



# HUNTER FACULTY LED PROGRAM GUIDE



Office of Education Abroad  
HUNTER COLLEGE

## **Developing a Faculty-led Program**

What is a Faculty-led Study Abroad Program?

A faculty-led study abroad program is one that:

- is taught outside the United States
- involves a faculty member as instructor and/or on-site coordinator
- involves a group of students going to the same location for the same time period
- allows students to earn credit taken for a grade, listed on their transcript, and included in their GPA – similar to on-campus courses
- is supported by a particular college/academic department on campus in conjunction with Education Abroad

Many students at Hunter travel abroad through faculty-led programs either at Hunter or through other CUNY study abroad offices. Generally, these occur during the winter session or summer. These programs offer students the opportunity to earn credit toward their degree with the additional comfort and confidence that comes from knowing their faculty leader. Faculty leaders are a strong draw for those who aren't experienced travelers. These programs can provide opportunities for students who wouldn't otherwise be able to study abroad, and for others, it can serve as a launching point for further international studies.

## **Getting Started**

Education Abroad appreciates your interest in developing a faculty-led study abroad program, and we look forward to assisting you with what will surely be a greatly rewarding opportunity for you and your students.

There is a lot of work involved in developing and conducting a successful faculty-led study abroad program. The good news is you don't have to do it alone. The Education Abroad office is here to partner with you and make your program a reality. Below are some guidelines and resources for you to use as you develop your program.

As you are thinking about when you might want to lead your program abroad, keep in mind that the development process starts well in advance of actually going abroad. To learn more about things to consider and what is involved, schedule a meeting with Giovanna Cucciniello, Director of Education Abroad.

Further, in this section you will also be able to learn about the program proposal process and timeline. Keep in mind, well-developed faculty-led programs will require about a year of advance planning, and your approval by CUNY's Office of Academic Affairs and Office of Environmental, Health, Safety and Risk Management. Faculty must also submit the CUNY International Group Trip Proposal Form to your College Provost and to Central Office.

## Being a Faculty Leader

Leading a faculty-led program abroad is a full-time commitment for the duration of the program. While it is similar in some ways to teaching a course here on campus, in other ways it is very different and much more demanding. It is not an experience for the faint of heart, but can be very rewarding professionally and, for most students, will be the one of the most memorable parts of their experience.

Faculty leaders wear many hats including instructor, logistical coordinator, advisor/counselor (both academic and personal), and at times, disciplinarian and crisis manager. It's important that faculty leaders feel comfortable in these roles when considering leading a study abroad program.

Another important responsibility of a faculty leader is participating in program recruitment efforts. Faculty leaders are the biggest draw for students and for those willing to spend time speaking with students at the Study Abroad Fair, in classes, and any other ways, makes big a difference in enrollments.

Rest assured, for those up to the task of taking on these responsibilities, Ed Abroad is here to help. In addition to providing support through each step of the way, there is also a **Faculty Leader Orientation to share information, discuss campus policy and procedures, and work through example scenarios so that faculty feel prepared to lead their group abroad.**

## Program Design Considerations

When thinking about designing a program, there is a lot to consider. There are many factors that differ from designing a course on-campus. This list will break down some of the things you'll want to think about into some general categories. This list isn't comprehensive, given that there are a variety of destinations, academic foci, learning objectives, and your preferences may change how you approach your design, but it's a good place to start.

## The Course

The course need not, but may, be modeled after a course you normally teach on campus. Adapting a syllabus you already have makes the process much easier, especially since the syllabus is already approved and you know the content well.

Take advantage of the location – A well-designed program will combine academic learning with cross-cultural experience and be designed to make extensive use of the physical, human, and cultural resources of the host environment. Field trips, site visits, and other cultural activities integrated into the course material should provide an in-depth view of the host country in order to enhance the classroom experience.

Credits awarded in an overseas setting are based on the same formula used for regular classes. Credit requirements can include guest lectures and documented, organized experiential activities that support the class work (e.g. excursions, field trips, museum visits, as well as organized language lab or computer lab activities). Time traveling to and from experiential activities is not included in this calculation, unless you are able to make a case for lectures on a chartered bus. But keep in mind that the concept of learning by osmosis (living in the overseas location for a period of time) is not a sufficient basis for awarding credit.

The academic rigor of the program must meet Hunter standards. This is an important consideration, and one that the Education Abroad Office takes seriously. A common criticism levied against study abroad programs is that they lack academic rigor, and are nothing more than informative tours to international locations. We *know* that this is not the case, and together with faculty like you we work hard to deliver high quality, academically rigorous study abroad programs.

### **Program Providers**

Program Providers are companies or organizations that specialized in providing customized, faculty-led program support. They arrange the various components and details of a program. They work closely with you, as well as coordinate with the Education Abroad Office to design a program that meets your objectives and preferences, while also conforming to Hunter and CUNY's regulations and guidelines.

There are many custom faculty-led program providers, and different companies have different approaches, areas of expertise, pricing models, and geographic limitations. Depending on your program, the Education Abroad office can make recommendations to best suit your goals and objectives.

For first-time faculty leaders, and especially for faculty leaders without a program assistant, the use of a program provider is strongly encouraged. Such organizations allow faculty leaders to focus on the academic components of their program while they organize housing, classroom space, and any excursions or activities you may request.

While working with providers simplifies the program development process immensely, it does come at a cost. This is important to consider, as it may necessitate a larger group size, or a higher per student cost. But, the cost incurred from a provider easily pays for itself through the delivery of a seamless, high quality program.

### **Accommodations**

Accommodation varies widely among faculty-led programs, with certain types lending themselves more to certain program models. Accommodation in hotels is most convenient for faculty-led programs, with double-occupancy rooms being the norm.

For programs that are longer, and focused on a specific city or area, certain long-stay student housing options may be a good option.

Programs that move around a lot can be more expensive, especially as hotels are the best housing option in this model, and can be pricier than options like hostels, or long-stay student residences.

If you are working with a program provider, the company can often provide housing or recommend a housing provider. This often proves to be simpler and more economical, and much easier, than you making arrangements on your own.

For security and risk management purposes, faculty members are encouraged to stay in the same housing provided for participants.

### **Meals**

Programs are not required to provide meals, however, a few group meals, such as a welcome and farewell dinner can help build cohesiveness in your program. Also, keep in mind that a group meal can

be a more convenient and timely solution, as opposed to releasing the students to do their own thing. This is an important consideration when planning excursions.

Breakfast isn't always included in the cost of a hotel, but when evaluating hotel options, you may want to give preference to those that do include it. Not only does making use of lodging that includes some or all meals help to reduce the overall program cost, it also provides a daily meeting to check in with the students and prepare for the day's schedule.

If you opt not to include some or all meals, or are unable to arrange this, be sure you know how/where students will get their meals. Accurate cost estimates for student expenses in this area will also be essential to help students plan. And, they will look to you for guidance on where to eat, especially when arriving in a new location.

### **Excursions**

Excursions and field trips are an integral part of a faculty-led program. These activities, coupled with your academic content, are the core substance of the program. They are the opportunity for first-person, experiential learning. The students will want to know what will take place during the program, and a well-written and detailed description of the excursions and activities will go a long way in getting students interested.

Costs for excursions will be budgeted into the program, so it will be important to do some research on transportation, lodging, and admissions costs related to excursions while you are working on the overall proposal. The more detail you provide early in the process, the faster things will go in the planning phase.

Excursions should be relevant to the purpose of the program, take advantage of the locale, and be realistic in terms of time, distance, and cost. And, consider the overall itinerary and travel schedule. You want to find a balance between including a lot, and not overwhelming yourself and the students.

You will also want to take into account whether alternate activities would be available if a participant has mobility challenges. You should also make sure there is information available to applicants up-front to let them know the physical requirements of the program and any excursions.

### **Visas and permits**

Entry requirements and visas are an important consideration, especially when looking to many non-traditional destinations. In addition to country-specific requirements, the citizenship of students can dictate the process necessary to enter, or sometimes even just to transit. The earlier you start and the more you communicate with the Education Abroad office during the development process, the easier it will be to plan for visas and entry requirements.

Additionally, some countries require special permits for activities like field research, organized tours to certain locations, and/or filming. This is not a comprehensive list, and as the proposing faculty member, the responsibility for identifying the restrictions or requirements on these types of activities rests with you.

## Some considerations

In an effort to help with recruitment efforts, and in order to maintain a diverse range of program options for students, the Education Abroad office recommends you consider the following tips as you design your new program:

***New programs should complement, rather than compete with, existing Hunter or other CUNY programs.*** You may want to consider working with a faculty member from another discipline to co-offer a program. These joint programs can provide a very unique and attractive experience to students.

Consider non-traditional destinations. Programs to Western Europe are great, but also consider locales such as South America, Southeast Asia, Africa, and even part of Eastern Europe. These destinations can offer a lot, and may (though not always) be more cost-effective than Western Europe.

To ensure better rates of participation and greater accessibility program costs should be kept as low as possible. Consider that for many programs, especially in the summer, students are incurring a lost-opportunity cost because they won't be working while they are abroad. If offered in Summer I students have the opportunity to return to campus and take a course in Summer II session (and viceversa).

Students need to enroll in a minimum of 6 credit hours during the summer in order to maintain eligibility for financial aid. Students can meet this requirement by pairing an on-campus course with a 3-credit study abroad program. But, those programs that offer students 6 credits are attractive by virtue of already meeting that minimum. Generally speaking, students find a 6-credit option to be the most cost-effective.

Carefully consider your program curriculum. Students participating in study abroad programs are usually looking to fulfill major/minor/general education requirements. The more you can align your course with these core requirements, the more students will be interested in signing up for your program.

Your program should be designed with student safety in mind and in such a way that you feel you will be able to adequately ensure the safety and security of your group of students. Traveling to countries on the U.S. Department of State (DOS) Travel Warning List is not allowed.

## Submit a Faculty-led Program Proposal

Preparing to Submit

Moving your idea from your notes and conversations into an actual proposal is where the Education Abroad office can be a valuable partner. If you haven't already, it is important to contact the office and begin discussing your program idea with the director. That dialogue will help give shape and structure to your idea. Topics like program size, working with a provider, cross-listing your course, and marketing and promotion will get the ball rolling. In that discussion you and the director will also review the timeline for submitting your proposal.

A program proposal consists of four required components:

A program proposal form, with the necessary signatures (submitted online)

A detailed itinerary and/or course syllabus

A program budget

The detailed itinerary and course syllabus are closely connected, as the structure of the program exists within those two pieces. If you're adapting an existing course then you'll already have a syllabus to guide the development of your itinerary. Otherwise, if you're starting from scratch, consider developing these in parallel, as one will surely inform the other.

The program budget is often the trickiest to develop. As this is just a draft, don't stress too much about making the actual costs and numbers perfect, but rather focusing on obtaining reliable quotes and price estimates for the different components of your program. The Education Abroad office will be relying on you to provide these initial quotes, as the decisions about what elements to include, and how to evaluate their respective costs, ultimately lies with you.

At any point in the process, you can reach out to the Director of Education Abroad for input, guidance or feedback. While you are the engine driving the development of the program, you are not in it alone. And, once you have all of these pieces assembled, you are ready to submit.

### **Proposal Materials (separate packet/online submission preferable)**

#### **Faculty-led Program Proposals with Instructions**

To submit, you can either send a physical copy by campus mail, e-mail it to

New programs will need all approvals –first.

Repeat programs will be approved and being re-proposed for the following year's application cycle do not need full formal approval for the following two years. Department approval will be sufficient, and the program will go up for the full formal approval process after those two years to ensure the program is still running well and viable.

**Please note that if your program is a repeat submission from a previous year you will still need to update your itinerary to reflect new dates, as well as modify your budget to reflect changes in costs or currency fluctuations.**

#### **Proposal Timeline**

##### **Winter Program Proposal Timeline**

April 15	All Proposals due to Education Abroad office
Late April	Hunter Education Abroad and Provost review Proposals; any changes will be noted and returned to faculty.
Early May	Programs will be submitted to CUNY OGC
Mid-Late May	Faculty meet with the Education Abroad office to go over details, program development and implementation timeline, and next steps.
End of August/start of semester	Program information is released and applications open.

##### **Summer Program Proposal Timeline**

November 1	All Proposals due to Education Abroad office
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Mid-November Hunter Education Abroad and Provost review Proposals; any changes will be noted and returned to faculty.

Late November Proposals will be submitted to CUNY OGC

Early December Faculty meet with the Education Abroad office to go over details, program development and implementation timeline, and next steps.

Late December Program information is released and applications open.