

Academic Programs Abroad

New Directors' Guidebook

These guidelines are designed for first-time directors of national and international short-term programs. They serve as a companion to the Directors' handbook, which can be found on APA's website. The Directors' handbook assumes you have already designed your program, so this companion will help you get to that point.

The main goal of this companion is to assist you in completing your 2017 program proposal. The proposal forms can be found here, on the APA website:

<http://www.lsu.edu/intlpro/apa/faculty/plan.php>

Proposals for 2017 are due to APA by **September 4, 2016**.

This guidebook provides explanations of topics, such as choosing a program site, budgeting, LSU rules and regulations, recruiting, etc. It can be overwhelming to start a program from scratch, and taking over an established program isn't much easier, so this is your go-to place for advice.

Sections in this Guidebook:

- A. First Things First: How to Pick a Site
- B. Who to Choose? Working With Service Providers
- C. Pros and Cons of Housing Choices
- D. When? Choosing Dates for Your Program
- E. What Courses Should I Offer?
- F. Compensation for Faculty
- G. How Much? Establishing a Program Budget
- H. The How, When, and Where of Airline Tickets
- I. Submitting a Proposal

A. First things first: How to Pick a Site

Okay, so you're thinking about putting together a summer or intersession study abroad program for 2017. That's great! Welcome to study abroad! You'll get to experience teaching the way it should be: onsite, interactive, and with enthusiastic, interested students who are truly absorbed in what they see and hear. But first things first: where will this program take place?

Sounds simple, but this is the first major decision that you as a Program Director will have to make: where are you going on your program?

1. What Country? For some people, this is an easy question to answer. Maybe you want students to experience your home. Maybe you have a research interest in a particular area. In those cases, the question of "which country" should be fairly easy to answer. In case your decision is not that clear, here are a few things to consider:

- Domestic or International? A domestic program can be easier to organize (no worries about exchange rates or a major time difference), but your students won't be eligible for study abroad-specific scholarships, such as [Gilman](#). If you've never traveled abroad, trying to be a first-time visitor to a country AND a Program Director will be overwhelming, to say the least. International sites are often more exciting, but they do require more first-hand knowledge of local customs on the part of the Program Director.

For those of you considering domestic programs, feel free to substitute the word "state" for the word "country" in the rest of this handbook.

- Prior travel experience? If you've never been to the country before, you probably shouldn't plan to be a Program Director of a program in that country. Learning a new culture is exciting, but your students will expect you to be the expert, so if you don't have any knowledge or experience in-country, consider moving to a location with which you are more familiar.
- Language skills? Do you speak the language of the country? If not, what linguistic resources do you have at your disposal? Will you need to hire a translator? Do you have some knowledge of the local language (enough to order dinner for the group or buy train tickets, but maybe not enough to file a police report?) This is something that really needs consideration. It's one thing to travel as a tourist to a country where you don't speak the language, but being a Program Director carries a higher legal and ethical responsibility, so take some time to ask yourself what your language skills are and to look at what resources you have to help you.

2. What City? Okay, so now that you've picked a country (or a state, for those of you who are planning US-based programs), where in that country do you want to go? Capital cities are often popular tourist destinations and will likely have the largest supply of museums, historical sites, cultural centers, and public transportation that can be used for class field trips. But, there's a big difference between life in a major metropolis and life in a small city. Do you want your students to have a more "authentic" experience? Is there something about your academic discipline that would make one city more appropriate than another? There's also the practical consideration: how well do you know the city? A couple of considerations:

- No city is inherently “better” than another. Capital cities may be more well-known to students, which may make the program easier to market initially, but it also depends on what goals you have for your program. If you want to do an immersion program, choosing a city that’s not overrun with American tourists may be a better solution for you, regardless of whether or not it’s the most well-known city. You can always plan a weekend excursion to the capital!
- What works for one academic area may not be ideal for another. Take a program in England as an example: if you’re a Geologist, a program based in Dover might be perfect for you. If you’re from Theatre, Dover may not be as ideal. Start thinking about what course(s) you’ll offer and start looking at what cities have the best resources for your classes.
- How familiar are you with the city? If the answer is “not very,” how much will you be able to learn before you go? The more familiar you are with the location, the more effective you will be as a Program Director.

3. **Housing** This will be covered more in the next section (“Working with Service Providers”) but it helps to start thinking about a few basics now. How would you feel about each of these types of housing:

- University dorms?
- Hostel?
- Hotel or Motel?
- Host families?
- Apartments?

Each one has its own unique set of advantages/disadvantages. Start looking around your chosen city(ies) and see what’s available. If you’re in a small town, you may not have some of these options. It may be that you’re not planning to offer a language-intensive program, but are in a country where English is not the native language, so home stays with host families aren’t an option. Start a preliminary list of housing options, including estimated prices. Start making your own personal pro/con list with regards to types of housing.

Congratulations! You’ve officially started your program proposal. You now know where you’re going. There are some who never make it this far in the program proposal process. You can now also start thinking of a name for your program and start filling in your program proposal forms (which can be found here: <http://www.lsu.edu/intlpro/apa/faculty/plan.php>)

B. Who to choose? Working with Service Providers

Next, it's time to think about how you're going to cover some of the onsite logistics. Surprisingly, the first question is not where to live. The first question is how much independence you want in the decision-making process. You have three choices:

1. **You could be the sole decision maker.** This would involve finding all of the housing yourself, picking all the sites for field trips, arranging transportation, deciding where and when to get meals, etc. If you're taking students to your home city/state/country, you may want this much freedom. You may already know the best student housing in town. If that's the case, being your own service provider is not only more freeing, it will also save money because you're not paying someone else for these services.
2. **Working with a travel agent** is a good choice if you're familiar with the area and can come up with your own itinerary, but don't have the expertise to negotiate for services. Your travel agent will be responsible for handling logistics, but you will be the day-to-day leader of the group and the one to select field trip sites.

This option is best for the Program Director who's able to be independent onsite, but doesn't have the resources or contacts to set up the logistics ahead of time. One thing to keep in mind is that you will not have a 24-hour tour guide with this option. If something goes wrong while you're onsite, you need to be able to talk to hospital staff, local police, etc. Your travel agent may be able to book you a tour guide for a one or two hour bus tour of the city or for a tour of a specific monument, but this is not like having a 24-hour contact person in the event that a student has a crisis. You will still need to have knowledge of both the local language and ways to find emergency services, should something happen.

Economically, this option is not much more expensive than the do-it-yourself option. In fact, if you don't have a lot of personal contacts in the city, this option may be more economical. Contact Jill (summerabroad@lsu.edu) for a list of travel agents and service providers.

3. **Service providers** are a good choice if you're interested in directing a study abroad program, but are not sure you're ready to assume all of the responsibility for the group onsite. You'll be responsible for teaching and recruiting, but the service provider will arrange everything else, from housing to transportation to meals. These companies often have two options:
 - **Pre-built itineraries:** If you go with a ready-made tour, you will most likely be placed with other student groups taking that same tour. One question to ask the service provider is whether or not you'll have time and facilities for teaching your courses separately. Any service provider that is not willing to discuss applicable contact hours for your classes is probably not someone with whom you should be working.
 - **Customized programs:** This is the option that APA would prefer you use if you go with one of these service providers, but remember that custom-designed programs have a minimum number of students that are required. The company you work with should be able to tell you what that minimum number is. This option is the most expensive, but also requires the least amount of onsite experience from the LSU faculty.

C. Pros and Cons of Housing Choices

There are various types of housing that are commonly used by study abroad programs, and deciding which one to use is more a choice of which problems you're willing to assume in exchange for which benefits. This is one of those situations where you'll have to decide what you think is best for the group.

1. Homestays

- Pros – more authentic view of life in the host culture; host parents can help out if something goes wrong; students are less likely to stay isolated in their own group; ideally suited for language-intensive programs; for students going through culture shock and homesickness, a host family can sometimes help ease their transitions
- Cons – host families have to be selected very carefully and need training; you will need “standby” families in the event that one of your students doesn't get along with his/her host family; your students may have more extreme cases of culture shock, especially if the living situation in the host family is very different from their own homes; homestays require much more cultural training for students pre-departure

2. Apartments

- Pros – cheaper than hotels; gives students a chance to participate in everyday activities, such as grocery shopping; students can save money by eating in
- Cons – large groups will be in several apartments, making group management more difficult; you need a sufficient number of beds for your participants (we can't charge a student full price and then put him/her on the floor or a sofa!); if the apartments don't have furnished kitchens, food savings are lost

3. Dorms

- Pros – cheaper than hotels; most have security guards/staff on call; students get some idea of what university life is like in the host culture
- Cons –students who are unaccustomed to traditional dorm rooms will complain about the “unsuitable” housing; meal plans may not be included in the cost of the room; you'll want to check and make sure that bed linens are included

4. Hostels/Hotels

- Pros – easiest form of housing to book; convenient; students know (or think they know) what to expect; oftentimes includes at least one meal a day (usually breakfast)
- Cons –students will be isolated from the host culture; finding space to have class can be difficult; if the hotel is small and/or family-run, your students may upset the owners by coming in late at night and/or being very loud (this is especially true for bed and breakfasts, which are not really ideal settings for large groups of college students)

D. When? Choosing Dates for your Program

With roughly three months between the date of spring commencement and the first day of fall classes, there are quite a few date options you could set for a summer study abroad program, which usually lasts 4-5 weeks. Here are a few things to consider when choosing your dates:

1. **Academic considerations** – as a general rule, you don't want your program to start the week after finals for spring semester or to end the week before fall semester starts. Starting your program on the heels of spring final exams won't give your students any time to work on their assignments for your program before they leave and will mean that you will find yourself making last minute arrangements while trying to grade spring finals. The same is true with programs that end the week before fall semester starts. You're cutting into your preparation time for fall classes, giving your students very little time to prepare for their fall classes, and putting yourself in the situation of grading final summer projects while attending faculty meetings and starting fall semester. With the summer being three months long, give yourself and your students a little time before and after the program.

As a reminder: commencement for spring semester 2017 is on May 11 and 12! Keep that in mind when picking the date by which your students need to arrive onsite.

2. **Onsite Events** - is there an event in your destination city that you don't want your students to miss? Is there an event in your destination city that could make it difficult to find housing? Keep an eye on major events that tend to attract lots of tourists to your destination. The event may be something you really want your students to experience, or it may be something you want to avoid. Housing may not be readily available, or may be more expensive. Another consideration is the holiday season. Do the majority of shops, tourist attractions, and theatres close down during a certain month? If so, you may want to consider going before or after, instead.
3. **Housing** – one of the major contributing factors to your program's dates will be when your desired housing option is available. Talk to your housing providers before committing to any program dates. Don't assume you can pick the dates and then talk to housing!
4. **Weather** –If July tends to be monsoon season in your destination, you may want to consider a program that leaves in late May and runs through June. If May tends to be chilly in your host city, you might want to consider a late June – July program. As a general rule, students complain when it is both very hot and very cold; they're a temperate group. Now, some of you may be thinking, "but isn't the point to teach them about a new culture?" Yes, it absolutely is. And yes, they're going to be out of their comfort zones in many ways, not just climate-wise, but if one part of the summer has substantially better weather than another part, that is something to consider.

Finally, one thing to consider when selecting program dates is the day of the week on which you begin and end. Your students will be able to find cheaper flights if you have them flying in/out on weekdays, as opposed to weekends. It may also be easier for your group to "hit the ground running" if they arrive onsite on a weekday, when museums and monuments are more likely to be open. If you start your program on a Thursday or Friday, your group members have a couple of days to learn their way around, check out the area, and see some of the touristy sites before they dive into classes on Monday!

E. What courses should I offer?

Once you have a destination, housing, and program dates, the rest of your program proposal (and planning for your program after the proposal is done) will be guided by one major influence: the courses you offer. The courses you offer will not only determine what sites are best suited for field trips, they will also determine how your students experience the host city/culture. One of the biggest temptations in short-term study abroad is to try and plan a program so that your students experience “all that the city has to offer.” It won’t happen. There is no way that you will be able to give your students an all-encompassing view of the local culture in four weeks.

Creating a quality program will be much more effective if you can accept that there are important things that your students will not get the chance to experience. As one study abroad administrator put it, “don’t think of summer programs as once-in-a-lifetime opportunities. Think of them as introductory courses for majors.” The whole point is to awaken in students a desire to travel, learn, and experience.

What your students should experience is a 3-6 week program that shows them the significance of the host culture on the subject(s) they’re studying while there. This is precisely why course selection is so important. To begin, you should ask yourself these questions:

1. Are you the only faculty member going, or are you taking other professors with you? The more faculty you take, the more areas of expertise you can encompass. Or, you can take another faculty member from your discipline and offer twice as many courses in that same subject.
2. What are your reasons for wanting to create this program?
3. Are there enough students in one academic area for you to meet your minimum enrollment, or do you anticipate needing to pull students from all over campus? In general, the more advanced your courses, the more you will need to be able to rely on your majors in order to fill your program. If you plan to take one or two (or more?) faculty from different disciplines, you should plan to offer lower level courses that can count as general education credits.
4. If you’re offering courses from different disciplines, are there places where they overlap, so as to make field trip planning easier?
5. What courses will best fit into the host culture and offer the most effective opportunities to integrate the site into the course?

Once you choose your courses, the rest of the questions are easier to answer. Pick your courses and then go back and read the housing and choosing dates sections. You’ll find that the answers become clearer once you know what it is your program will focus on and what aspects of the host culture you’ll introduce to your students.

F. Compensation for Faculty

For every faculty-led study abroad program, there are two sources of income: the program fee and the students' tuition. The program fee pays for the services received onsite. It covers these fees for both students and faculty. Faculty do not pay their own housing, flights, health insurance (for international programs), per diems, or entrance fees on group excursions. Those costs are built into the student costs.

Notice that salary is not listed as a covered expense under program fee. There is a reason for that: salaries are not paid out of the program fees! No salary money may be built into the students' program fees. Directors may not budget any portion of the program fee towards salaries.

Salary money for faculty on study abroad programs comes from the students' tuition. All students must pay both the program fee and regular LSU tuition and fees. There is no out of state tuition exemption for study abroad. Students who pay out of state tuition to LSU for classes on-campus will still pay out of state tuition for study abroad classes. Tuition is assessed based on residency, not the location of the classroom. It's important that you make this clear to students from the very beginning: they will have to pay the program fee to cover the living expenses overseas and the tuition (instate or out of state, depending on their status) in order to get credit for the courses.

One reason you will want to make sure that students understand that they have to pay tuition and fees for the courses as well as the program fee is because the salary amounts are based on the program's overall enrollment. While we can hold those students who drop out late responsible for the program fee, we cannot hold them responsible for paying tuition. Remember: your salary is based on the number of students who are paying tuition. If students drop out, your salary may drop to a lower pay rate!

On study abroad programs, all faculty receive their program-related salary as additional compensation ("add comp"). LSU places a cap on the amount that any one employee can earn in add comp in a year. The maximum amount that you're able to earn in add comp is based on your annual salary. Please contact the person in your home department who is the departmental liaison with Human Resources to determine your individual limit for add comp per year.

For 12-month employees, the only way to earn add comp in the summer is to take annual leave for the duration of the program. You can opt, however, to take the funds that would have been available to you in add comp and put them into the program budget as a way to offer more services to students.

Faculty will be paid according to the following scale:

<u>Program Enrollment</u>	<u>Faculty Salary</u>
5-8 students	\$2,750
9-12 students	\$3,300
12-15 students	\$3,850
16-20 students	\$4,400
21-25 students	\$4,950
26 or more students	\$5,500

In addition to these salary amounts, Program Directors (one per program) will also receive an additional supplement based on enrollment:

<u>Program Enrollment</u>	<u>Director Stipend</u>
5-8 students	\$550
9-12 students	\$1,100
12-15 students	\$1,650
16-20 students	\$2,200
21-25 students	\$2,750
26 or more students	\$3,300

G. How Much? Establishing a Program Budget

This section will make a lot more sense if you have a copy of the budget template open as you read. You can find it here: http://www.lsu.edu/intlpro/apa/faculty/pdf/budget_template_2016.xls.

Let's start with the easy part – enter the name of your program in the upper left-hand column (cell A1).

If you are running an international program, you need to make sure that all of the numbers you enter in the budget template have been converted into US Dollars (USD). Enter the exchange rate you're using in the second cell in the upper left-hand corner (A2). You will want to be very conservative with your exchange rate. If you're going to pay bills for the program in EUR, you may want to use an exchange rate of 1.50, just to be on the safe side. If you're wrong and the exchange rate is better than 1.50 by next summer, you will have more money than you need to run your program (a good problem to have). If, however, you haven't been conservative enough with your estimates and the exchange rate gets worse, you will have to cut items out of your budget to keep the price of the program the same. That is not an ideal solution, so go with an exchange rate that you think is the worst case scenario.

Reminder: the numbers in your budget template need to be in USD!

The next step is to determine your minimum and maximum numbers of students (enter in cells E23 and E24). Your maximum will likely be determined by your housing and how many people they can hold. Your minimum may be dictated by your housing or service provider. As a general rule, APA says that you need 10 students per faculty member as a minimum. That's so that no student is paying more than 10% of a faculty member's costs. That's not a hard and fast rule, though.

Your minimum number of students needs to be entered in cell B3.

You'll notice that the budget has two main sections: Student Costs and Faculty Costs. You will notice also that some of the cells are yellow and some are white. The yellow ones have equations pre-entered in them. You should enter figures into the white cells, not the yellow ones. More on each section:

- 1. Student Costs:** You want to enter these costs per student, so you'll enter your figures into column C (income per student). If your students are housed in double rooms, remember to enter the cost of half a room, since each individual student will pay for half of a room. The one exception to this is classroom rentals. You won't buy one classroom per student, so you should take the total amount for classrooms and enter it into cell D9. The spreadsheet will then divide it by the minimum number of students and come up with a per student price automatically.

The price for flyers, publicity, and orientations is a set cost of \$100 per student. This is assessed by APA to all programs. This amount (cell C10) should not change.

The labels on the individual line items are just suggestions. Feel free to change the labels (the ones in column A) so that they fit your specific program.

Once you've entered all of the costs for student expenses in cells C4 – C11, the spreadsheet will automatically sum them. You'll find that sum in cell C12.

2. **Faculty Costs:** This section is the opposite of the students' costs. For this section, you will enter a total amount needed and the spreadsheet will calculate the price per student (remember: you enter figures into the white cells, not the yellow ones). You will enter the costs for faculty into column D.

If you have more than one faculty member, remember that you need to enter the total amount needed for all faculty. Also remember that even if you don't purchase airfare for your students, you will need to add in airfare as a line item for faculty.

If you intend to claim mileage to/from the airport and/or airport parking here in the US, you need to add it in here. Planning to purchase a cell phone while you're abroad so you can be in touch with APA and have it in the event of an emergency? This is where it goes. APA does not have a separate "Faculty Travel" budget; any expenses you claim will need to be built into your program budget and charged to your students. That includes per diem.

The per diem rate for international sites is \$68/day (\$13 for breakfast, \$19 for lunch, and \$36 for dinner). You can receive per diem for any meals that are not covered by the program. If your hotel provides breakfast, you can only claim \$55 per day in per diem. If you plan to have a group dinner once a week, you will need to take out one dinner's worth of per diem per week. The total amount needed in per diem for all faculty for the entire length of the program should be entered in cell D17.

Once you've entered in all the faculty costs for your program, the spreadsheet will determine the cost per student for each line item. The sum of all the per student costs for faculty expenses will be automatically calculated in cell C20.

That's all! The price of the program (per student) is simply the sum of cells C12 and C20. You will see this number in cell C21. This is the exact per student cost of your program.

Most programs do not advertise their programs based on the exact program price, mainly because the number will probably come out looking something like \$3835.42, which isn't exactly an easy number to remember when recruiting! That's why, in cell C22, you will see that it asks you to enter "price to quote." Most directors will round up to a number that's nice and neat. \$3,835.42 would most likely be advertised as \$3,850. Not only is that easy to remember, but it gives you an extra \$14.58 in income per student to use onsite. APA will not keep that extra money; we'll give it to you to take on the program. You can use it to treat your students to bottled water while on a walking tour of the city, or maybe take everyone to the movies one afternoon. Whatever you decide is up to you. You will get all the money from your program, except the \$100 per student marketing and orientation materials cost.

You now have a program price! You have your dates, housing, price, location, and courses. You should be able to fill out your proposal without too much trouble, and APA will have everything we need to create your flyers for you. You're all set!

The How, When, and Where of Airline Tickets

Before you can buy tickets, you need the dates of your program. You'll also want to decide how flexible you can be with your start/end date. Do you absolutely need the program to start on a Monday? Does your housing option have enough flexibility in available dates to allow you to move the start/end dates of your program around a bit? When you send the information to the travel agent for a quote, you need to let the agent know whether or not your dates are flexible.

The second decision you need to make before you call for a quote is whether or not you want to go over a few days early and/or stay a few days after the program is over. For new programs especially, we encourage Program Directors to fly over a couple of days early, so that you have a chance to get over jet lag before your students arrive. This also gives you time to confirm reservations, purchase event and/or metro tickets, etc. Plus, you avoid the problem of your students arriving without you being there in the event that your flight is delayed. We certainly don't want the director to be the last one to get there!

So, once you've got your actual travel dates and have decided whether or not your dates are flexible, you need to call or email Short's Travel (www.shortstravel.com/lsu). They are the official state travel agency and are the ones through which we have to book all LSU-related flights. To contact them:

Short's Travel: 1-888-846-6810 or state@shortstravel.com

To draft your budget, you need a quote from Short's. Online airfare websites don't always give the same quote as Short's, so make sure you get a quote from Short's website. Once you're ready to buy your ticket, you will select APA as the paying department (if you're purchasing through the website) or let the agent at Short's know to charge the ticket to Academic Programs Abroad. If you've traveled for your home department before, you'll need to make sure that you select APA as the paying department, so it doesn't default to your home department.

What about student tickets?

As a general rule, students on LSU-sponsored summer programs buy their own tickets. Some shorter programs (intersession and spring break) purchase group airfare, but the majority allow the students to purchase their own tickets. You'll need to tell the students when they should be onsite in the host city/country. This gives them the flexibility to fly out of the US city that they want, to travel before or after as they want, to fly on the airline of their choice, to use any frequent flyer/family discounts that they may have, and to shop around for those very cheap online tickets.

Very important: *APA will not purchase individual tickets for students!* The only way we will purchase students' tickets is if the students are on a group reservation.

H. Submitting a Proposal

You've got your location, dates, housing, and budget. You've got courses that are related to the site and use the location of the program to enhance learning. You've looked into practical matters, such as hospitals near your housing and how to call the local police. You've decided if you're taking other faculty along, and who they will be.

So what now?

1. The first thing is to approach your Department Head and Dean about your program. There is an approval page in the proposal that requires signatures from both of them.
2. If you're offering courses from different disciplines, you need a course proposal form, syllabus, and signature page for each course.
3. Final proposals should be in this order:
 - a. Program Proposal
 - b. Signed Course Proposal (one per course)
 - c. Syllabus (one per course)
 - d. Budget (on Excel spreadsheet)

Please note: only *completed* proposals will be accepted. Programs must be approved by APA before they will be included in the 2017 list of offered programs, so please make sure that your proposal is complete when you submit it.