

Study Abroad Faculty Led Program Development

We welcome faculty interested in helping Parkside broaden our study abroad program. We are taking this opportunity to address the many factors that need to be considered in the development of new program options. What we know well is that students love to travel with their professors!

- **Academic Fit**

In order to attract student interest to a new program, the coursework must meet the academic needs of a wide group of students and should offer an opportunity to fulfill direct degree requirements. Ideally courses will count as general education course credits. Unfortunately, as study abroad programming has high overhead costs, if the program cannot attract sufficient numbers the program will need to be cancelled.

In addition, faculty must be cognizant that programs cannot be scheduled to conflict with similar Parkside study abroad offerings as this would jeopardize the viability of both programs. The Parkside student body does not have sufficient numbers for this type of competition.

- **Safety**

Safety planning is imperative with study abroad. Students and their families depend on us to provide an experience that is designed with safety in mind. As you may imagine, international programming is considered a high liability program at the University and that is why Parkside has a Study Abroad Advisory Committee that must approve all perspective programs.

Study abroad program developers should begin by consulting the US State Department travel webpages to determine the safety level of the site location.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html> . Safety ratings of Level 3 or 4 will not be considered. All risk factors should be discussed and thoughtfully addressed.

The Parkside Study abroad Committee strongly advocates that host country educational institutions should be integral to the program design. If an emergency arises, it is imperative that there are local professionals knowledgeable about the resources available to effectively deal with the issue.

- **Affordability**

A budget will be developed for every faculty-led international program (FLIP) by Study Abroad Office and the faculty leaders. At a minimum, line items will include:

- Faculty remuneration and fringe benefits
- Airfare and transport of students
- Airfare and transport of accompanying faculty
- Lodging of students & faculty
- Faculty per diem and health insurance
- Faculty visa costs (if applicable)
- Local partner program fees
- Study abroad fees (\$150) and study abroad insurance is also compulsory.

As an example, program developers should consider that a study abroad program with one faculty leader and a local university partner will most likely require a minimum student fee of \$3500 for a 10-day program (varies dependent upon location and many other factors).

Generally, a minimum of 10 students are required for any group program. Faculty leaders will set their own group minimum that will determine whether the program is a “go”. If that number isn’t met, the program will be cancelled.

Financial Aid: Faculty leaders should know that while Federal/State financial aid resources can often apply to study abroad programs, the students’ annual award levels do not increase to meet these additional costs. An exception to this is the Wisconsin Study Abroad grant which offers residents with a GPA of 2.5 and a FAFSA demonstration of need, the possibility of a grant ranging from \$500-\$1000 for a short-term program. Please note that usage of all summer financial aid requires a 6-credit minimum.

- **Stability of Program Structure**

Covid has taught us many lessons. Study abroad programs cannot be built upon the leadership, knowledge and expertise of one particular faculty member. This practice puts Parkside and our students in a precarious situation in the unfortunate event of a personal, health or family emergency of the faculty leader. In addition, programs that travel from place to place will be thoroughly examined. In this type of program, significant issues arise if a student is injured or ill. Will they be left behind?

To create a stable program structure, the Parkside Study Abroad Advisory Committee requires that all programs have a local university or partner organization that offers a pre-structured program. This has many benefits:

- Programs are taught and administered by locals that are experts of the topic and how it fits into the local culture. This provides a truly immersive cultural experience.
- Students are integrated into the local community, making stronger connections.
- Frees the faculty leader from arranging logistics, direct teaching and financial management allowing them to better support student needs.
- If a student has an emergency, the faculty leader is available to assist and the program can continue on without interruption.
- Many invite visiting professors to co-teach student groups alongside them. This creates great collaborative efforts for future programming.

All over the world local universities are implementing programs for incoming international students. Why reinvent the wheel? Here are some program examples:

- Liverpool Hope Maymester Program: <https://www.hope.ac.uk/international/summerstudyabroad/>
- Hessen Germany Summer University: <https://www.uni-marburg.de/en/studying/studying-at-umr/short-term-programs/isu>

Finally, UW Parkside study abroad program staffing has been significantly affected by university financial cutbacks. Please keep this in mind when considering the development of a new program.