



Procedural Guide for International Travel Courses

Drafted by the International Programs Coordinating Council

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Introductory Note

The purpose of this document is not to introduce any new policies, but to clarify and regularize existing administrative procedures pertaining to international travel courses, in consultation with the myriad of offices across the University that are involved with this process in one way or another. This Procedural Guide is intended for the use of faculty and administrators alike. This document should be considered dynamic, and will be accessible in a format that will allow for revisions and updates. A separate Teaching Guide aimed specifically at faculty will be developed later to offer solutions to the unique practical and pedagogical issues that arise when designing and teaching an international travel course.

This guide consists of two distinct parts. Part I covers the one-time process of creating and getting initial approval for a new international travel course. Part II covers the process that must be followed every time an international travel course is offered, whether that course has just received its initial approval or has already been offered one or more times in the past.

PART I

DESIGN AND APPROVAL OF NEW INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL COURSES

COURSE PLANNING / DESIGN

Topic

The first step in planning an international travel course is to determine the course topic, which could be based on a course that you currently teach (or previously taught) or on a new subject that you would like to offer for the first time. The protocol is similar to the process that you would follow when developing any other course, except that an international travel course always incorporates substantive international elements into its curriculum and includes a travel component. That travel should give students the opportunity to enhance their understanding of the course topic in the context of the firsthand perspectives to be gained in the destination country/ies.

Assuming that you have already chosen your destination, your task is to develop a course that takes advantage of the unique opportunities presented by University students being able to travel to a foreign environment and experience firsthand the language, culture, history, people, and life rhythm of a presumably new and different setting. It is also advisable that you provide students with an appropriate cultural and logistics orientation prior to departure to enable optimal learning while in the travel mode.

Course proposals must submit to the normal approval processes on the department, college and university levels. Given the inherent international dynamic of your course, and in the interest of accommodating students' curriculum requirements, consider designing your course so that it would qualify as a Cultures or an ILP course. International travel courses are also prime candidates in which to embed an LBC component.

Course Options

University faculty currently teach three types of study abroad course: 1) all-travel courses, 2) hybrid courses that combine on-campus and travel components, and 3) courses that are part of a semester- or summer multi-course program. This guide is intended primarily for those interested in developing courses that follow one of the first two models.

1) All-travel courses are taught entirely abroad and so need to consider what learning environments, materials, and assessment will be required in the destination country/ies and whether any assignments will be deferred until students return home. All-travel courses may visit a number of different locations, but can just as easily be taught in a single fixed location.

2) In hybrid courses, faculty teach an introduction to their topic on campus that usually includes orientation to the destination country/ies. The remainder of the course is completed through international travel. Final exams and course evaluations *may* be delivered and received online after departure from the destination country/ies.

3) International courses may be incorporated into existing programs, for example "Sophomore Experience Abroad (SEA)" (Fall) and the "London Program" (Spring, Summer). If you are interested in one of these programs, contact the program coordinator (Jeanie Forray [SEA], Ted South [London Program]). The coordinator will discuss your ideas and help you plan a proposal.

Scheduling

Once you have chosen a course topic and type, your next decision will be when to offer your course. Your scheduling options will be shaped by whether you want to offer an all-travel course that takes place entirely abroad (option 1 above) or wish to offer a hybrid course that combines on-campus and travel components (option 2 above). Throughout the following discussion we assume that you will design a standard 3-credit course. It may be possible to design a 1- or 2-credit course following these same guidelines, though such a split-course option might disappear.

If you are designing an all-travel course, your only real scheduling options are during the summer or winter terms. The standard length of a 3-credit all-travel course is 10-14 days, which makes it impractical for spring break. If you are considering a winter session course, think about the weather and build some flexibility into your course and travel schedule. In general, it is a good idea to maintain flexibility regarding in-country plans and prepare back-ups, given the unpredictable nature of travel (e.g. winter flight cancellations).

If you choose to adopt the hybrid course model, your best scheduling option is probably the spring semester, with the travel component occurring either during spring break or after classes end. In the latter case, students would receive an incomplete on their spring course grade until they completed the travel component. Note that all the credits for these hybrid courses must be awarded in a single semester, either fall or spring. It is possible to teach in the fall with the travel component during winter break, but remember the concerns about bad weather and tight timing.

Minimum Class Size

You will now need to decide on the number of students that you are comfortable supervising while traveling abroad. The traditional rule of thumb (and the official policy of some colleges within the University) is that each faculty member supervise no more than 10 students. Therefore, unless you are co-teaching your course, you should budget for a chaperone if your minimum number of students is going to be greater than 10. Even if your class size is 10 or less, it is suggested that you include a chaperone if your course is going to be travel-intensive with lots of moving around.

The university defines an international course chaperone as a Western New England University faculty or staff member who serves on an international course trip in a non-academic role and whose travel responsibilities include health, safety, and supervision of students during the study abroad experience.

Be aware that minimum class size is a very significant number. If you fail to register the minimum number of students, it is very likely that your course will not be allowed to run. Also note that each student will bear a higher share of the cost, the smaller the minimum class size is. You will probably want to make initial calculations of costs before you make your final determination on minimum class size. This will be discussed further in the budget section.

Third-Party Providers

Unless you will act as the general travel coordinator in addition to teaching the international travel course, you will need to work with third-party providers. Some third party providers offer specific services that you might need: examples include a travel agency for airline and hotel arrangements; a tour operator for ground transportation, tour guide, and cultural tours; an

academic program provider for subject-matter expertise (such as business briefings and factory tours); a ticket broker for tickets to high-demand events; and a host institution for academic facilities such as classrooms, cafeterias, and dormitories. As appropriate, solicit bids from several third-party providers in order to obtain the best possible deal for University students.

Other third-party providers offer a complete service that handles all international arrangements. Such providers are beyond the scope of this guide because those providers will plan and budget your trip for you. Be aware that such providers may have specific regulations that differ from University policy (e.g. restrictions on travel with minors) that you must observe if you choose to work with them. It is your responsibility to abide by all University and third-party regulations. The Office of Study Abroad Programs located in the College of Arts and Sciences can assist you in evaluating third-party providers.

BUDGET CALCULATION

Per-Person Costs

Once you have determined your destination country and the anticipated dates of travel, and have received bids from any third-party providers, you can begin to calculate the per-person cost of your trip. When calculating expenses you should consider:

- Air transportation (including travel agency fee)
- Airports transfers
- Accommodations
- Included meals
- Included events/activities
- Third-party provider fees
- Visas
- Local ground transportation
- Rental of classroom space
- Contingencies (unforeseen expenses, including changes in exchange rates)
- The University's mandatory liability insurance fee of \$550 per course

If your College has a travel course coordinator, s/he should help you plan and budget your trip. Consider contacting faculty who have conducted similar courses. You may also wish to apply for summer funds or a sabbatical to support preliminary travel to gather information on site.

Additional Costs

The University does not charge tuition in the traditional sense (i.e. fee per credit hour, presently \$500/cr.) for summer or winter travel courses as it does for on-campus courses that do not figure into a student's regular semester load. Instead every travel course (regular semester, summer, or winter) passes along to students any additional costs the University might incur, particularly faculty salaries (in the case of course overloads) and faculty travel expenses. Therefore, in order to calculate the actual cost per student you need to include any additional faculty-related costs.

Potential additional costs include:

- *Faculty/ chaperone travel expenses:* As stated above, classes should usually have one faculty member / chaperone for every 10 students, with a minimum of two for travel-intensive courses. Each faculty member or chaperone will usually incur the same per-person travel costs as each student. So take the number of faculty members / chaperones who will be travelling and multiply this number by the raw per-person cost that you calculated above to obtain the total faculty travel expenses. For example: if the per-person expenses are \$2,000 and one faculty member will be traveling with a second chaperone, then the faculty travel expenses will total \$4,000.
- *Faculty salaries:* Include this *only* if faculty will be teaching this course as an overload, not as part of their regular annual course load. (Note that one way to keep student costs down is to teach your study-abroad course as part of your regular load, if that is feasible.) Your department chair will determine whether the course will be taught as part of your regular course load or as an overload.
- *Chaperone stipends, if any:* If you will be taking non-teaching chaperones and if you intend to pay them a stipend rather than simply covering their travel expenses, include this cost.
- *Accompanying persons:* Note that while it is possible for family or friends to accompany faculty, these persons are not considered official participants in the travel course. They must pay all their own travel expenses (or reimburse the University for them) and provide their own insurance coverage; none of their expenses can be included in your budget.

It is useful to bear in mind these faculty-related costs when you calculate your minimum number of students (see above) to see if you are in the ballpark of a reasonable amount to charge each student for the trip. In general, as of summer 2011, the typical faculty-related cost per student for a two-week travel course of 10-15 students was in the \$500-600 range. This cost will drop as you raise the minimum number of students, which is good for the students' pocketbooks. However, if you set your minimum number of students too high and fail to recruit that number, the University will lose money and you will likely be forced to cancel the course.

Final Per-Student Cost

Once you have calculated the total faculty costs, divide this number by the course's minimum number of students to get the faculty-related cost per student. Add that number to the raw per-person cost to get the final cost per student. This is the actual amount the University will charge each student who takes your course.

COURSE APPROVAL

Course Approval: Academic

Once you have calculated the costs of your course you will be able to develop a detailed course schedule and draw up a syllabus. Your course will now need to go through the same approval process as any other new course in your College; this process should include a preliminary conversation with your dean.

As with any other new course, you may want to offer it first as a Special Topics course. Submit a completed Special Topics course request form to your department chair. Depending on the specific course, you may also need the approval of the Cultures Program, the General University Requirements Committee, or another committee.

Course Approval: Administrative

At the same time you will need to submit a complete budget for your course to the Controller's Office and to the Dean's Office of your College. Your budget should include a complete breakdown of your cost calculations (per-person costs, additional faculty costs, final per-student costs), the final per-student cost you have calculated, and the minimum number of students you have set for the course. Once your budget has been checked by the Controller's Office it will be sent to the Provost for final approval.

Once you received both academic and administrative approval, you can follow the standard procedure described below to actually get your course running.

PART II

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL COURSES

Part I of these guidelines described the once-only process needed to initiate a new international travel course. Part II, in contrast, describes the administrative process that is required every time an international travel course is taught, whether it has been newly approved or previously offered. This process requires the instructor to contact a variety of administrative offices at different stages in the development of the course; these are listed in rough chronological order below. Note that this listing is not a rigid schedule; there may be variations in timing depending on your College and the specific requirements of your course. Note also that some offices may need to be contacted multiple times at different stages in the process.

COLLEGE APPROVAL

You should begin to seek College approval for your travel course roughly a year before you intend to offer your course. You will need to request course approval from your dean, your department chair and any other relevant body, to include the Study Abroad Office located in the College of Arts and Sciences. Once approved, your chair will then add your course to the academic schedule in the usual manner when the time comes.

OFFICE OF THE UNIVERSITY COUNSEL (Cheryl Smith; contact Evan Bjorklund)

You will need to inform the University Counsel of the details of the course (a syllabus or travel itinerary should suffice) so that the viability of travel to the country/ies in question can be confirmed. Risk & Release Forms will then be drawn up for all registered students, faculty and chaperones to sign. These forms include health and insurance information and medical treatment authorization as well as consent and release statements. Before you depart for your trip, you will need to collect all forms and deposit them in the office of your Dean. You should also retain copies of the health and insurance portion of each form to carry with you on the trip, in case of emergency.

If the preparations for your course involve any contracts with third-party service providers, these will need to be reviewed and approved by the Office of the University Counsel before you can finalize your budget.

The University does not provide liability insurance for any persons who accompany official participants (see above) but who have no official role in the international travel course. Participant lists and related budgets must not include friends, relatives or companions (regardless of age) who do not serve in an official capacity on the trip.

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION (Bill Kelleher; contact Faith Leahy)

Send a travel itinerary to Faith Leahy so that she can verify that insurance riders are available for the country or countries you will be visiting.

Roughly one month before departure you should contact Faith again to confirm that your International Travel Form (see below) has been received and approved, and to obtain a travel insurance card.

CONTROLLER'S OFFICE

As soon as you have finalized your various expenses and determined the per-student cost of the course (and before you have actually announced your course) you will need to submit your budget to the Controller's Office and to the Dean of your College for approval. Once you have received confirmation of the per-student cost you can proceed to announce the course.

ANNOUNCEMENT AND RECRUITING

Once you have received approval from your department chair, the Controller's Office and the University Counsel, you can announce the course and begin recruiting students; this will usually be 6-9 months before the course is scheduled to run, and thus before the academic calendar for that semester has been published.

Several University offices can help announce and publicize international travel courses. The Office of Marketing and External Affairs (contact Mary Orszulak) maintains a list of upcoming travel courses and a Study Abroad webpage, and can also produce posters for your course. The Office of Student Activities (contact Erin Murphy), the Office of Learning Beyond the Classroom (Tina Flanagan), and the International Student Coordinator (Katie Clair) can also help you alert students to your course. Note that all printed promotional media relating to your course must be submitted to the Office of Marketing and External Affairs for production before they can be disseminated on campus.

STUDENT ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES (Barbara Gasperack; contact Rebecca Sargent)

You may begin to pre-register students for your course in the months before registration officially opens. The standard method is for students to make a non-refundable deposit at Student Administrative Services in order to reserve a seat in the course. (Contact Rebecca Sargent to arrange this.) The amount of the deposit varies by course, but should be at least enough to cover any expenses (e.g. non-refundable airline tickets) that will be incurred if a student suddenly drops. Once the registration period officially begins, students with paid deposits will automatically be registered in the course by SAS.

As soon as students pre-register for the course, make sure that those students (as well as any accompanying faculty or staff members) who do not yet have passports immediately begin the passport application process. All students must be registered in order to participate in the course.

PROCUREMENT OFFICE (Dan DiGloria; contact Pat Lamere)

Once any contracts have been approved by the University Counsel you will need to work with the Procurement Office to arrange payment to the service providers you will be using on your trip. Get invoices from your providers and take them to Pat Lamere in Procurement, who will guide you through the paperwork.

Once student registration is complete you will need to submit an International Travel Form to the Procurement Office. (This form is available online through Administrative Services. See the Appendix.) Once this form has been approved by Procurement it will automatically be forwarded to the offices of the Vice President for Finance, the Bursar and the Controller.

By far the simplest way to pay expenses while traveling is with a University credit card (pro-card). If you already have a pro-card, let Dan DiGloria know your travel dates as soon as possible so he can clear your card for out-of-country charges. If you do yet not have a pro-card, Dan can guide you through the process of getting one. Once you have returned from your trip you will need to submit all your expense receipts to Dan as well; attach these to the monthly expense statement you will receive from Procurement. If travel costs for any non-official members, such as family or friends, are included in any University payments, the faculty member in question must also make arrangements through Pat to reimburse the University.

BURSAR'S OFFICE (Cheryl Murphy; contact Sandy Brault)

As soon as course registration is complete you will need to submit your student roster along with the per-student charge for the course to the Bursar's Office. This will enable the students in your course to be correctly billed.

HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICE (Assistant Vice President for Human Resources)

Send the Human Resources Office a course itinerary and a list of all faculty / chaperones who will be travelling on the course, to ensure that all participating faculty and staff have an understanding of appropriate insurance coverage.

FINAL NOTIFICATION

Immediately before departure, prepare detailed travel information for all participating students, faculty and chaperones, including cell phone numbers and other emergency contact information. Check the U. S. Department Current Travel Warnings to ensure that the federal government has not listed any travel restrictions for your destination country. Ensure via Student Administrative Services that each participant is in good standing. Email this list to the Assistant to the Vice President for Finance and Administration (Faith Leahy), the Assistant to the General Counsel (Evan Bjorklund), the Vice President of Student Affairs (Jeanne Hart-Steffes), the Director of Public Safety (Adam Woodrow) and the Procurement Manager (Dan DiGloria).

The Office of Public Safety (which maintains a 24-hour switchboard) will serve as the primary contact point in case of any emergency; be sure that students and their families are aware of this.

APPENDIX: SAMPLE FORMS

Western New England University
Procurement Services

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL FORM

The purpose of this form is to ensure that necessary information is provided to our insurance company for international travel.

Please attach this form to the purchase order requisition and forward it to Procurement Services.

NOTE: No requisition for international travel will be processed without this form being completed.

Foreign Travel Destination:

Department: _____ Supervisor: _____

Date of Departure: _____ Date of Return: _____

Purpose of Trip:

Sponsored by:

Airline: _____ Number of tickets to be purchased: _____

Requisition Number: _____ Account Number: _____

Names of Individuals Traveling and Relationship to University:

(Circle one)

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

Name: _____ Faculty/Employee/Student/Other

*

* If "Other" please specify:

Note: If you have additional names, please attach a list.

To be completed by Procurement Services

Procurement Services Approval: _____ Purchase Order No:

- Copy to F. Leahy on: _____ Copy to Cheryl Smith on: _____
 Copy to Controller's Office on: _____

Travel Course Notification Form

- 1. Course Title and Number: _____
- 2. Circle one: Existing Course New Course
- 3. Course Dates: _____
- 4. Signatures:

Faculty Member(s) Date

Department Chair Date

Dean Date

Study Abroad Office Date

Provost Date

Controller (Budget Review and Approval) Date

Assistant to Vice President (Insurance) Date

General Counsel (Liability)

Date

Marketing and External Affairs (Promotion)

Date

Student Administrative Services (Registration)

Date

Procurement Office (Contract Payments, if necessary)

Date

Human Resources Office (Course Itinerary)

Date

Required: 1) International Travel Form (see above); and 2) Liability Waivers (see general counsel)

Please return the original to your college's dean's office.