

GUIDELINES FOR BYU INTERNATIONAL STUDY PROGRAMS

The university's call for better programs and more engaged students to pursue "Inspiring Learning" has foregrounded the need to articulate basic principles for existing and newly proposed International Study Programs (ISP). These priorities inform the criteria for evaluating the quality of the program and its impact on students.

Our purpose in this document is to highlight guidelines and principles for faculty who wish to propose and retain an approved international study program. Proposed programs should fit into only one of the following categories:

- Study abroad program with credit-bearing courses
- Internship programs
- Business/organization excursions
- Direct enrollment/exchange programs
- International field school programs

PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING PROPOSED AND CURRENT PROGRAMS

1. ALIGNED

Effective international study programs extend learning and capabilities valued by the sponsoring degree program. All courses offered on the program must include substantive outcomes-based curriculum tailored to the sites of experiential learning.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. Is the international program closely aligned with the learning outcomes of its affiliated academic program(s)?
- b. Does the curriculum include content, outcomes, and assessment methods that align the aims of the affiliated program with the unique nature of the international experience?
- c. If the program offers courses from multiple disciplines, are those courses integrated into a common itinerary?

2. EXPERIENTIAL

International study programs should enable learning that cannot be fully replicated or achieved by campus-based experience, study, and instruction. Programs should demonstrate the added value of experiences conducted in each specific location, including how the sequence of travel unfolds.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. Does the program provide distinct learning experiences that cannot be achieved on campus?
- b. How does each location, and specific sequence of travel, contribute to specific learning objectives?
- c. How does the program afford a unique level of mentoring through the quality and extent of contact between faculty directors and students?

3. COMPETENCY-BASED

Students admitted to international study programs should engage in activities, practices, interventions, experiments, and reflective observations. These experiences should take them beyond the level of mere cultural exposure. Students are best prepared for these experiences when the program learning outcomes include specific competencies, capabilities, and attribute development. As learning outcomes, competencies should be central to internship programs and curriculum, where the primary learning objective is professional development.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. How will the curriculum and itinerary foster experiential learning that moves beyond cultural exposure?
- b. How will the learning outcomes listed be assessed?
- c. Are cultural, political, and historical issues that are most relevant to the locations proposed covered explicitly in the preparatory course (IAS201R)?

4. WELL-DIRECTED

Faculty directors should be eligible and qualified to direct an international study program.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. Are department chairs and deans substantively involved in approving program directors considering such factors as sufficient experience, knowledge, skills, and position relative to continuing faculty status? Have they discussed the pre-, onsite-, and post-responsibilities, along with potential pros and cons of directing an IPS experience with the faculty member? Have previous faculty directors been conferred with?
- b. How do faculty directors ensure the student experience receives their undivided attention above the demands of family, research interests, or personal travel plans?
- c. Does the faculty directors' design reflect thorough understanding of key elements of effective experiential education programming (e.g., experiential.learning@byu.edu)?
- d. Do the faculty directors demonstrate discipline-specific expertise, through their teaching and research, related to the curriculum offered as well as the region or regions of the world they are proposing to visit?

5. SUSTAINABLE

International programs can most benefit the university and international settings when they are sustainably designed and supported. Programs built around a single faculty member or with limited commitment to international partners are more likely to require redirection or retirement.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. Is there sufficient faculty expertise and commitment to support the program beyond the individual faculty with whom it originates?
- b. If the program includes a partnership or affiliation with another organization, such as an NGO or foundation, has that institution been appropriately vetted and appropriate information provided?

If the intention is to build a long-term relationship with another organization, are reciprocal obligations described in writing and do not create dependencies?

6. AFFORDABLE

Faculty directors should wisely manage time, energy, and money by prioritizing quality over quantity of locations and emphasizing essential learning experiences. These efforts allow for wider student participation.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. Does the program reflect a concerted effort to control costs?
- b. Does the program include an itinerary (time line, list of location(s) for both study and touring) that demonstrates alignment with coursework learning outcomes?
- c. Does the program demonstrate a feasible scope and scale for the experience?

7. APPROPRIATE

Each selected site, and its associated activities, should avoid placing students, faculty, the university, or the Church in compromising, illegal, or unsafe positions.

Evaluation Criteria:

- a. Does the program compromise Church welfare principles in the locations visited by the program by raising expectations that cannot be met, or undermining self-reliance by providing financial and material resources?
- b. Is the program safe? Does it avoid placing students, faculty, university, or the Church in compromising, illegal, or unsafe positions?

