



International Programs Office

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STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM SITE VISITS

Site visits are invaluable components of program evaluation. Almost nothing substitutes for observing the program in action and speaking with faculty, students and administrators about the challenges they face and the rewards they reap. International Programs and the International Programs Committee (of Faculty Council) seriously consider faculty feedback in evaluating new program proposals and in seeking to strengthen current relationships. IPO may be able to defray costs site visits with prior approval and only upon receipt of a written report.

Study abroad programs must complement and relate to the Occidental curriculum, not necessarily duplicate or add an entirely unrelated area. *Quality of the teaching and learning experience in a cross-cultural setting is the top consideration*, particularly since approved programs bear full college credit, count in GPA calculations and cost students full Occidental tuition.

Some considerations in program evaluation:

Teaching & Learning

Who are the teaching faculty? What is their training? Is there an effective mix of local faculty & other expertise?

How are faculty selected and compensated and does this impact quality?

What are the teaching methodologies incorporated in the classroom, lab, field? Is there variety? Are they effective?

How much "contact time" is there between students and faculty?

Are course readings, assignments and assessment methods rigorous, appropriate, fair?

Are there opportunities for experiential learning in the local cultural context/community? How is experiential learning guided & measured?

If field trips or excursions are part of the credit bearing program, what are the intended learning objectives for students?

Are facilities adequate? Library? Computers? Labs? Practice rooms?

What other academic support, advising or tutoring resources are available?

Are classes taught in the local language? What is the role of language in the overall learning experience?

Independent field work, research, creative work

Who supervises the projects? How are they designed and evaluated? Are there example projects to review and perhaps bring back to Oxy?

Administration

Is the on-site administrative staff attentive? Organized? Effective? Accessible to students? Prompt? Can they articulate their goals for relationships with home campuses?

Culture & Language

To what extent is understanding the cultural context within which a program operates an integral part of the learning objectives? Are language learning and cross-cultural interaction integral parts of the learning objectives?

What opportunities are provided for learning and using the language, for connecting with the community?

To what extent do students interact with local people, students, faculty?

Can students themselves identify ways in which their language & cross-cultural skills have been impacted by the program? "How's your French? Spanish? Chinese? Etc?"

Do students recognize in themselves attitude change due to their experiences?

Housing & Food

Is it adequate by local standards? By students'? How do the students rate their housing and meals, considering local constraints?

Are there opportunities for living with local student roommates or home stays? How are host families and roommates selected? Compensated?

Health & Safety

What on-site conditions compromise health and safety of participants? What program design elements address them to ensure safety and maintain the essential academic experience? How does the program prepare students to understand and manage the risks? How does the staff ensure compliance with rules, regulations intended to promote health and safety?

Are students physically and mentally healthy? What happens when they get sick? What have been their experiences getting assistance from program staff and local medical practitioners?

If the program is located in a site that is remote, has health risks (e.g. high rates of HIV infection, malaria, etc.) or cultural barriers to care (i.e. mental health) how does the program manage this?

Other issues to raise with students

Was orientation adequate? Why or why not?

What is the most important change that would improve this program?

Would you recommend that your school continue to send students on this program?

How will this experience impact your personal, academic or professional plans?

Thank you for your interest, time and expertise!