



Learning Abroad Center

Custom Programs Procedures & Responsibilities

Learning Abroad Center Contacts

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Overview

The Learning Abroad Center provides support to faculty members and departments who wish to organize study abroad programs for their students. Through the custom program option, the Learning Abroad Center provides support services essential to study abroad programs while allowing faculty the freedom to design their own programs.

What is the Learning Abroad Center?

The Learning Abroad Center is the primary undergraduate and graduate international opportunity unit within the Office of International Programs (OIP), under the office of the Executive Vice President and Provost. The Learning Abroad Center is the central University office for the planning, development, and administration of many University of Minnesota learning abroad programs.

Additionally, among its many programming, advising, and administrative services in support of experiences abroad, the Learning Abroad Center works with academic departments to plan, develop, and implement study abroad programs for University of Minnesota students. Some programs are also open to students from outside of the University of Minnesota.

What is a Custom Study Abroad Program?

A custom study abroad program is a faculty/department sponsored study abroad program. The department assumes responsibilities for all academic, on site, and travel-related arrangements. For a standard fee, the Learning Abroad Center can provide the services detailed below:

Learning Abroad Center Services for Custom Programs

- Provide workshops at least twice a year that provide faculty with training on program design, accessing international resources, budget planning, U of M learning abroad policies and procedures, student conduct issues, risk and liability management and other fundamentals of learning abroad program leadership. Attendance at one workshop is mandatory prior to the program.
- Provide faculty with a comprehensive handbook that addresses all of the above and includes more detailed information related to program planning and implementation, learning abroad administration procedures, student conduct, and other learning abroad issues.
- **Program Proposal Consultation:** The Learning Abroad Center is available to meet with interested departments to discuss program proposals and services.
- **Letter of Understanding:** The Learning Abroad Center will draw up a *Letter of Understanding*, which the Learning Abroad Center, faculty member, and department/college will review and sign. This contract will specifically outline the administrative tasks and financial arrangements to be undertaken by both the Learning Abroad Center and the faculty/department.
- **Pre-departure Information:** The Learning Abroad Center provides packets of standard information and student forms that explain basic responsibilities and precautions involved in studying overseas. This includes a release and waiver form, health information form, application, information on overseas medical insurance, advice on financial aid, safety information, program evaluation, and a list of key resource offices which can help students prepare for their overseas experience. Students obtain their application packets from the LAC web site.
- **Registration Services and Credit:** The Learning Abroad Center will provide course registration numbers for the courses offered on the program. Credit and course information is supplied by the faculty/department.
- **Health Insurance:** Students participating on University of Minnesota study abroad programs, including custom programs, are required to have international health insurance for the period they are overseas. The Learning Abroad Center provides all students with health insurance through Cultural Insurance Services International. The cost is typically included in the program fee.
- **Financial Aid:** The Learning Abroad Center will work with the department/faculty member to prepare a cost estimate sheet for students seeking financial aid. The Learning Abroad Center will advise students on financial aid and process the appropriate paperwork.
- **Program Fee Payment:** The Learning Abroad Center bills students for the program deposit and later for the balance of the program fee via the student billing system. These funds will be deposited into departmental CUFS accounts. The program fee is determined by the department.
- **Pre-departure Meeting:** A Learning Abroad Center staff member will meet with the participants and faculty leader to discuss cultural adjustments, safety, international health insurance, course

registration and billing procedures. Please note that the Learning Abroad Center cannot begin any activity related to a custom program until a signed Letter of Understanding is on file in the Learning Abroad Center.

- **Resources:** The Learning Abroad Center staff can serve as a resource to the faculty leader on pedagogy, travel advisories, cultural information, program promotion, pre-departure preparation and overseas arrangements.
- **Evaluations:** The Learning Abroad Center provides online student evaluations for all custom programs. These are to be completed by the students at the end of the study abroad program. Instructions for completing the evaluation are sent out by the Learning Abroad Center. Summaries are provided to the instructor.
- **The Learning Abroad Center Custom Program Fee:** In return for the above listed services, the Learning Abroad Center charges the faculty/department an administrative fee of \$200 per student enrolled on the program.

Faculty Leader & Department Responsibilities

- **Custom Program Proposals:** Faculty leaders must submit a program proposal that should include:
 - » Goals and objectives of the program
 - » Preliminary overseas arrangements and contacts, if any
 - » Duration and general itinerary
 - » Tentative courses and credit to be offered
 - » Name of the faculty leader
 - » Program dates
 - » Location
 - » Audience and amount of interest anticipated
 - » Preliminary promotion plans
 - » Tentative program price, if known, or what costs the program price would need to cover
 - » Pre-departure course plans, if applicable
- **Course Information and Credit:** The faculty/department is responsible for establishing the course designator, course number, and number of credits for the course(s). (See the *Custom Program Information Form*.)
- **Custom Program Fee:** The faculty/department is responsible for setting the student program fee, which covers all on-site expenses, including educational expenses. The program fee must be at least the cost of tuition. Program fees generally *include*:
 - » Student housing and meals (usually one or two meals per day are provided).
 - » Ground transportation, upon arrival, to the program site.
 - » Faculty leader expenses, such as housing, meals, and international travel.

- » Administrative costs the faculty department incur while planning and conducting the program. It is assumed the department is absorbing the salary of the faculty leader, or if the program is an overload, the faculty salary and fringe is built into the program fee.
- » International health insurance while studying abroad.

Study Abroad program fees generally *do not include*:

- » International airfare.
 - » Cost of obtaining passport and visa, if applicable.
 - » Texts and materials.
 - » Additional meals and miscellaneous expenses such as toiletries, camera, film, and personal entertainment.
- **Finances:** Programs must have the financial support of the department chair. If the University (e.g., the Learning Abroad Center, the department, or Central Administration) cancels the program, the Learning Abroad Center will not receive any portion of the administrative fee. However, the department assumes responsibility for any and all debts or expenditures it has made on behalf of the program. The Learning Abroad Center policy stipulates that if a study abroad program is cancelled by the University (e.g., due to safety or liability issues), all fees collected, including the application fee and any non-refundable deposits, will be refunded to the students.
 - **Promotion:** The promotion of the program is the responsibility of the faculty department. The Learning Abroad Center is available to review promotional materials prior to their distribution and will include the program in their catalog and on their web site.
 - **Application Review and Acceptance:** The faculty leader is responsible for the review of applications and for accepting students on the program.
 - **Pre-departure Orientation:** The faculty leader is responsible for arranging and leading an orientation for participants.
 - **Overseas Arrangements:** All overseas arrangements are the responsibility of the faculty/department.
 - **Grades:** The faculty leader will post grades as instructed by the Office of the Registrar. It is recommended that the following statement be included on student transcripts:

MEMO: TRANSCRIPT FOR (term, year) REFLECTS COURSEWORK COMPLETED IN (name of program), IN (name of country), OFFERED BY (name of department or college) AND LEARNING ABROAD CENTER, UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA.
 - **Health and Safety:** The faculty department must be aware of, and follow the NAFSA: Association of International Educators Health and Safety Guidelines. See the *Learning Abroad Center Student Handbook*.

Learning Abroad Center

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