

**Bradley University Office of Education Abroad**  
**Protocols for Faculty-Led Academic Programs Abroad**

**[Jan 2023] Please note that revisions of protocols related to the ongoing impact of Covid 19 and its variants may be implemented as our Interim Programs Abroad continue to operate.**

**I. Program Structure**

Organizers of a Bradley University faculty-led academic program abroad face foreseeable risks associated with international travel and academic programs. These risks include events at the venue; incidents related to participants' health, safety, conduct, and other important issues. Program structure must maximize chances for an uninterrupted academic program and simultaneously follow best practices in terms of risk management. Accordingly, every faculty-led program abroad requires a non-teaching, fully participating, designated Program Director. That individual may be a faculty member or professional/administrative staff member with relevant expertise.

A faculty member who is authoring a new program proposal might plan to serve as Program Director, or alternately might plan to teach instead, electing to identify a different faculty member (not teaching in the program) to be designated as Program Director. Either structure will work as long as responsibilities are clearly delineated. Program Directors constitute an integral program design component, and those individuals carry significant responsibilities for risk management.

**II. Mandatory Documents: Waivers and Policy Statements Requiring Signatures**

As a condition of program enrollment, student participants must return signed copies of documents provided by the Office of Education Abroad (OEA) including:

**A. Risk and Liability Waivers**

1. Travel Terms and Conditions
2. Student Assumption of Risk

**B. Conduct Expectations: Standards of Student Conduct Abroad**

1. General and specific guidelines for student conduct expectations onsite, including norms for respectful observation of cultural norms, and norms specific to student accommodations, site visits, interactions with both group members and others, etc.
2. Interim Programs Abroad Policy on Alcohol Use and Misuse, and zero-tolerance policy regarding substance abuse.
3. Specific procedures and consequences in cases of non-compliance or violations, including criteria for a participant's removal from a program.

**C. Medical and Emergency Provision**

1. Medical Information and Medical Waiver Form, including Emergency Contacts

### III. Necessary Processes: Faculty Orientation

This orientation should address issues that at a minimum include the following:

- A. Program logistics, airport procedures, class scheduling, grades-due dates, pay date, mobile phone policies, class evaluations, and other program details.
- B. Faculty Policies for Teaching Abroad, including course planning and student work expectations, attendance policy, class meetings and contact hours, policies concerning faculty companions, and class activity guidelines.
- C. Faculty information on safety and security issues, program emergency plans, guidelines on student health and mental health issues, and case-study discussions.

### IV. Necessary Processes: Pre-Program Student Orientation

A mandatory student orientation is necessary for any international academic program to ensure that policies, practices, and travel arrangements are clearly articulated and understood in advance of the program's departure date. Students should receive an orientation package consisting of, at minimum, the following:

- A. Information about health, safety, and security abroad, including pre-trip preparation, onsite emergency contact information, procedures for both medical and public-safety emergencies, and any site-specific security special concerns.
- B. Discussion of the university Standards of Student Conduct Abroad, including the program's policy on alcohol use and misuse and substance abuse. This discussion must include the consequences of non-compliance, including criteria for an individual's removal from the program.
- C. Academic policies, including a mandatory attendance policy for all students, and academic information, including a course description, course requirements and grading criteria, and a general syllabus.
- D. Basic travel procedures, airport and luggage guidelines, and information about money, phones, communicating with home, electronics abroad and miscellanea (laptops, laundry, packing list, and other travel guidelines).
- E. Information about university procedures that may operate differently abroad including information about Title IX and reasonable accommodations in programs abroad.
- F. Program-specific guidelines or information, especially affecting student safety and security; and safety recommendations and program policies regarding independent or non-program-related activities at the venue.

**Other Necessary Purposes of the Student Orientation:** one central purpose of student orientations is to introduce students to what the faculty leader defines as **important cultural and social norms and differences**, particularly as these apply to a college-age, first-time traveler's experience abroad. Public behavioral expectations, standards regarding appropriate attire, and other norms relevant to the venue must be articulated.

## V. Emergency and Contingency Plans

Organizers of faculty-led academic programs abroad are required to demonstrate preparedness for both the more common and less common potential complications of international academic programs. Program Directors and teaching faculty therefore collaborate to develop strategies for coping with contingencies that include these core concerns:

- A. Medical situations, including medical prompt care, medical emergency, and student mental health problems.
- B. Non-medical urgent or emergency situations (for example, loss or theft of passport, money, or debit or credit cards).
- C. Crisis response: Crisis preparation begins as soon as students enroll, and the purpose of many of these protocols is to facilitate that process. We do not encourage one another to dwell on worst-case scenarios, but we all know that serious threats to group safety are a possibility in nearly all the places that Bradley students venture. Accordingly, teaching faculty as well as program directors must incorporate basic crisis management mechanisms into their preparations for the contingencies listed above. The Office of Education Abroad (OEA) will work with every Program Director to develop a crisis response plan and onsite Emergency Action Plans. The OEA can also provide recommendations for clear communication protocols.

## VI. Onsite Program Orientation

Students receive significant amounts of information in the pre-departure Orientation, but an onsite orientation is an absolute necessity. Here, Program Directors provide:

- A. Copies of the venue's Emergency Contacts Card, with instructions for contacting the Program Director (24/7) and faculty members in the event of emergency, whether that is within the hotel or elsewhere in the venue. (Also see "Emergency Action Plan").
  - B. Information about evacuation procedures, including fire drills or fire emergency, from group accommodations.
  - C. Information about safety and security, with particular attention to security issues specific to the site, venue, or environment (city, country, etc.)
  - D. Information about medical resources for non-emergency medical care, emergency medical care, and mental health concerns.
  - E. A copy, along with discussion, about the site's Emergency Action Plan, including where to go and whom to contact in the event of a public safety emergency.
  - F. Other site-specific information determined relevant by faculty and Program Directors.
- Note:* Shortly after the Onsite Orientation, send all participants electronic copies of all documents (Emergency Contacts, etc.), so that participants can download these documents to their phones.

Onsite Program Orientation Part 2: the Environs. All programs conduct an Arrival Day exercise that involves an orientation to the neighborhood and/or vicinity; nearby resources (pharmacy, shops, ATMs, restaurants, public transportation stops, and other relevant locations); an introduction to public transport wherever appropriate; information on taxis, pedestrian safety;

independent travel safety recommendations, such as avoiding unlicensed cabs, Uber, etc.; and an introduction to means by which students might inform themselves about the venue (for example, a “city walks” kiosk).

## **VII. Communication**

A basic plan for crisis response begins with clear avenues of communication. Faculty traveling with Bradley students must be able to communicate with one another and, if needed, with on-campus administrators and offices, and/or with individuals listed as student emergency contacts for program participants. To that end, all international Program Directors must carry a mobile phone that will be active and accessible from and to the country/ies to be visited for the duration of the program. This must be a 24/7 contact number.

Note: international plans are now available through most smartphone providers, or alternately, GSM non-smart mobiles can be budgeted into program costs. The OEA can also loan GSM cell phones to faculty, and/or provide information on purchasing SIM cards.

The OEA provides on-campus administrators with contact information (see VI below) for each Interim Program Abroad.

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The Office of Education Abroad can provide copies of any or all of the following:

(Section II.) Mandatory required waivers and policy statements

(Section III.) Faculty Orientation: sample documents

(Section IV.) Student Orientation: mandatory materials (mandatory in terms of type; specifics vary with program venue and term)

(Section IV.) Student Orientation: non-mandatory, suggested, and additional document types for

(Section VI.) Onsite Orientation documents, including an Emergency Contacts Card, Emergency Action Plan, Arrival Day activities, and others.

(Section VII.) Sample document “Emergency Contacts for BU Groups Abroad,” distributed for all Interim Programs Abroad.