program or representatives of the OIP (or any member institution affiliated with the OIP). Although family members are not participants in the program, they are expected to abide by program policies and restrictions. Family members should be aware that their

personal behavior must not affect the quality of the program or the experience of the participants, and that their involvement in group activities may be stopped by the OIP.

- Children under the age of 13 must be under the supervision of a parent or guardian over the age of 18, other than the Program Leader. Supervision of children is the sole responsibility of the parent(s). At no time should a program participant be asked to care for or supervise a child of a faculty member. You can read the full policy regarding accompanying family members in the [Program Leader Handbook](#).

What?

Academic Considerations

- What are the program objectives?
- What courses will be offered as part of this program?
 - Will you teach an existing departmental course?
 - Will you teach a special topics course?
 - Do you wish to propose a new course?
 - Are courses geared toward majors only, or open to all types of students, e.g., non-majors, undergraduates, graduates, non-traditional students, non-UNCW students?
 - Do you have the support of your department and chair to offer these courses as part of a faculty-led program? Keep in mind that courses offered as part of a faculty-led program should have the same academic rigor as those offered on campus.
- Will the program offer University Studies credit? Are there any prerequisites? While all education abroad experiences can satisfy the undergraduate requirement for Explorations Beyond the Classroom, programs offering courses that satisfy other University Studies requirements often have the greatest success in attracting a diverse group of participants.
- If the course is cross-listed for both undergraduate and graduate credit, what are the characteristics of the course and the course requirements that distinguish the graduate course from the undergraduate experience?
- What type of instruction method(s) will be utilized?
- What type of grading process will be utilized for each course? The Office of International Programs strongly encourages a significant portion of a student's grade be dependent on attendance and participation in program related activities.
- There are four primary types of faculty-led education abroad programs.
 - The majority of UNCW's faculty-led education abroad programs are stand-alone programs, in which the entirety of the course is taught abroad.

- Some of UNCW's faculty-led programs are embedded programs, in which a large portion of course content is taught on campus, and the education abroad experience is embedded as a required component of a larger course.
- Other faculty-led programs use the faculty-led program as an optional add-on to a larger course. For example, a faculty member may teach a 3-credit course on campus during the semester, and may offer the education abroad experience as an additional one credit "lab" course that occurs at the end of the semester.
- The final type of faculty-led program is a partnership program in which some teaching is conducted by a UNCW program leader and another course(s) is offered by a faculty member from a partner university or program provider.

All four of these types of faculty-led programs go through the same vetting process by the International Programs Advisory Committee.

Other academic considerations:

- Consider assigning pre-departure readings, presentations, and/or projects, as these will enhance students' preparation for the experience, their progress toward course objectives, and augment their experience abroad.
- Does your program compete with another faculty-led program with similar content or coursework?

If your intended program competes with another initiative, it may be best to work with the other program leader to see if one of you can adjust your program in some way (dates, courses offered, program destination, etc.) so that you do not unintentionally cannibalize each other's programs. If these types of adjustments cannot be made, you may want to consider co-leading the program, or agreeing that the two programs will run on alternating years.

- Consider including the following when planning your program:
 - Instruction by local scholars and experts
 - Opportunities for student to interact with members of the host culture
 - Opportunities for applied learning activities like internships, hands-on research, or service-learning
 - Exercises for focused reflection on learning experiences

It is okay to schedule free time into your program as this provides students with the opportunity for self-exploration, socializing, and pursuit of personal interests

When?

Considerations related to when you will run your program include a number of factors including the terms with which your program will be associated, the length of your program, and the actual dates of your program. Ask yourself the following questions when determining the timing and timeline for your program.

- What is the length of the proposed program?

Faculty-led education abroad programs are often as short as one week, but can last as long as a semester. Keep in mind that the length of your program will need to correlate with the number of contact hours needed to award the intended credit for the course, with 15 contact hours=1 UNCW credit. Academic contact hours can include lectures, classroom discussions, and course-related activities, performances, and excursions. Purely tourist activities should not be included in calculations of contact hours. If contact hours cannot be fully satisfied abroad, considering including course contact hours on campus or online either before or after the travel portion of your program.

- At what point in your program itinerary should certain activities occur? It may not be the best idea to plan a guest lecture or bus tour at a time during which students may be experiencing jet lag, and visits to certain historic or cultural sites may be more impactful toward the end of a program after students have learned more about the context and significance of these sites.
- Do your program dates conflict with final exams, commencement ceremonies, or other events that may inhibit student participation?
- Summer faculty-led programs do not need to align directly with UNCW's summer sessions. Your summer faculty-led program can start before UNCW's Summer I, end after UNCW's Summer II, or span across both summer sessions.

Short-term spring and fall programs can happen immediately before, during, or immediately after the fall or spring semester. However, in order to justify them as being associated with the spring or fall semester, some activities (pre-departure preparation, post-travel reflection, etc.) should occur during the actual semester dates.

- Do some research into the seasons and weather in your host destination. Many locations have a rainy or wet season, which you may wish to avoid, or a typical vacation season (i.e. August in Italy or January in Argentina) during which many businesses are closed as host country nationals enjoy an extended vacation.
- As you begin to plan your itinerary, research holidays, sporting events, elections, and other events that may affect public transportation, lead to overbooked hotel rooms, or closures of sites of interest.

Where?

- What is the justification for your selection of your program location(s) as it relates to the course(s) being taught? The best faculty-led programs are usually those in which the location and the course are closely integrated.
- What is your experience in the host destination? It is highly encouraged that at least one program leader for each program have direct experience with the intended program site prior to leading the program. If you do not have direct experience, you will need to

utilize a UNCW approved program provider to assist with coordinating and managing your program. Alternatively, you can apply for funding for program development or a site visit through OIP's [Global Citizenship Grants or Faculty Travel Grants](#).

Conducting a site visit can enable you to confer with colleagues or other contacts abroad, including members of professional organizations related to your field. This can also be a great opportunity to explore options for housing, meals, transportation, course-related excursions, or internship/service-learning placements. You may also be able to determine the level of safety within the location you have selected, or take photos and videos that you can use for marketing of the program.

- Will your program be based in one city, or will you travel to more than one destination? Some faculty-led programs have one “home base,” but travel to other destinations on day trips or short-excursions, while other programs move from city to city, or even between countries. You may want to consider the feasibility of moving your group between program sites, transportation costs that will be incurred, and how each destination will enhance your program objectives. As you consider program destinations and inclusions, remember that the safety of students is the top priority.
- Do you speak the language of the host country for your program? If you do not speak the local language, will someone co-lead your program who can serve as a translator with local police, authorities, or medical staff if the need should arise? If the answer to these two questions is no, we highly recommend that you consider switching to another program location.
- Will your students speak the local language of your host country? If not, can you plan for ways in which they can immerse themselves in the local culture?
- Is there a U.S. Department of State travel warning for your intended host country(ies)?

You can look at Department of State (DOS) travel warnings and travel alerts online at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html>. UNCW's travel policy prohibits university-sponsored travel to countries that bear a DOS warning. The travel policy may be found at: <http://uncw.edu/policies/academic.html>. Requests for exceptions to this policy are granted through the provost's office.

- What sort of medical facilities exist in program destinations? How will on-site procedures for medical needs (injuries, illness, etc.) be handled?
- To what extent can the host destination(s) logistically handle the presence of your group on-site? Will your group's presence negatively affect locals in terms of access to food, drinking water, water for bathing, transportation, and other factors?

How?

When developing logistics and ideas for your faculty-led program, there are several options available.

1. Program Providers

Program Providers can be utilized to help develop a customized program that meets specific learning objectives. Program providers can assist with managing a number of program components, including itinerary development, program housing, site visits, rental of academic facilities, group meals, special events, group flights, on-site coordination, and risk management. Many of these program providers can coordinate as many or as few of these program components as you would like. Please contact [Kara Pike Inman](#) in UNCW's OIP to inquire about program providers.

2. UNCW's Partner Institutions

UNCW has a network of partner institutions around the world, many of whom can assist with arrangements related to faculty-led programs, including provision of housing, classroom space, and guest lecturers. [Kara Pike Inman](#) in OIP can assist you in getting connected with colleagues at partner universities abroad.

3. Self-coordinated Program

Due to personal experience and connections abroad, some program leaders choose to arrange all of their own program logistics. While these programs are often the most affordable option as no fees are being paid to outside organizations for assistance in coordination, they are also the most work for the program leader. Self-coordinated programs require extensive time and effort in planning the program, arranging logistics, building the program budget, running the program abroad, and reconciling finances upon program completion.

If you are unsure of which of these program coordination options works best for your interests, skills, and expertise, please make an appointment to meet with [Kara Pike Inman](#) in the Office of International Programs to discuss your program.

Budgetary Considerations

Program promotional materials should clearly delineate which items are included in the program budget, which students must pay out of pocket, and which components are optional. As you begin to think about your program and program budget, it is important to consider the following items.

- Which components of the program do you want to include as part of the program fee, and which costs will students pay separately?

Keep in mind that all required program activities should be included in the total program fee. Some potential inclusions may include:

- Housing for students and program leader(s)
- In-country transportation (buses, trains, ferries, taxis, chartered bus, subway, in-country/regional flights, etc.)
- Admission fees (museums, performances, historic sites, sporting events, etc.)
- Fees for guides, translators, or guest lecturers
- Course related supplies and gear
- Classroom rental
- Gratuities and tips
- Required taxes or exit fees
- Visa fees for program leader(s)
- Emergency funds
- Luggage or parking fees for program leader(s)
- International flight for program leader(s)
- Group flight for program participants
- Program leader per diem
- Program leader cell phone
- Group meals

Passport, visa, books, vaccinations, exit fees, and any non-program related travel are typically the responsibility of the participant and are not included in the program fee. Tuition costs are also the responsibility of the student, and usually apply to summer programs only, as short-term program tuition is included as part of the regular semester tuition as long as the student does not exceed 18 credit hours.

- Do you want to include group airfare?

Including group airfare is convenient in that it allows for all program participants to arrive and depart on the same flights. However, for programs that occur during summer or winter breaks, group airfare may not be a good option as students may be traveling to the program site from their hometowns. Therefore, traveling back to Wilmington in order to fly abroad may add extra expenses for many participants. Additionally, if students or program leaders wish to engage in personal travel before or after the official program dates, having a group itinerary creates challenges in allowing participants to add

personal travel time. The other drawback of group airfare is that this option does not allow participants to use frequent flyer miles or to take advantage of free airfare available from parents who are employed by an airline.

- Do you want to include group meals? If so, how many meals and which meals do you want to include?

Including group meals can add convenience in knowing where students are and in keeping the group together. However, depending on the size of your group, group meals may take significantly longer than allowing students to dining separately. Additionally, if you have students with specific dietary needs or restrictions, finding group meal options that account for the myriad of student dietary needs and preferences can be a challenge. If some meals are not included, you are encouraged to provide students with an estimate of the amount of money they should plan to bring for meals.

- Will students have free time during which they can travel away from the program site? If so, how much should they budget for personal travel? You may wish to provide students with examples of the type of independent travel they may choose.
- Health insurance will automatically be included in the budget for all students and program leaders. If you are using a program provider to assist with logistical arrangements, it is not necessary to utilize their insurance.
- Often unforeseen budgetary factors:
 - When planning program housing, the male/female ratio of your program participants may affect program cost if odd numbers mean that some students have a single room. In some cases, triple rooms or other configurations can be utilized to keep costs down.
 - Exchange rates can often fluctuate and affect program costs. If you are being charged or will pay for items in a currency other than U.S. dollars, be sure to build in a cushion to accommodate fluctuations in exchange rates.
 - As in the U.S., overseas destinations often have a peak tourist season during which hotels, flights, and other items may be more expensive or unavailable. Research when peak season is in your host destination, and try to plan around it if possible.
 - Programs that visit multiple countries may incur multiple visa fees and applications, or exit taxes. Determine if the addition of a second country is worth the extra expense and potential hassle.
 - Determine if vaccinations are required or recommended for any of your intended program destinations. In many countries, vaccinations are recommended for only part of the country, so moving your intended program to a different part of the same country may eliminate vaccine related expenses and processes.

- Students who are studying abroad in the summer and wish to use financial aid must be enrolled in 6 or more credit hours (undergraduate) or 4.5 hours (graduate) in order to be eligible to utilize financial aid. If your faculty-led program does not offer 6 credits of coursework, you may want to ensure that program dates do not overlap with at least one of UNCW's summer sessions in order to enable students to pursue remaining credits for financial aid eligibility on campus.

Creating Your Proposal

Now that you have thought about programmatic and budgetary considerations related to your program, it is time to create your proposal. Certain academic departments, colleges, and schools at UNCW may have internal review and approval processes that will need to be met in addition to those required generally by UNCW. Please speak with the appropriate dean or department chair to determine if these additional steps apply to your proposal process.

All faculty-led, credit-bearing programs involving UNCW students abroad must be approved by the Office of International Programs (OIP) via review by a subcommittee of the International Programs Advisory Committee (IPAC). Please review proposal guidelines, materials and deadlines found at: <http://www.uncw.edu/international/facultyledresources.html>. If you have any questions, concerns, or need assistance, please contact Kara Pike Inman at pikek@uncw.edu, or call 910-962-3685 to set up an appointment to discuss your potential program.

Thank you!