

# Study Away Program Proposal Guidelines

The Study Away Committee is responsible for working with the administration and academic departments to develop and maintain study away programs. It shall also review affiliated and student exchange programs. In addition, it shall report and make recommendations to the faculty on the **availability, affordability, and academic quality of the University's study away programs.**

Proposals for faculty-led study away programs will be submitted to the Rinker Center for Study Away and International Education (hereafter 'Rinker Center') and the Study Away Committee. Proposal forms and requirements for proposal submission are available on the Rinker Center website. Proposals for MayX programs are due at the start of the Fall semester of the year before the proposed MayX program, and Fall/Spring (semester) proposals are due at the start of Fall semester of the academic year before the proposed semester program. Faculty members are required to submit a proposal every time they wish to run a study away program whether that program was previously approved by the faculty or not.

The Study Away Committee evaluates all new program proposals. The Study Away Committee will also evaluate previously approved programs whenever they have been substantially changed from the originally approved program (e.g., a change in travel provider, a significant change in academic design, itinerary or locations visited), if it has been five or more years since the initial approval, or if travel conditions where the program is proposed to take place have changed significantly (e.g., a global pandemic, heightened travel advisory level). Other criteria for full committee evaluation would be that the budget has increased significantly (beyond nominal increases due to inflation or currency fluctuations), that student evaluations from previous iterations have identified significant issues, or that the relevant Department Chair(s) have expressed concerns regarding the program.

To provide faculty with clearer guidance regarding a variety of issues relating to the creation, planning, and operation of study away programs, the Study Away Committee makes the following recommendations to be applied in its oversight of Furman's travel programs. All Study Away program proposals should adhere to the following guidelines:

## 1. Program Development Timeline

Faculty considering running a travel study program will notify the Director for Study Away and International Education of their intentions **at least one and a half years prior to their expected departure date** so that directors and the Study Away Office have ample opportunity to work together to develop the programs.

## 2. Cost of Programs

Semester faculty-led programs should not exceed \$22,000 per student. MayX program costs should be kept as low as possible, to ensure greater accessibility and participation. The Study Away Committee strongly recommends that MayX program directors work with the Study Away Office to limit their expenses to \$7,000 (about a fourth of the cost of a semester program). The committee reserves the right not to approve MayX programs that unnecessarily exceed \$7,000.

## 3. Costs of Travel to Departure Points

Semester students will be billed separately for round trip airfare or will purchase airfare on their own. MayX programs usually include in the program cost round trip airfare from a designated

departure airport. If a program is meeting on-campus through the departure day, the faculty member needs to make arrangements to transport students to the airport. Otherwise, students are responsible for expenses associated with getting themselves to the designated departure airport.

#### **4. Number of Student Participants**

The Study Away Committee recommends a course cap of 13 students per faculty member for MayX travel study programs. Thus, a total of 26 students is recommended as the maximum number for two faculty members leading a study away program. This is approximately the same average Furman maintains for on-campus courses. Semester programs typically require a minimum of 10 students, and the maximum number is typically 22.

#### **5. Student Accommodations**

Furman is committed to providing individuals with access to all University programs, activities, and facilities. Students and employees with a diagnosed disability may be entitled to reasonable academic, housing and/or workplace accommodations under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or change in the academic atmosphere, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that provides equal access to an educational program, allows someone to perform job functions or otherwise provides equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the educational environment or workplace.

Faculty may not discriminate against a student with perceived, visible or known disabilities during the study away application process. Faculty will be required to provide information about the destination and its demands for all students, and students can work with their health professionals to make appropriate decisions about participation and accommodations.

#### **6. Travel Within MayX Stipulated Dates**

MayX Study Away programs must be conducted within the stipulated MayX calendar dates. In rare cases, faculty directors may obtain permission from the Rinker Center for programs to be allowed to travel one day before or after the stipulated MayX dates. However, no coursework should commence before or extend beyond the stipulated dates.

#### **7. Students on Academic Probation Participating in Study Away**

Program directors, in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs and the Rinker Center, will determine whether students on academic probation can participate in their respective study away programs. Generally, students on academic probation may not study away.

#### **8. Participation of Guests (Family, Friends, etc.)**

Faculty are permitted to take family members such as their spouse and/or children abroad with them. However, there must be an understanding that family members cannot disrupt the academic quality or momentum of the program. Family and guests over 18 years of age must complete all necessary paperwork and pass a background check, and program funds may not be used directly or indirectly to cover any associated costs of accompanying the faculty program director. Family and guests must pay separately for all added costs to the programs, including airfare, meals and participatory fees such as museum entrances, performances, etc. The travel agent must create packages specifically for this purpose that is separate from the program

budget and is not paid using Furman funds. Furman University reserves the right to prohibit particular guests in situations it determines might be a distraction to the program. Furthermore, the University is in no way responsible for accompanying family members or guests while abroad. Note, however, that Furman's international travel insurance policy extends to spouses and dependents.

## **9. MayX Stipend**

The current MayX stipend is as follows:

- Program directors each receive a stipend of \$3,162.50; additionally, each program will receive a \$1,500 program administrative stipend.

## **10. Diversity of Programs**

Faculty should think about diversity of location and topic by considering less traditional sites and academic focus. The Rinker Center can provide recommendations for reputable on-site academic organizations that will design high impact programs for universities in virtually any country in the world.

## **11. Diversity of Participants**

Program directors should make an effort to recruit a diverse group of students and should consider a variety of factors outside of the student GPA, declared major, and age in order to assemble a group of participants who can lend their collective perspectives and experiences to the program.

## **12. Alcohol Policy**

Alcohol for students is not an allowable expense. Depending on the laws in the host country, students may purchase alcohol on their own with a meal. Wine/beer tastings, when part of an activity related to the topic of the course/program, may be permitted on a limited basis. Prior approval must be sought from the Rinker Center to use program funds to pay for alcohol.

Although alcohol misuse may not carry the same legal penalties as the use of illegal drugs, it can create dire circumstances for your program and the safety of your students. Since there may be no minimum or a lower drinking age in your host country, the customs regarding alcohol use may be very different from those in the U.S. Alcohol abuse is planned, systematic misuse of alcohol. Alcohol misuse is defined as any use that is harmful or potentially harmful to oneself or to others. Alcohol misuse is present when the effects of alcohol consumption result in: missing any scheduled event, becoming ill, disrespecting of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, engaging in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals, becoming so intoxicated that he/she cannot walk unassisted, engaging in destructive behavior toward property, not abiding by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying, engaging in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the program leader(s), or the in country host(s), engaging in behavior that causes his/her companions concern for the safety of the individual or the group, encouraging or ignoring a fellow student who is misusing or abusing alcohol, transporting significant quantities of alcohol with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group.

Report alcohol misuse to Furman and document incidents. Students with conduct violations occurring abroad will be held accountable by Furman since they are ambassadors of the university.

### **13. Travel Providers**

Upon request, the Rinker Center will take on a liaison role between faculty members and travel providers to handle the negotiations and program details on the front end or to develop programs in new sites or focusing on new topics. As stated earlier, faculty directors should initiate conversations one and a half years in advance so that actual budgets can be in place by the time programs are advertised in the fall. This is particularly pertinent to MayX programs. Semester-length study away program directors should plan to partner with an approved travel provider or suggest one to the Rinker Center for approval and follow the same timeline.

### **14. Internet & Phones**

As an essential part of risk management program directors should have a plan for communication with all participants, to ensure communication during an emergency situation. Internet calling, calling cards and cell phones can be affordable or expensive depending on program destination. Faculty are responsible for researching their communication method and budgeting for it accordingly.

### **15. Academic Content (High Impact Activities, Reflection, etc.)**

Provide a rationale for the proposed program which explains how it contributes to the department or general university curriculum. The site(s) must relate to the academic content and education goals of the program and the associated course(s). Major student learning objectives for this program must be identified and should demonstrate ample opportunity for immersion in the host community, authentic local experiences, student self-discovery, student-faculty interaction, active and collaborative learning, and reflection via various assignments undertaken as part of the program.

High impact practices will have some of the following characteristics:

- Requires considerable length of time
- Requires considerable effort/dedication
- Fosters the development of relationships with faculty member, staff member, mentor or supervisor, fosters communication about meaningful topics
- Fosters the development of relationships with peers,
- Fosters communication about meaningful topics
- Requires collaboration with people who have diverse ideas, backgrounds, and experiences
- Involves receiving frequent and substantive feedback
- Fosters reflection about values, beliefs, and future plans
- Requires the application, integration, synthesis of knowledge to solve a novel problem or apply knowledge in a different setting
- Involves public demonstration of learning