



NORTH PARK UNIVERSITY

The Office of
International Affairs

Short-Term Academic Study Tours Best Practices Handbook

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Taking Students Abroad Best Practices Handbook, 2017

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INTRODUCTION

North Park University short-term academic study tours are a great resource for students with work and family commitments, those who cannot interrupt their course of study to go abroad for a full quad or semester, and those who might otherwise not be able to afford the costs of a traditional study abroad program. In certain disciplines, the opportunity to conduct field research or investigate a subject in its context is not only important, but necessary. For faculty and staff, the experience of teaching in a new culture and context can be a valuable asset to continued learning in one's academic field, as well as personal and professional development.

Even so, such programs can be time-consuming and emotionally draining. Teaching a diverse group of students in an international setting presents a host of challenges, anticipated and unforeseen. As the leader, you will be called upon to assume the role of teacher, advisor, program administrator, disciplinarian, cultural interpreter, and student advocate.

In preparation of this handbook, the Office of International Affairs consulted resources from the [Forum on Education Abroad](#), which recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization for Education Abroad. The format and some content for this handbook was used with permission from Indiana University CIBER.

The policies and procedures set forth below are designed to help you develop and implement a short-term academic study opportunity that will ensure both academic and personal success. While intended primarily for international study tours, the guidelines can be adapted to domestic programs, as well, which also required institutional approval. Please contact the Office of International Affairs with any questions or concerns.

Tessa Zanoni, Director
tzanoni@northpark.edu
773-244-5553

Ruby Benigno, Assistant Director
rbenigno@northpark.edu
773-244-5571

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SERVING AS A STUDY TOUR LEADER

It is important that the faculty and staff who commit to serve as short-term study tour leaders realize the extent of the responsibility they will take on through this process. The Office of International Affairs is here as a resource for faculty and staff to receive guidance and advice at all stages of the program, from idea to post-travel debriefing.

Even with the support of NPU's resources, faculty and staff must be prepared to be the first responder in any kind of situation. More information about managing emergencies will be provided in this handbook. **Most faculty and staff find that leading an education abroad program is one of the most satisfying experiences of their careers. However, they need to be prepared for the full scope of eventualities that may occur.**

Responsibilities as a faculty or staff leader include:

- **Teaching students in an international setting and executing the learning objectives and programmatic goals.** Students who participate in short-term study tours earn academic credit for the experience. It is an opportunity for students to grow academically, as well as personally and professionally.
- **Administrative and fiscal duties, which will vary depending on the model of the program.** Administrative duties may include organizing field trips and excursions, interfacing with hotels and other service providers, purchasing tickets, arranging meals, organizing local transportation for the group, working with NPU administrative offices, and handling a variety of details, etc.
- **Managing student life issues.** While abroad, students have no recourse but to turn to their program leader for their personal needs. These needs can be wide ranging and can include help for *mild homesickness, acute emotional distress, minor or major health issues, physical or sexual assault, accidents, theft, passport/visa problems, and other unexpected incidents.*

Decisions related to health, safety, and security need to be made in consultation with the Office of International Affairs.

STUDY TOUR TIMELINE & CHECKLIST

<p>At least one year* in advance of proposed study tour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange separate meetings with Office of International Affairs and your Department Chair/Academic Dean to discuss your program proposal. <input type="checkbox"/> Select a program provider, location and secondary leader. <input type="checkbox"/> Work with the program provider, host organization and/or Office of International Affairs on trip details including itinerary and budget. <p><i>*Begin 18 months in advance of desired, if location has a Level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory, or complex health/safety concerns</i></p>
<p>May 1 (or June 30 for repeat May tours)</p>	<p>Submit online application, for review by the Office of International Affairs and approval by the Provost. Your application must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Program Description and Justification <input type="checkbox"/> Leader Preparation <input type="checkbox"/> Student Selection Criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety Information <input type="checkbox"/> Dates/Itinerary <input type="checkbox"/> Detailed Budget <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of Support from your Dean
<p>Recruiting Students (~6-10 months out)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create your course page in Via <input type="checkbox"/> Advertise course and hold information sessions <input type="checkbox"/> Advise students on any available scholarships <input type="checkbox"/> Review applications and “approve” students in Via <input type="checkbox"/> Notify OIA of final course roster and ensure all students are eligible (i.e., not on academic or student conduct probation) <input type="checkbox"/> Set up the deposit schedule with the Business Office <input type="checkbox"/> Reserve flights
<p>Program & Student Preparation (~4-6 months out)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize itinerary <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all students have applied for or have a valid passport <input type="checkbox"/> Provide students with visa application instructions, if applicable <input type="checkbox"/> Begin student course registration <input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting student deposits and making program payments, as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all students have “committed” in Via (or you can update application status once deposits have been made) <input type="checkbox"/> Begin leader trainings, as scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Begin collecting and reviewing student forms through Via
<p>Program & Student Preparation (~2-3 months out)</p>	<p>Prepare yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete leader trainings, as scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> Complete all required leader forms in Via <input type="checkbox"/> Make any payment(s) to program provider <p>Prepare students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all students are appropriately registered for the course <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that all students have applied for or have a valid passport <input type="checkbox"/> Hold course sessions and/or orientation for trip participant(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange for OIA to present health, safety & general travel orientation <input type="checkbox"/> Continue collecting and reviewing student forms through Via

	<input type="checkbox"/> Remind students to submit payments <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize flights
2 weeks prior to tour	<input type="checkbox"/> Send to Office of International Affairs: Final itinerary, including dates, locations, and contact information at each location <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure all students have completed required forms in Via <input type="checkbox"/> Finalize any student/program payments <input type="checkbox"/> OIA will enroll group in insurance & STEP
1 week prior to tour	Final meeting with the Office of International Affairs: <input type="checkbox"/> Review itinerary, student forms, and final questions
After Tour	Follow up: <input type="checkbox"/> Work with the Business Office to finalize any outstanding payments <input type="checkbox"/> Review student evaluations with OIA <input type="checkbox"/> Submit study tour proposal, if planning to run again next year

TYPES OF STUDY TOURS

There are two different types of Short-Term Study Tours sponsored by the Office of International Affairs:

Stand-Alone Study Tours

Students participate in a study tour during a school break (winter, spring, or summer break). The course may not have many or any regular meetings meet throughout the semester/quad, but the trip is still credit bearing. Most or all contact hours are completed during the actual study tour instead of regular meetings during the semester/quad. Students enroll in the course as part of or supplemental to their regular course load. The cost of the trip may be included in the student's regular semester tuition (depending on travel dates); the program fee is an additional cost and will be posted to the student's account.

Course-Dependent Study Tours

Students enroll in an academic course that meets regularly during the fall or spring term and participate in the study tour over the winter break, spring break, during May (immediately following the end of the spring term) or, in some cases, immediately before the start of the fall term. In some cases, it may be possible for a student to enroll in the course without participating in the study tour, but it is not possible to participate in the tour without completing the course. Students must check with the faculty leading the tour to ascertain whether participation in the study tour component is required or optional. Tuition for the course is part of the regular semester bill; the program fee is an additional cost and will be posted to the student's account.

TRIP LEADERS

- Short-Term Academic Study Tours may be led by full-time faculty or staff at North Park University, though all such programs must have the full support of an academic department or school at the time of proposal.
- All groups must have two leaders over the age of 21. The primary leader should be a full-time NPU faculty. The secondary leader should be an NPU faculty or staff. For undergraduate programs, the secondary leader may be a graduate or seminary student. If you are having a difficult time identifying a secondary leader, please contact OIA for suggestions.

- Programs based in the U.S. or repeated programs run in conjunction with a host-country organization may not require a secondary leader. Please inquire with OIA if you are unsure whether your program requires a secondary leader.
- If a secondary leader is chosen from outside of the NPU community, they must be vetted and endorsed by the dean of the sponsoring school or academic department at North Park and Human Resources. At least one of the leaders is expected to have demonstrated knowledge of or experience in the area(s) to be visited.
- All trip leaders will be required to participate in faculty/staff trainings required by the Office of International Affairs.
- Whenever possible, the primary faculty leader should have participated in leading a Short-Term Academic Study Tour before, either at North Park or at a previous institution.

NEW STUDY TOUR PROPOSAL PROCESS

The Office of International Affairs offers an annual information session about proposing new academic study tours. Please plan to attend this session before proposing a new study tour. If you are unable to attend, you should schedule a time to meet with the Office of International Affairs to review the proposal process.

Prior to Submission

1. Select a course for the study tour. Any new courses must be approved by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee (or other appropriate committee) and the Office of the Provost and appear in the NPU course catalog. You must also decide if this will be a stand-alone study tour or course-dependent study tour.
**We recommend that you select a course or cross-list your course to fulfill a Core Curriculum requirement, as this will attract more students to your program.*
2. Select a location and program provider. All study tours are required to partner with an organization, university, or study abroad program provider. A list of reputable study abroad program providers and exchange partner universities can be found in the Appendix.
3. Select a secondary trip leader. This person should be an NPU Faculty or Staff member – see section entitled “Define Leader Roles” above. If you are having trouble identifying a secondary leader, please contact the Office of International Affairs for names of recommended staff members.
4. Create a trip budget. If you are working with a study abroad provider, they will be able to assist. See more information below about Budgeting.
5. Create an itinerary. This should be done in partnership with the on-site organization, university, or program provider. See sample itineraries links in the Appendix.

Questions to Consider

Please consider the following questions during the development phase of your program. These questions come from the Forum on Education Abroad publication *Leading Short-Term Education Abroad Programs: Know the Standards* (2022). Please refer to this publication (in the Resources Folder) while developing your program.

- What are the learning goals of my program?
- How will my program leverage the unique learning opportunities of the destination?

- How will I support students' academic and personal growth, intercultural development, civic and global learning, and professional skill development?
- How will I prompt students to reflect on their learning in and outside of the structured experience?
- How will I support the continuity of student learning pre-departure, on-site, and post-program?
- How familiar am I with the cultural values, norms, and language of the host community and the implications of these for facilitating the program?
- How will my program respect the values and norms of the host community and avoid imposing an undue burden on its resources?
- How will my program support students' understanding of the social, historical, political, economic, linguistic, cultural, and environmental contexts of the destination, and the impact of their presence on the local communities?
- Will local infrastructure support a safe and effective program (transportation, housing, and healthcare)?
- What are the risks associated with this destination for students, program leaders, and community members?
- Is the program designed to be accessible to students with disabilities?
- Is my program sufficiently staffed to achieve program and learning goals and respond to emergencies?
- Will I need to hire local experts or service providers? How will they be vetted and arranged?

Proposal Form

After you have gathered all above listed documents and information, please complete the [online proposal form](#) for New Academic Study Tours. You can view the form online at any time. Please note that all study tour proposals are due by **May 1** of each year, for study tours running during the upcoming academic year. Extensions through June 30 are granted for programs running in May which will reapply for the following year. Email a copy of the itinerary, syllabus, and budget to OIA. OIA assumes that faculty have worked with their respective departments to ensure full support before submitting a proposal.

Supplemental Health & Safety Questionnaire

If you are proposing a study tour to a country with a [Level 3 or 4 Travel Advisory](#) from the U.S. Department of State, or to a location with unique health/safety concerns, you will also need to complete the [Supplemental Health & Safety Questionnaire](#). These study tour applications must be vetted and approved by the Travel Oversight Committee. Complete applications to locations with complex health/safety concerns must be submitted to the TOC at least one year in advance of intended program departure date to ensure enough time for proper review and trip preparation.

Next Steps

The Office of International Affairs will collect and review all study tour proposals. Leaders can expect to receive requests for additional information or clarification, as needed. Program materials will be sent to the Dean of your school and Provost for signatures. Final approval for study tours is given by the Office of the Provost, and leaders can expect to receive a decision no later than **June 30**. If study tours are being proposed to countries with a Level 3 or 4 Department of State Travel Warning, approval decisions

will be made by the Travel Oversight Committee. More information about this process can be found in the [NPU International Travel Policy](#).

BUDGETING

All Short-Term Academic Study Tours must be self-supporting; all costs should be covered by participant fees. A detailed budget will consider airfare, housing, meals, local transit, tour provider fees, faculty/staff leader expenses, cell phone, etc. If you are working with a program provider, they will often be able to assist you in the development of a budget.

Costs for all faculty/staff leaders should be budgeted into the program. Leader expenses may be offset by departmental budget or grants, if available. Primary faculty leaders will be issued a university p-card for program expenses.

Please consider the following questions during the development phase of your program. These questions come from the Forum on Education Abroad publication *Leading Short-Term Education Abroad Programs: Know the Standards* (2022). Please refer to this publication (in the Resources Folder) while developing your program.

- How will the program be funded? How will low enrollment affect the program?
- What does the program fee include (credits, flights, meals, excursions, transportation, visas)?
- What financial aid or scholarships are available to students?
- How will I pay for necessary goods and services while abroad?

Purchasing Flights

Participants must travel together on a group flight, unless alternate arrangements or travel deviations have been approved in advance by OIA. Any person who deviates from the group travel plans must sign a Travel Deviation Request, available from the Office of International Affairs.

Trip leaders are suggested to work through a travel agent or study abroad program provider in order to purchase plane tickets. Recommended travel agents:

- [Student Universe: jenny.belshaw@studentuniverse.com](#) or jenny.belshaw@studentuniverse.com
- Sara Nakazato, JTB: snakazato@jtbusa.com

Group flights can generally be reserved as soon as 10-11 months in advance of travel. Please inquire with travel agents about flight booking timelines, cancellation fees, etc.

Budget Template

Faculty should work closely with their department chair, Dean, and OIA to develop a budget. OIA or your study abroad provider can provide a template (see Resources Folder). Your budget must include ALL anticipated expenses, because it will be used to set the minimum enrollment and student costs. Please contact OIA for budgeting assistance. All budgets will be reviewed and approved by the Office of the Provost.

Student Deposits & Payments

Students will make program payments to the Business Office, through their student portal in Self Service. In order to set up the student deposit schedule, please complete [North Park University Academic Trip Deposit Set-Up Form](#) (also in the Resources Folder) and submit to Allison Valentin the Business Office, along with a roster of student names (once available). Refund amounts and timeline should be included in this form. The Business Office will use a shared spreadsheet to communicate student deposit payments to the faculty leader. Faculty should remind students to make payments, but students will also receive payment reminders from Student Accounts.

MARKETING YOUR PROGRAM

Via Traveler Relationship Management

NPU uses [Via](#) to manage all study abroad program “brochures” and student applications. OIA will provide specific training to new users and set up a profile so you can update your digital program brochure and manage the student applications for your program. For additional assistance with Via, please utilize the resources in the [Faculty Toolkit](#).

Marketing Ideas

The following is a list of ideas for marketing your study abroad program. It is the responsibility of the program leaders to recruit student participants.

- Use [Via](#) to your advantage – encourage all interested students to start an application so you can track their progress and send follow up messages.
- Participate in events hosted by the Office of International Affairs (study abroad fair, etc.)
- Advertise your program on the Office of International Affairs website and Instagram page. Send blurb and pictures to international@northpark.edu to be included on our social media channels.
- Advertise in the weekly university student email. Send formatted blurb to announcements@Northpark.edu.
- In-Person Information Sessions – and advertise on:
 - [myNPUEngage](#)
 - Announcements email (see above)
- Class Visits and ask colleagues to distribute information to their students.
- Post up to 30 flyers at approved locations around campus. Posters must be stamped and approved by the Center for Student Engagement. Please email studentengagement@northpark.edu for more information.
- Up to 50 flyers can be displayed in residence halls. Please contact housing@northpark.edu for more information about poster distribution.
- Send an email to students within the appropriate major or who meet program pre-requisites.
- Information table in the Johnson Center Lobby. Reserve via [25Live](#).
- Use program alumni from previous years to help with marketing efforts.
- Contact the Office of International Affairs to brainstorm other ideas!

Important note: Marketing materials are legally contractual documents. Therefore, it is important that program information is communicated to students clearly. Costs and itinerary should not change from what is originally advertised. All study tour advertising must also include minimum participation

requirements (e.g., ability to hike for one mile, ability to traverse uneven terrain, ability to carry 50 pounds, ability to see clearly at night, etc.). If a program is required by an academic school or department but not accessible to students with disabilities, the school or department must make alternative arrangements for completing these requirements. It is up to the program leader to ensure that recruitment and selection processes are inclusive, fair, ethical, transparent, and accessible to students.

STUDENT ADVISING AND SELECTION

It is the responsibility of the trip leaders to advise and select students for programs, in consultation with the Office of International Affairs, when appropriate or necessary. Trip leaders should consider the following questions (Forum [Standards of Good Practice](#), 2022):

- What are the policies for academic eligibility, conduct, and health concerns?
- How will you recruit and advise students from all segments of the student population, including those that are historically underserved?
- How are students informed of the significance of identities (including but not limited to race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, religion, ability, and socioeconomic status) and how their identities might impact their experience in the program location?

Note: Students who are on academic probation or student conduct probation (Level 1 or 2) are not allowed to participate in any study abroad experience, including short-term study tours. The full policy can be found [here](#) (Resources Folder).

Application

All students will submit their application in Via. A standard application will be provided by the Office of International Affairs and linked to your Via program brochure. Application deadlines should be set far enough in advance to allow for proper vetting, class registration, trip preparations, etc.

Note: although it is important to make students aware of any physical and/or mental health requirements for the trip, this information cannot be used as admissions criteria per ADA regulations.

Student Vetting

If any applicants are found to be on academic probation or student conduct probation during the time of application to a study tour, they cannot be admitted to the program per University policy. OIA will notify faculty leaders of ineligible students and update their application status, accordingly, in Via. Students are asked to disclose probation status during the application process and all applicants/participants will be vetted by OIA to ensure they are eligible for participation. Please consult the [full policy](#) (in Resource Folder) for more information and the appeals process.

Student Selection

Faculty leaders are responsible for reviewing and approving applicants for their program. It is important to establish clear selection criteria, including GPA requirement, major/minor, course pre-requisites, class standing, etc. A minimum or maximum number of participants to run the program should also be established, along with waitlist processes and procedures. OIA recommends that students are waitlisted

in the order in which they apply. Leaders should notify participants of program acceptance or denial with sufficient time for course registration and planning purposes.

In order to approve students for your program, please update their application status in Via. More instructions on how to do that can be found here: <https://help.viatrm.com/how-do-i-update-application-status>. If you select “**approved**” it will automatically release the forms for the students to start completing. Students are then able to “**commit**” to the program, or you can update their application status to “committed” once they have indicated commitment through a deposit.

Once a list of student participants has been finalized, please notify OIA.

Course Registration

Faculty leaders are responsible for setting up their course (or ensuring the academic department has set up the course) with Registrar. Generally courses should be set up so that students need permission to register. Pre-requisites and course enrollment cap should be properly set up so. Faculty are responsible for ensuring that their course roster matches their approved applicants. All students must register for credit for the appropriate course, in order to participate in the travel portion. Requests to audit the course should be approved by OIA.

Non-NPU Participants

Any request regarding a spouse, child, or other non-university personnel accompanying the group must be approved by the Office of International Affairs and the Office of the Provost. North Park will consider requests for a leader’s spouse and/or child(ren) to accompany a program on a case-by-case basis, with the understanding that the leader’s demanding role is not likely to allow much free time for private social or recreational activities. Leaders are responsible for obtaining health, evacuation, and repatriation insurance for any accompanying dependents, and must not allow these individuals to interfere with or disrupt the academic program. The university will not provide any financial or administrative support (housing, childcare, etc.) or assume any responsibility for accompanying non-participants.

In some instances, it may make sense to permit NPU staff, faculty or alumni/-ae take part in a short-term tour, however, leaders must also request approval from the Office of International Affairs before allowing these participants to join the group. As a general rule, individuals who are not enrolled in the course are not permitted to participate.

BEFORE THE STUDY TOUR

There are various tasks that must be accomplished before the study tour begins.

Leader Training

All leaders are **required** to undergo two trainings sessions:

Office of International Affairs

The first mandatory training is provided by the Office of International Affairs and covers health, safety, and crisis management. At this training you will learn best practices for handling different types of

emergencies abroad. This training is offered every semester and trip leaders are required to complete the training at a minimum every two years.

Mental Health First Aid

The second mandatory training is [Mental Health First Aid](#), a national program to teach the skills to respond to the signs of mental illness and substance use. It is generally taught on-campus or virtually by NPU Counseling Support Services staff and requires a set number of hours of coursework. This training is offered multiple times every semester and the certification is valid for three years.

Additional Training Opportunities

OIA will occasionally offer supplemental training for program leaders. If you wish to learn more about best practices and network with other professionals who lead study abroad programs, we recommend that you consult the following resources, conferences, and organizations, or contact the Office of International Affairs:

- [International Educators of Illinois](#)
- [Forum on Education Abroad](#)
- [Diversity Abroad](#)
- [NAFSA: The National Association of International Educators](#)

Travel Documents and Immunizations

Program leaders will be responsible for collecting the following travel documents from all participants (students and leaders). Participants will be prompted to fill out all pre-departure documents in [Via](#).

1. Faculty should review forms carefully for completion. If there are any questions or concerns, contact the student and/or OIA.
2. Please move form from “submitted” to “approved” status to indicate review and acceptance of the form.
3. Via provides reports and messaging functionality to make it easier to follow up with students. Please refer to additional instructions [here](#) for assistance using these functions.

Note: The Federal Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is still in effect for study tours and all care should be taken to ensure student confidentiality.

*All documents listed below are required for international study tours; domestic study tours do not require as many pre-departure documents. A * symbol indicates documents required for domestic study tours.*

Liability Waiver*

This form outlines the leaders’ obligations and the student’s obligations regarding the study abroad experience. By signing it, students state that their participation is voluntary and hold NPU harmless for risks incurred during travel. At the same time, the form grants NPU and its agents the authority to authorize routine or emergency medical treatment, allowing program staff to secure reasonable care and giving NPU a responsibility to act in the best interests of students.

Insurance*

International study tours: all students must have medical insurance that is valid abroad, as well as an emergency medical evacuation policy. The Office of International Affairs will purchase an international medical insurance plan for all participants, at a rate of approximately \$3/day per participant. This fee should be factored into the program budget. Please complete the enrollment spreadsheet provided to you by OIA. If your study tour already has an insurance policy provided by the program or third-party, you can request to have the OIA policy waived. Please provide OIA with a copy of the insurance you plan to use for your group, at least one month in advance of the study tour.

Domestic study tours: proof of medical insurance for each traveler is required. Please contact the OIA with any questions or concerns regarding uninsured students.

Student Information Form*

The address, phone number, and email for one or more emergency contacts is collected from all participants. The standard NPU photo and video release form is also included in the pre-departure documents, so that any trip photos or videos can be shared publicly and used in future promotional materials.

Medical History Form*

It is critical that you collect medical information from students that might be important during a medical emergency, such as allergies to food or medicine, and physical and mental health conditions. This information must be kept confidential unless needed in an emergency. Program leaders should review all medical information and have conversations with students prior to departure if there are any questions or concerns. Additional questions can be directed to NPU Health Services. Health Services can offer advice, information, and training, such as how to administer an epi-pen.

Student Conduct Agreement

All students must sign the Student Conduct Agreement. The Conduct Agreement outlines a standard set of consequences and a list of behaviors that may result in a student's being sent home at their own expense. A sample has been included in the Appendix.

Trip Leader Drug & Alcohol Policy

North Park University Academic Study Tours are generally considered to be an extension of the NPU campus. Student participants must therefore abide by drug and alcohol consumption guidelines set forth in the Community Standards in the NPU Undergraduate Student Handbook, while NPU faculty and staff must abide by the policies of any applicable employee handbook.

Use of any illegal drugs by faculty, staff, and students participating in North Park University Academic Study Tours is prohibited under all circumstances.

Exceptions to the NPU Community Standards for alcohol consumption may be granted **only for international study tours** in cases where (a) alcohol consumption is deemed socially, culturally, and religiously appropriate in the context of the host-country; (b) moderate alcohol consumption is approved in advance by the Office of International Affairs and Office of the Provost as part of the

program proposal process; and (c) program leaders and participants agree to follow all guidelines set forth in this policy, in addition to local laws.

Faculty/staff leaders must agree to the following guidelines:

- In consultation with the Office of International Affairs, decide whether alcohol consumption by student participants will be permitted during an international academic study tour. Cultural and religious norms, local laws, safety, and other factors should be considered in this decision.
- Faculty/staff must provide clear, written guidelines for alcohol consumption by students on the academic study tour, to be included in the Student Code of Conduct. Host country laws and standards must be accounted for and discussed with students. Students will sign and submit the Code of Conduct to the Office of International Affairs during pre-departure orientation, along with all other pre-departure materials.
- It is the responsibility of trip leaders to enforce the Student Code of Conduct and necessary disciplinary measures while abroad. Trip leaders are responsible for communicating any Code of Conduct infractions to the NPU Office of International Affairs and the Dean of Students.
- Faculty and staff are prohibited from supplying students with drugs or alcohol on academic study tours.
- If trip guidelines and local laws permit alcohol consumption, faculty and staff leaders who choose to consume alcohol should do so in moderation. All faculty/staff leaders are responsible for the care of students for the duration of the program. **At no time should a faculty or staff leader's judgement be impaired by the use of alcohol.**

Immunization Waiver

Program leaders should provide students with a list of immunizations recommended or required by the U.S. [Centers for Disease Control](#) for the country or countries in which you will be traveling. Students will sign this waiver acknowledging they have received this information. If your destination requires specific vaccines/medication, please consult with the Office of International Affairs and Health Services for additional information or assistance.

STEP Enrollment

All students traveling abroad must be enrolled in the [Safe Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#). OIA maintains a group account and will enroll all participants. Note: non-U.S. citizens will not be able to enroll in this program but should check with their home country government for similar programs.

Passport and Visa Copies

Passport and visa copies should be collected as soon as possible after the student and leadership participants have been selected. The main purpose of collecting passport and visa copies is to assist students with travel or entry problems that may arise or in case of a stolen or missing passport.

- Trip leaders are responsible for checking that all participant passports are valid for the duration of the trip, as well as at least 6 months after the trip end date.
- If visas are required for your destination, you will need to provide students with instructions on how to obtain a visa. You will also need to collect visa copies to verify that all students have valid visas for entry.
- Make a special note to check-in with non-US citizens travelling with the group. Their visa requirements most likely will be different than US citizens and may take longer to obtain. Be

sure non-US citizens are carrying their required documents, including any special transit visas or visa applications required by citizens of their home country, and have a clear plan for travelling through customs. For example, students from China or India might require transit visas if the flight itinerary has a layover in certain countries, such as Canada.

- Remember, for some of your students this may be their first time getting a passport or travelling outside of the country.

In-Country Communication Plan

Have a communication plan for the duration of the trip. Leaders should distribute emergency contact information to all participants during the pre-departure process, including:

- In-country program/host contacts
- Leaders' international cell phone numbers
- Contact information for OIA and NPU
- U.S. Embassy physical address and phone number
- In-country emergency numbers, if available (equivalent to 911 or local police department)
- Codes needed to make a call from the country to the US

Pre-Departure Meetings

Many students who participate in short-term trips have never been out of the country before. Their expectations of what the host country will be like can vary greatly from the reality on the ground. Leaders should be prepared to provide a clear picture during orientation of the experience students will have abroad. The Office of International Affairs will provide a standard Health & Safety orientation for all groups, but it is the responsibility of the trip leader to ensure all topics listed here are covered before departure.

Faculty and staff should discuss the cultural differences students will encounter in the host country as well as how students can demonstrate cultural sensitivity and respect. Some students will experience culture shock. Leaders should discuss the symptoms of culture shock with students before departure. It is also important to prepare students for situations or experiences they may not be used to having in their home countries. For example, if students are going to a country where solicitations by street people are common, it is important to discuss how to respond and prepare students for what could potentially be an uncomfortable experience.

All faculty/staff leaders are required to hold a minimum of two orientation sessions for their students and any other trip participants prior to departure. Following are suggested topics for the two meetings:

Logistics, Health & Safety

- Required paperwork
- Health and travel insurance
- Immunizations and medicines/prescriptions
- Personal safety/security
- Physical rigor of the trip
- Personal behavior expectations – including drug and alcohol policy
- Emergency protocols

- Money access in country and the amount of cash to bring on the trip
- Flight arrangements
- Walking through the itinerary
- Packing list & appropriate clothing
- Details of hotel rooming arrangements

Culture & Academics

- Academic expectations and assignments
- Host country history and current events
- Foreign language words and phrases
- Cultural norms and taboos
- Food and dietary restrictions
- How to handle new experiences
- Culture shock and reverse culture shock
- Sharing pictures and social media accounts
- Cell phones and internet
- Group communication in country via email and/or messaging apps
- Q&A

Trip Preparations

Updated Travel Itinerary

All leaders and OIA staff should have an up-to-date copy of the itinerary and contact information at least two weeks before departures. Students have a copy of the itinerary, as well.

Gifts

In some countries, it is culturally appropriate and expected for gifts to be exchanged with hosts or those who have offered your program great assistance. A reasonable number of gifts for in-country hosts should be arranged in advance.

Cell Phones

Both trip leaders **must** have a working cell phone on them at all times in the host country. Any cell-phone costs should be factored into the trip budget.

ARRIVAL IN-COUNTRY

Transportation Procedures

Both trip leaders must travel with the group and may not make separate travel arrangements. It is important to keep in mind that the level of experience and comfort with international air travel often varies greatly within a group of students. As such, it is useful to offer guidance about what they can expect with checking in, airport security, showing passports at the gate, going through customs and immigration, etc. When the group boards the plane, it is useful to have at least one leader remain at the back of the group to ensure students are all able to board the plane smoothly.

In the event that travel is interrupted or delayed, it can be necessary for the group to split up and take separate flights. In this case, it is best if at least one leader accompanies each group of students. Have a

pre-determined meeting point within the final destination airport, or if the separation is lengthy, at the destination hotel. Leaders must update keep OIA updated on the new itineraries for each member of the group, in so far as possible.

Travelling with non-U.S. passport holders can present special challenges when entering the host country or re-entering the U.S. These students usually hold student visas and clearing customs and immigration can take much longer than the process U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents. As such, a designated leader should make arrangements with any non-U.S. passport holders on how they will reconnect with the group once they clear immigration. If you know non-U.S. passport holders will be travelling in the group, it is a good idea to schedule longer U.S. re-entry layovers ahead of time. Regardless, one leader should plan to stay and wait for any student(s) delayed in this process, even if it means the rest of the group continues on the scheduled flights. **Under no circumstances should a student (or students) be left behind to travel on their own when the trip has been arranged as a group travel experience.**

Any person who plans to deviate from the group travel plans must request in advance a Travel Deviation Request, available from the Office of International Affairs. If approved, the student will be required to share their itineraries with trip leaders and OIA prior to departure and notify leaders immediately if there are any deviations in transit (flight cancellations, travel emergencies, etc.). A designated meeting time and location in the host country should be pre-determined. Students wishing to arrive at the host country early or stay after the official end of the trip should make their own arrangements for accommodations, at their own cost.

Arrival Procedures

Upon arrival to the hotel/homestay or first program site, the leaders should:

- Help students orient themselves to their new surroundings.
- Discuss the following topics with students:
 - Internet usage and phone communication
 - Location of nearby banks, pharmacies, and restaurants
 - Expectations for behavior while in the hotel/homestay
- Ensure all travelers have emergency contact information in case of separation.
- Coordinate a meeting place everyone is expected to gather before leaving each day.
- Establish an emergency location in the event of a natural disaster or civil unrest where the group can reconvene and plan next steps. This could be your normal meeting place or a new location.
- Contact OIA via email or text to notify of safe arrival in country.

When checking out of hotels and upon arrival at the airport (both going and leaving), always check that students have their passports (and visas). It might be a good idea to have a reminder checklist and/or packing list to give to students.

DAY-TO-DAY

While the day-to-day details will vary from program to program, some practices are recommended regardless.

Daily Group Check-in

The group should have a designated meeting time and place every day. This time should be used by the leaders to get the students in the appropriate mindset for the day's activities. This time to touch base may occur over breakfast, in the hotel lobby, or via commute to the first business, educational, or cultural site. It may also be useful to discuss these points the night before.

The first order of business is to account for all students. Expectations should be set for punctuality and modeled by the leaders themselves. All students and leaders are expected to participate in all planned group visits and activities. The leaders should review the day's itinerary and make note of any significant changes to the schedule. Topics to review at this check-in meeting could include:

- Appropriate attire
 - Business casual/professional?
 - Will there be a lot of walking?
 - Should students carry an umbrella, jacket, or change of clothes?
- Meals
 - When will you eat?
 - Are students responsible for paying?
 - Are snacks and water available on site or should they bring their own?
- Business/Educational visits
 - What do they know about the places they will be visiting?
 - Who within the organization will be their host?
 - What questions do students have prepared?
- Gifts
 - Which student(s) will present the gift to the host?
 - Coaching the student(s) in appropriate thanking procedures

At the end of the day's planned activities, facilitators should clearly communicate the meeting time, agenda, and clothing for the following day before students are released for the night.

In-Country Transportation

Travel in-country can take many different forms depending on the location of the program. The itinerary should include a plan for travel to each site, and leaders should prepare students accordingly. Whenever possible, groups should plan to travel during daylight hours. Road related accidents are the top cause of preventable death of health U.S. citizens traveling abroad ("International Road Safety", [CDC](#), 2018). More information about road safety abroad can be found on the [CDC website](#), [World Health Organization](#), [OSAC](#), [Global Road Safety](#) and [The Association for Safe International Road Travel](#).

In the event that in-country travel requires the group to split up (multiple taxis, crowded subway cars, etc.) a leader should accompany each student group if possible. In some cases, such as taxis with a large group, this is not possible. In this case, one or two responsible and travel-savvy students can serve as leaders in a taxi. Any time the group is split, it is advised that one person in each group has a working

cell phone. If not, a contingency plan on how/where to meet up should be established in the event that not all groups arrive at the target location as planned. In some countries, it may be appropriate to ask students to make sure that women are always accompanied by at least one male student, especially at night.

Many programs require a great deal of walking as a primary mode of transportation. When walking as a group it is important to always have one leader at the front and one at the back of the group to ensure all students arrive at the destination. This is also useful when leaving a location or a mode of transportation as these also provide opportunities for the group to become separated. If a student indicates they are not able to do a lot of walking (bad knee, recent injury, etc.), arrangements should be made to accommodate them, and a leader should accompany them at all times.

Social Media and Photos

Students will be taking photos and posting on social media during the trip. Take advantage! OIA recommends creating an official hashtag (e.g. #NPUVikingsIndia) to share student posts and create a single social media narrative. If you would like to “take over” the OIA Instagram for posting during the study tour, please contact us for more information! Social media posts are often reviewed by parents, students, staff, and faculty back home and should be professional in tone and appearance.

Moving as a Group

Students should always travel in a group and notify leaders of plans (where they are going, when they plan to return, etc.). Per the student code of conduct, students agree to never travel alone, even during free time. Experienced leaders recommend the following tips:

- Accounting for students can be made easier by assigning each student a number and doing a “count-off” before leaving a site. Additionally, each leader can be responsible for a smaller group.
- Split up leaders so that the beginning, end, and middle (if possible) of the group is accounted for. This will ensure no one gets lost when walking.
- Scheduling group wake-up calls with the front desk can be helpful for particularly early mornings.
- Make the announced departure time 15 minutes earlier than necessary.

Staying Engaged

It is important for all leaders and students to stay actively engaged for the entire duration of the trip. Experienced leaders recommend the following:

- Check-in with your small group daily. Help them reflect on their experiences and assess their emotional/physical well-being (drink more water, blisters on their feet, experiencing culture shock or anxiety).
- Be as informed as possible on the trip surroundings—being able to provide fun facts and insights into the companies and educational and cultural sites can enrich students’ learning experiences.
- It is important to remember that these students are adults and deserve our respect and trust. If you see someone breaking a minor rule, you may want to give a knowing look or a casual

comment rather than a stern lecture. If they know we are aware they are breaking the rules, they generally will keep it in check. Also, we want them to feel comfortable telling us where they are going instead of sneaking off.

- Plan to check in regularly with the other program staff. Solidarity among leaders is important for avoiding students' manipulations.
- Modeling flexibility and a positive attitude will keep student morale high in the event of unexpected delays or less-than-desirable conditions.

MANAGING HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY

Emotional unease, such as anxiety or homesickness, is common for students traveling abroad, especially for those abroad for the first time. Leaders should be prepared to assist students daily for personal difficulties as diverse as illness, homesickness, accidents, sexual harassment, drunkenness, relationship issues, and loss or theft of property. The availability and concern of facilitators is crucial in assisting students as they deal with adjustments to the new culture, food, currency, and jet lag.

Responsibility to Act

Maintaining the health, safety, and security of all students and leaders abroad is the top priority for North Park University. Since all participants sign a liability waiver which, among other provisions, grants your institution and its agents the authority to authorize routine or emergency medical treatment, program staff have a duty to secure reasonable care and a responsibility to act in the best interests of participants.

Personal Preparation

Leaders should be encouraged to follow the same advice as the student participants regarding personal trip preparation:

- Consult with your physician about travelling abroad and make arrangements for carrying any required medications. Check entry-requirements and ensure all medications can be brought into the country.
- Receive any required immunizations for the trip.
- Prepare for loss or theft of financial resources. Keep a photocopy of your passport, credit card numbers, and bank phone numbers separate from the original documents.

Incident Report Form

If any health, sexual harassment, crime, discipline, or other health/safety issues arise during the study tour, please complete and return the [Incident Report Form](#) (Resources Folder) to OIA. It is important the OIA be informed of these issues and can assist with emergency response, if necessary.

Health

Disseminating information about food and water precautions is paramount to student health while abroad. Leaders should take care to assist students in finding reputable dining establishments. It is also important to emphasize hydration and rest.

While in country, leaders should ascertain the whereabouts of a local hospital and understand how to summon emergency services such as an ambulance. If a student is in need of medical attention, leaders should be prepared to provide pertinent information to the local medical provider. For this reason, leaders should carry copies of Participant Medical History Forms at all times. In the likely event of a student illness, the leadership team must assess the situation and determine an appropriate plan of action. In the case that an ill student needs to remain in the hotel or visit a hospital, a member of the leadership team (preferably of the same gender) should plan to accompany the ill student and remain with him/her at all times. If a student falls ill and is taken to a clinic or hospital for medical treatment, trip leaders should contact the Office of International Affairs immediately, and complete and return the Incident Report Form.

Alcohol

Students may find that the legal drinking age in their host country is a younger age than in the US. Unfortunately, when students take advantage of this freedom it often correlates with high-risk behavior. It is the responsibility of the trip leaders to educate students on cultural norms and/or taboos in the host country. Students and leaders are subject to all local laws, as well as NPU policy. Please reference the Appendix for the Student Conduct Agreement and Trip Leader Drug & Alcohol Policy for more information.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is unwelcome conduct or behavior of a sexual nature including sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Sexual harassment can include dating violence, domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. All trip leaders are required to act in compliance with US federal regulations in Title IX, as well as the North Park University [Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Violence, Relationship Violence, and Retaliation](#). Study tours are university sponsored events that fall under the purview of Title IX. Therefore, all trip leaders are considered mandatory reporters and must communicate Title IX violations to the University Title IX Coordinator: titleix@northpark.edu. More information about the North Park University Title IX policy can be found online here: <https://www.northpark.edu/about-north-park-university/title-ix/>

Discipline

As a participant on a university sponsored program, students are expected to adhere to the policies stated in the North Park University Undergraduate Student Handbook, or relevant graduate program handbook. In addition, students sign the Student Conduct Agreement before departure. Any additional conduct expectations should be communicated to students by the leaders during pre-departure and on-site orientations. If students violate the Conduct Agreement or other trip policy, trip leaders should follow these guidelines (depending on the severity of the issue):

1. First infraction: verbal warning from trip leader
2. Second infraction: written warning from trip leaders and/or behavioral contract between the student and trip leaders
3. Third infraction: student will be sent home at their own cost

Any disciplinary issues should be reported to the Office of International Affairs and documented in the Incident Report form. If further action or review is needed, it will be forwarded onto the Dean of Students.

Crime

Students on short-term programs are victims of crime more often than one would anticipate, likely because they are not abroad long enough to become skilled at recognizing dangerous situations. Safety issues should be covered with students at a pre-departure meeting as well as in their course syllabus or materials. Reminding students to store valuables in a locked luggage bag or safe, not to wear jewelry, or carry their wallets and phones visibly when in crowded areas such as on subways or busses, can prevent many thefts. Leaders are responsible for emphasizing safety measures throughout the trip. Reminding students (and in some cases requiring) the importance of travelling in groups and identifying areas of the city to avoid are good preventative measures.

Free Time Management

In the event that students have free time during the trip, all leaders should remain “on call” and prepared to act in the event of a student problem. Leaders should also have enough knowledge of the city to suggest safe activities and dining locations for students in their free time. A designated meeting time and place should always be set in advance, and students should always travel in groups.

Managing Real and Perceived Emergencies

Emergencies during programs abroad generally fall into two categories: real and perceived. A real emergency is usually defined as one that poses a genuine threat and sometimes immediate risk to, or that has already disturbed, the safety and well-being of participants. These include coups or civil disturbances, natural and man-made disasters, incarcerations, serious physical or emotional illness, accidents, physical assaults, disappearances or kidnappings, and terrorist threats or attacks.

Perceived emergencies are those which pose no significant risks to the safety and well-being of participants, but which are seen as threatening by family members in the U.S. or by others, including, at times, students and colleagues at the home institution. Perceived emergencies can arise from several causes, including sensationalized reporting of an event abroad, distortion of information provided by a participant in a communication home, or simply out of nervousness of a family member or student with little or no international experience. Such perceptions will sometimes affect family members even more strongly than a real emergency and need to be treated seriously.

The Office of International Affairs will serve as the main contact person for all family members and colleagues in the home country. If there is a need to contact parents, in either a group or individual emergency, the Office of International Affairs will communicate with them.

Notes on Managing a Crisis

NPU requires the following steps be taken (above) as part of the pre-departure process to mitigate and prepare for potential crisis situations abroad:

- All participants are enrolled in international health insurance through GeoBlue.

- All eligible participants are enrolled in the State Department STEP program.
- All participants are provided with local emergency numbers (police, ambulance, and embassy) as well as the contacts back in the U.S. (NPU, OIA, students' emergency contact info, etc.).
- Leader(s) should carry a university p-card and cash for unexpected expenses.
- Both leaders should carry a working cell phone at all times.
- Identify in advance and communicate to students during an on-site orientation meeting points to be used in case of crisis.

Specific emergency protocols for Medical, Mental Health, and General emergency situations will be provided to all leaders during training and are available in the Resources Folder. If an emergency occurs, the trip leader should record dates, times, persons contacted, actions taken, and additional phone or contact information. Please include this information in the Incident Report Form.

AFTER THE STUDY TOUR

Evaluations

OIA will send out an electronic evaluation to all students. The purpose of this evaluation is to collect feedback and assess learning outcomes for each individual program, as well as to compile data across programs. This data is used to improve and to reapprove study tours. Additionally, this data will be used to promote the study tour experience and obtain additional support and resources overtime. Program leaders will be provided with anonymous participant feedback.

Wrap-Up

After the conclusion of the study tour, leaders should:

- Process any outstanding invoices with the Business Office
- Balance program budget, per departmental guidelines
- Ensure reimbursement documents are submitted per NPU/departmental policy
- Meet with OIA to debrief the experience and review participant evaluations
- Send photos to OIA for use in future marketing materials
- Submit a blog post to the NPU website reviewing the highlights of your trip (this could also be done by a participant)
- Consider providing opportunities for your students to continue their learning and reflection. This could be a social gathering, part of your course, or off-campus activities related to the country, culture, or topic studied abroad.

Resubmit Study Tour Application

If you wish to run the same study tour again with no major changes to itinerary, leadership, or budget, you can complete the [Repeat Academic Study Tour Form](#) online by May 1.

If you wish to propose a new tour or significantly change any aspects of your tour, please submit the [New Academic Study Tour Form](#) again, by May 1.

LINKS

Recommended Study Abroad Partners and Study Tour Providers

The following are reputable Study Abroad Providers who are able to provide itineraries, housing, and more for short-term study tours. The benefits of working with a partner or provider are numerous! Study abroad providers can:

- Arrange in-country logistics such as accommodations, meals, and transportation
- Purchase group flights
- Set up tours and visits to cultural sites
- Assist with budgeting
- Provide classroom space
- Allow you to focus on teaching, while they provide logistical support
- In case of emergency, provide crisis management and support

Contact any of these providers directly for more information about their locations, services, or a quote.

- [IES Abroad](#)
- [Academic Programs International \(API\)](#)
- [Council on International Educational Exchange \(CIEE\)](#)
- [CISAbroad](#)

North Park University also has more than 30 partner universities around the world. Please refer to the list on the [NPU website](#) or contact the Office of International Affairs for more information.

Resources Folder

All resources listed on this page (and others) are compiled in an online Resource Folder and accessible [here](#). Other helpful resources may be added periodically.

- Leading Short-Term Education Abroad Programs: Know the Standards, 2nd Edition (2022)
- Budget Template
- Business Office Deposit Schedule Form & Roster
- Sample Itineraries
- Incident Report Form & Emergency Protocols
- NPU International Travel Policy
- Policy on Student Judicial Record Review