

# Study Abroad Faculty Leader Handbook

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION AND STUDY AWAY

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## Congratulations on your selection as an Academic Travel Seminar Leader!

The Center for International Education and Study Away (CIESA) is looking forward to collaborating with you throughout the coming year as you prepare for and lead your Academic Travel Seminar.

This handbook provides an overview of what to expect over the next year. It outlines your responsibilities as a Travel Seminar leader, the support and resources available to you, CIESA’s role in the process, and key Academic Travel Seminar policies.

### The Three Pillars of Academic Travel Seminars

Planning and leading an Academic Travel Seminar is a year-long process with ongoing responsibilities designed to support its three core pillars: Academic, Cultural, and Logistical.

As the faculty leader, your primary role is to shape the academic content. CIESA and the in-country program partner focus on logistics, ensuring they align with and support both academic and cultural goals. Cultural engagement is a shared responsibility and should always enhance the academic experience.

The chart below outlines how these responsibilities are distributed:

Faculty Responsibilities	Shared Responsibilities	CIESA Responsibilities
Prepare RFP form	Identify and select partners	Send RFP forms to selected partners
Review the online brochure for your specific program, and provide content		Create and maintain online brochure for each program
Recruit students to participate your specific program	Attend study abroad fair	Advise interested students
	Meet with partner regarding itinerary and logistics	
Create curriculum and syllabus	Ensure that the class meetings and travel component meet contact hour minimums	
Pay attention to applications for your specific program in the Study Abroad application system		Manage applications for all programs in the Study Abroad application system
Be familiar with the basic Study Abroad eligibility requirements		Make acceptance decisions based on eligibility requirements
Decide on class meeting times and location		Manage student registration and billing
	Finalize program budget and ensure that the program remains within budget	Manage contracts, invoices and budgets
Attend pre-departure orientation in November		Lead pre-departure orientation

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Faculty Responsibilities	Shared Responsibilities	CIESA Responsibilities
Remind students if visas are needed	Check in with students to ensure they have been received	Support students in visa process
Manage roommate selection		Collect food allergies and preferences
		Support students in scholarship applications
Facilitate group dynamics and set expectations		Visit each ATS class to create a group agreement and ensure students have all their questions answered.
Model culturally competent behavior	Prepare students for a culturally competent and beneficial experience	Provide resources and orientation activities to help students prepare culturally.
Facilitate reflection and debrief with students upon return		Invite students into the Study Abroad Returnee cohort for workshops and opportunities for involvement; provide confidential program survey

## Faculty Timeline

Planning for and running an Academic Travel Seminar is a year-long process, and there are expectations for you throughout the process which support the three pillars of an Academic Travel Seminar.

Below is a basic timeline for the coming months that will help you prepare for the coming year.

### MAY

Early May: Faculty are informed of selection

- Faculty will be sent a link to register as faculty leaders in the Study Abroad site (Terra Dotta)
- Faculty will be asked to sign off on the CIESA Faculty Handbook

Mid-May: Session with returning faculty to share experiences

- Faculty leaders from the previous years will be invited to present on their courses and experience, and newly selected faculty leaders will be invited to learn and ask questions.

End of May: Initial meeting with CIESA for selected faculty members

- CIESA staff will review processes in Terra Dotta, RFP form, timelines, responsibilities, and next steps.

### JUNE

Mid-June: RFP finalized, and sent to potential partners for new programs; for repeat programs using the same partner, RFP form may be used as a guide for conversations regarding any changes to the program.

### JULY

Mid-July: Proposals received, partner selected

## AUGUST

Early August: Dates, process, course information and student cost

- Budget proposal finalized with costs from the partner, faculty costs, and flights (if necessary)
- Budget proposals sent to Carlos Henriquez, Helen O'Brien, and Steve Hill for approval

End of August: Virtual Faculty Leader Workshop with CTSE

- This workshop focuses on the academics and pedagogy of integrating an Academic Travel Seminar into your course. Teaching an on-campus course with an experiential travel component requires a new approach, and this workshop allows faculty to share their experiences and work with the guidance of CTSE.

## SEPTEMBER

September 1: Applications open on Study Abroad site

Early September: Launch meeting with CIESA and faculty leader teams

- Faculty are moved to the next phase in their Study Abroad account and begin filling in their personal information, and learn how to view and manage their students in the Study Abroad system

Mid-September: Study Abroad fair. UG Faculty are required to attend for recruitment.

September 30: Student application deadline for MBA programs

## OCTOBER

October 15: Student application deadline for non-MBA grad programs and all UG programs

## NOVEMBER

Early November: In-person Faculty Leader Workshop

- This workshop focuses on the logistical side of leading an Academic Travel Seminar. Faculty will need to wear a number of hats while leading students abroad, so we'll explore what this requires and who can support them. Faculty will hear from campus resources, including the Emergency Manager, the Dean of Students, the Office of Disability Services, the Title IX Coordinator, and others. Having the faculty together as a group allows for them to work as a cohort and learn from each other.

Mid-November: Study Abroad Orientation for UG students. Faculty leaders are required to attend, and will lead breakout groups.

## JANUARY

Pre-spring programs run.

## FEBRUARY

Throughout: CIESA Program Managers visit ATS class meeting

Throughout: Final meetings with CIESA, Faculty teams, and Program Providers

## MARCH

Spring break programs run.

## APRIL

Mid-April: Meeting with CIESA Program Manager to debrief and reconcile finances

Mid-April: Confidential student program survey sent from CIESA (This is separate and different from the course evaluation.)

## MAY

Pre-summer programs run.

## CIESA Policies

As an Academic Travel Seminar Leader, you'll wear many hats and you'll have responsibilities that you wouldn't have to think about when teaching on campus. These policies are designed to ensure that both students and faculty leaders have a positive experience. CIESA and other offices around the University will support you as you prepare, and while you are in country.

**Failure to comply with these policies may prevent you from leading a Travel Seminar in the future.**

## Program Planning

Planning an Academic Travel Seminar requires a lot of work prior to the start of the course. As noted in the timeline above, you will begin planning with CIESA over the summer. This timeline ensures that we have time to finalize program details by September so the programs can be marketed to students at the start of the fall semester. You are expected to meet with and be in contact with CIESA and the program partner regularly throughout the planning process.

## Program Partners

Suffolk University requires that all international Academic Travel Seminars collaborate with an approved Study Abroad partner. These partners play a crucial role in handling logistics, coordinating academic excursions, and offering risk management support. The extent of their involvement can vary significantly: some partners design and execute the entire itinerary, while others provide essential support as faculty members organize and plan the program.

Partners may be a US-based provider that specialize in international programs, others are our international university partners who have an internal team to support programs, and others are organizations based in the host country that have a more localized expertise. You may have a partner in mind already, but CIESA has a growing list of trusted partners for you to consider.

## In class

An Academic Travel Seminar is an academic course, and requires class meetings before and after the travel component (when allowed by travel dates). It is the faculty leader's role to ensure that the thread of the course topic continues through the semester and comes to life during the travel component.

The class meetings and the required activities in-country must meet minimum contact hour requirements for your Academic Department. CIESA will provide a worksheet to facilitate the contact hour count, and Faculty should plan to have semi-regular class meetings before the travel component to prepare for the travel experience, and at least two to three class meetings after the travel component to facilitate group reflection and debrief. The first class of the semester must be in the first two weeks of the start of the term.

Faculty should set expectations for the group from the first meeting, and are encouraged to incorporate expectations into the syllabus. CIESA will provide recommended language for the Academic Travel Expectations which references and echoes the language in the Study Abroad Participation Agreement.

## Flights

Flights for Undergraduate Travel Seminars and Graduate Travel Seminars are managed differently.

### Undergraduate Travel Seminars

Undergraduate Academic Travel Seminars have group flights built into the cost of the program. This is done for a few reasons. First, it allows the student to pay for the cost of the flight through their student account, utilizing scholarships, financial aid and a payment plan, making the Travel Seminar more accessible for students. Secondly, all of our programs include airport pickup and it is more efficient for our partners to pick up the group at one designated time.

Students are **not** permitted to book their own travel. At least one faculty leader, ideally both, must travel with the students for all flights.

Group flights are booked out of and into Boston Logan airport. Students and faculty will make their own way to the airport and should make a plan to meet at the airport well in advance of the departure time. At the end of the program, students and faculty will make their own arrangements to return home after arriving at Logan airport.

Faculty members must stay with their group when clearing Customs and Border Patrol both upon arrival in the host country (and in any transitory airports), and when returning to Boston.

### Graduate Travel Seminars

Graduate students choose and book their own flights. Many of the graduate level programs have the cost for the Travel Seminar built into their graduate tuition and there is no mechanism to bill them for the flights. Additionally, not all of the Graduate Travel Seminars include airport pickup.

## While traveling

Leading students on an Academic Travel Seminars can be an incredibly rewarding experience, offering opportunities for mentorship, cultural exchange, and academic enrichment. However, it also comes with unique

challenges and responsibilities. To support faculty and staff in these situations, CIESA has developed policies aimed at ensuring the safety and well-being of students and faculty leaders, minimizing potential risks, and reducing legal and reputational liability for the University."

### Student Conduct

All students sign a Study Abroad Participation Agreement which outlines expectations for students, as well as expectations of faculty leaders and CIESA. While traveling, students are held to the Suffolk Code of Conduct. If they violate the Student Code of Conduct or engage in any behavior detrimental to or incompatible with the harmony, interest, and welfare of the University, the Program, any Provider, or any other participant, including any behavior that poses a danger to themselves or others or interferes with the mission of the university, they may be dismissed from the program and sent home, with academic repercussions.

### Guests

Both students and faculty should remember that an Academic Travel Seminar is a University-sponsored, academic experience. No guests or family members are allowed to join the Travel Seminar. This means there are no guests allowed in the arranged housing, and no guests may join the group meals or activities. On the part of the faculty leaders, this is to avoid any confusion and vagueness about who is a vetted, trained, and liable representative of Suffolk University. On the part of students, this is to avoid any liability for non-approved participants.

### Crisis Management

Faculty will be provided with resources and guidance for managing and reporting any issues, crises, and emergencies. It is important to follow the established protocols to ensure that all Suffolk support services are informed and able to assist.

### Student Emergencies

If a student is sick, injured, or otherwise unable to participate in the program activities, one of the program leaders may need to stay behind with the student. This could be a faculty leader, university staff, or staff from the in-country partner. Program leaders should assess the situation with the student and in-country partner to determine what support the student needs.

If an undergraduate student is unable to depart the host country with the group due to illness, injury, legal trouble, or a lost passport, one of the faculty or staff leaders may need to stay behind with the student. The university will cover costs for the faculty or staff leader to stay behind, but the student is responsible for their own costs. The necessity to remain in country with the student, and the length of time, will be determined on a case-by-case basis in consultation with CIESA and Suffolk Risk Management.

If a graduate student is unable to leave the host country, the decision about whether someone should stay with the student will be made in consultation with the faculty leader, CIESA, Crisis 24, and the University Emergency Manager.

## Finances

Academic Travel Seminars are funded entirely by student program fees, which can be considerable; between \$4000 and \$5000. The goal is always to keep the cost for students as low as possible, while providing a safe and academically worthwhile program. Both the faculty leaders and the CIESA team are tasked with ensuring that the program expenses remain within budget.

### Credit cards

For most programs, all activities will be paid for in advance, via the invoice from our logistical partner. You will have a university credit card to use while traveling to pay for any planned expenses that could not be paid for in advance, and for emergencies or unexpected needs. CIESA will ensure that your credit card limit is increased during your time of travel, but if you are leading an international Travel Seminar, you will need to contact the bank to inform them that you are traveling abroad.

### Faculty expenses

Apart from per diems, any faculty expenses not paid for in advance should be put on the university credit card. You'll be given a budget for transportation to and from the airport, an international cell phone plan, and fees for one checked bag, if necessary. If you need a visa for the host country, this is covered by the program budget. The University **will not** pay for passport renewals.

Save all of your program related receipts! This will make the reconciliation after your program much easier for you, and for CIESA.

### Per diems

Your per diem for the Academic Travel Seminar will be calculated based on the US State Department rate for the city and country you are traveling to, and will account for the meals that are included in the program itinerary. For example, if your program includes breakfast every morning, your per diem will be adjusted to provide for only lunch and dinner.

The per diem will be provided to you prior to traveling as a cash advance. This means that you will not need to save receipts for your per diem, but you **may not** use your Suffolk credit card for your personal meals and expenses.

### Additional Compensation

Depending on your course load and your Academic Department's policy, you may be eligible to receive a course overload for teaching the Academic Travel Seminar course. There is no additional compensation provided through the Program budget.

## Best Practices for Faculty Leading Academic Travel Seminars

Below are best practices collected from faculty to help ensure your seminar is safe, well-organized, and successful:

### Budget Management

- **Keep the program cost under \$4,500 per student.** This is the target range for most programs. Higher costs may deter applicants and impact enrollment.

### Itinerary Planning

- **Avoid overpacking the itinerary.** Allow free time for students to explore independently. Plan 3–6 academic/business site visits and 3-4 cultural activities.  
This provides a balanced mix of learning, cultural engagement and independence.

### Student Recruitment

- **Recruit early, especially from your own courses.** Promote your program directly to your students, host info sessions, distribute flyers, and ask colleagues to help spread the word.

### Pre-Departure Engagement

- **Connect with students before the semester begins.** Start building relationships early to foster group cohesion.
- **Hold at least 3–4 on-campus class meetings before departure.** Most programs also meet 1–2 times after. Programs with even more frequent meetings often report stronger group dynamics.
- **Review the itinerary in detail with students before travel.** Walk through each day, answer questions, and set expectations clearly. Be clear with them that things happen and that they should anticipate unexpected changes. This is part of learning to be adaptive.
- **Verify visa completion in a pre-departure session.** Past issues with incorrectly completed visas can be avoided by reviewing them in class.
- **Set expectations for physical activity.** Let students know if they'll be walking long distances or navigating uneven terrain. Recommend appropriate attire and provide alternatives when needed.
- **Prepare students to engage respectfully in the host country's culture and customs.** Encourage open-mindedness, emphasize awareness of cultural norms, and discuss appropriate behavior, attire, and communication styles.
- **Establish a group communication method before travel.** For example, create a WhatsApp or GroupMe chat for updates, reminders, and easy check-ins.
- **Designate a student(s) to manage any social media as needed.** For example, designating a student to do a student-led takeover of a programmatic Instagram page can share the excitement and intensity of a travel course and help future students understand more about the experience.

### Travel Best Practices

- **Clearly define faculty/staff roles.** Let students know who to go to for academic concerns, logistics, health issues, or other needs.

- **Meet at the airport early and go through together (UG programs)**

Plan to meet the group at the airport **at least 3 hours before an international flight**. Going through security and navigating the airport as a group sets a tone of shared responsibility from the start.

- **Schedule daily group check-ins or reflections.** This could be a group breakfast chat, a debrief after the last activity, or structured journaling time. Use a format that works best for your group but be consistent.

## Resources

### Accommodations and Accessibility

Suffolk University is committed to ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, can fully participate in our global travel programs. Creating an accessible study abroad experience requires thoughtful planning and coordination between faculty leaders, students, Suffolk's Office of Disability Services (ODS), and in-country program partners.

#### Planning an Accessible Program

As you begin designing your travel seminar, it's important to consider accessibility from the start. During the application process, students will have the opportunity to disclose any accommodation needs. Faculty should work closely with ODS to ensure any disclosed accommodations, either for the on-campus portion of the seminar or the traveling portion, are appropriately addressed, both during the planning phase and throughout the travel experience.

#### Accessibility Considerations by Country

Please note that the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) does not extend outside the United States. Accessibility standards vary greatly from country to country. Once your destination is confirmed, we encourage you to research and evaluate the accessibility of the location. With this in mind, the following questions can help to guide your planning:

- What are the primary destinations, including lodging, transportation, and site visits?
- What are the expected travel conditions and physical demands of the program?
- Are there transportation limitations or barriers to physical access?
- What are the essential activities or learning components of the program? (To be defined with ODS.)
- What resources are available in-country to support students with disabilities?

#### Accessibility Dimensions to Consider:

- **Physical Access:** Are the spaces (lodging, classrooms, transportation, attractions) usable by people with mobility, hearing, or vision impairments? Examples:
  - Are there ramps, elevators, or accessible restrooms?
  - Are alternatives available for physically demanding activities such as bicycle tours or boating?
- **Digital Access:** Are course materials and media accessible to students with visual, hearing, or learning disabilities?
  - Are videos captioned?
  - Are readings and handouts available in accessible formats (e.g., screen-reader compatible)?
- **Instructional Alternatives:** Can students participate in essential learning objectives in different ways if an activity is not accessible?

In collaboration with the Center for International Education and Study Away (CIESA) and your in-country provider, you should consider possible alternatives or modifications to ensure all students can participate meaningfully in the program.

### How Students Request Accommodations

Students seeking accommodations should:

1. Contact the Division of Student Success to schedule an intake appointment: 617-573-8034
2. Submit appropriate documentation, which may include:
  - A diagnostic record from a healthcare provider or an educational evaluation
  - Records of previous accommodations (e.g., IEP, 504 Plan, or college-level supports)
3. Attend an intake meeting with ODS to discuss needs and determine an accommodation plan, if appropriate.
4. Collaborate with the Faculty Leader and ODS to develop an implementation plan for the travel seminar.

### Key Implementation Guidelines

- The accommodation process is interactive—faculty are not alone. ODS is here to support you.
- Confidentiality is critical. Disability-related information is protected under FERPA and ADA. Students have the right to decide if and when they disclose.
- Most disabilities are non-visible, so never assume a student's needs.
- Some details may be shared on a need-to-know basis to ensure student safety and program accessibility.

### Support While Abroad

In the event of a question or concern while abroad, faculty should be prepared to support students with disabilities and connect them to resources as needed.

- **Office of Disability Services (ODS)**
  - Email: [disabilityservices@suffolk.edu](mailto:disabilityservices@suffolk.edu)
  - Phone: 617-573-8034 (non-emergency support)
- **For urgent matters**, consult with your designated Suffolk emergency contact or partner institution abroad.

### Title IX, Bias, and Discrimination Resources for Faculty Leaders

As a faculty leader, you play a critical role in ensuring the safety and well-being of students while abroad. It is essential to understand your responsibilities related to Title IX, bias, and discrimination, and to be prepared to respond appropriately should an incident occur during a Suffolk University study abroad program.

### What Constitutes Sexual Misconduct?

Under Suffolk University policy, Sexual Misconduct is an umbrella term that includes, but is not limited to:

- Non-Consensual Sexual Acts

- Sexual Harassment
- Sexual Assault
- Dating Violence
- Domestic Violence
- Stalking
- Sexually Exploitative Behavior

These behaviors are prohibited and must be reported promptly.

#### Reporting Responsibilities

Faculty are required to report any instance of:

- Sexual assault or misconduct
- Sexual harassment
- Bias
- Discrimination

Reports can be made through the following resources:

#### **Title IX/Bias Coordinator at Suffolk University**

- Email: [title9@suffolk.edu](mailto:title9@suffolk.edu) or [biasreport@suffolk.edu](mailto:biasreport@suffolk.edu)
- Phone: +1 (617) 573-8027

#### **Crisis 24**

- Suffolk's emergency assistance provider for international travelers. Contact information will be provided during program orientation.

#### **University Program Health & Safety Contact**

- Contact your program's designated safety officer or the Center for International Education and Study Away (CIESA).
- Students may be referred to medical, counseling, and additional resources through these contacts.

#### **Local Police**

- Faculty may need to assist students in contacting local authorities in the host country to file a report.

#### Suffolk University Police (SUPD) / CIESA / Incident Support Team

- Available 24/7 at +1 (617) 573-8111
- SUPD coordinates with Suffolk's emergency management team for support.

#### Understanding Confidential vs. Private Resources

Please note:

- Faculty and staff are considered mandatory reporters and cannot guarantee confidentiality.
- Confidential resources (e.g., health and counseling services) will be outlined in your program materials and pre-departure training.

## Emergency Contact Reminders

Always ensure you have:

- Local emergency numbers
- Crisis 24 contact details accessible to both yourself and the students
- The contact information for Suffolk's Emergency Manager

For more support and guidance, reach out to:

### **Suffolk Office of Title IX**

Phone: +1 (617) 573-8027

Email: [title9@suffolk.edu](mailto:title9@suffolk.edu)