



A Checklist for Campus Administrators Managing Short-Term International Programs

Short-term international programs (STPs) refer to international or study abroad programs lasting less than one semester. Although increasingly popular with students, STPs pose several unique challenges for educational institutions. (For a detailed description, see William P. Hoye’s monograph *Understanding and Managing the Risks of Short-Term International Programs*, listed in “Resources.”) STPs are frequently organized shortly before departure by a faculty member who does not necessarily follow any procedures when planning the trip. As a result, these programs may lack the infrastructure and support of a more established study abroad program. In addition, STPs often occur during break periods when it may be difficult to contact the home campus for assistance.

This checklist is designed for administrators who are ultimately responsible for STPs on their campuses, not for program leaders or participants. It provides a guide to considering and addressing the primary risk management challenges of these programs. Administrators should check the appropriate “yes” or “no” response for each question and then consider what further steps, if any, they may wish to take for certain items.

I. Preparation for the Program

It is prudent to establish a formal approval process for STPs. The process should begin with a written policy to help ensure that consistent standards apply and that program leaders and student participants are adequately prepared before going abroad. In addition, institutions should carefully consider whether to sponsor a program directly or enter into a contract with a third-party provider. Third-party providers can generally customize a program to the institution’s needs and reduce the home campus’s liability exposure.

A. Program Formation and Approval	Yes	No	Further Steps
1. Program Formation. Does your institution have a written policy that identifies specific campus officials who have authority to determine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How and by whom a STP can be established 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Where the institution’s students are permitted to travel on approved programs, including any countries to which travel may be expressly prohibited 			

A. Program Formation and Approval	Yes	No	Further Steps
2. Program Approval Process. Does the approval process for a new STP include input of representatives from:			
▪ Risk management			
▪ Legal counsel, both at home and at the proposed program site			
▪ Office of the dean of students			
▪ Student health and counseling centers			
▪ Public safety			
3. Institution's Relationship to the STP			
▪ If your institution directly sponsors the proposed program, do you:			
□ Ensure that the institution is legally authorized to operate that program			
□ Require written agreements with all faculty and staff program leaders			
□ Require written agreements with other educational institutions and service providers (for example, tour operators, housing providers, and charter bus companies)			
□ Have a contingency plan in the event that program leaders are injured or unable to perform their duties			
▪ If your institution contracts with a third-party provider to deliver STPs, have you covered the following issues in a written agreement with that provider:			
□ The provider's emergency and crisis management protocols			
□ The orientation and on-site services provided for students			
□ The insurance and travel assistance services available			
□ The provider's vetting process for charter bus companies or other vendors			
□ The indemnification offered for injuries or property damage involving program participants			
□ A resolution process for disputes related to or arising out of the program			
□ Possible naming of the institution as an additional insured on the provider's liability insurance policies			

B. Faculty and Staff Orientation	Yes	No	Further Steps
1. Campus Communications and Contacts. As part of the pre-departure orientation, does your institution review with program leaders your crisis management and emergency response plans and introduce to them the individuals on the home campus to contact in the event of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Death, illness, or injury to a student 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Natural disasters (for example, earthquakes or tsunamis) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serious student misconduct 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Arrests or other violations of local law 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Property damage caused by someone on the trip 			
2. Dealing with Students in Emergencies. Do you train program leaders on appropriate actions, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The preferred way to reach a student's parent or other emergency contact 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procedures for advising students what to do if faculty leaders become incapacitated during the trip 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Management of the remainder of the group after an emergency involving one student 			
3. Insurance. Do you brief program leaders on the insurance available to them and to participants while overseas, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whether health insurance provided through the institution or by their parents applies during travel abroad 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whether insurance coverage is available for items such as trip cancellation, property damage, psychological counseling, repatriation, and emergency medical evacuation 			

C. Student Selection and Participation	Yes	No	Further Steps
1. As part of your screening process for student applicants to the program, do you collect information about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant's relevant language ability 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prior course work or life experience that prepared the applicant to participate 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ References with personal knowledge of the applicant's maturity and readiness to study abroad 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Previous academic dishonesty or disciplinary issues that may bear on the applicant's fitness to participate 			

C. Student Selection and Participation	Yes	No	Further Steps
2. With respect to applicants who may have disabilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 331 862 436">▪ Are program leaders advised that applicants should not be asked about disabilities and may not be denied participation solely on the basis of any disabilities? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 457 813 531">▪ Are all applicants provided information about potential accessibility issues in the program location? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 552 846 625">▪ Once students are accepted, do you inquire generally about any special needs that might affect their full participation? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 646 846 814">▪ If a student identifies himself or herself as disabled and indicates that accommodations may be needed, do you consult legal counsel and engage the student in discussions to determine what accommodations may be necessary and whether they are feasible? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 835 862 951">▪ Do faculty or staff program leaders participate in the process so that they are aware of students' particular needs and any accommodations agreed upon? 			
3. Before departure, do you require all participants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 1024 678 1066">▪ Execute an appropriate waiver of liability 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 1087 878 1161">▪ Sign an acknowledgment that the student handbook and any other rules applicable on the home campus also apply overseas 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 1182 878 1266">▪ Provide emergency contact information for a parent, guardian, or (for students who are not minors) next of kin 			

II. Oversight During the Program

Because program leaders have sole on-site responsibility but often have no staff and limited experience, administrators on the home campus should establish policies governing oversight of STPs. These policies should cover key risks commonly associated with international study and require some level of on-site orientation for participants.

A. On-Site Student Orientation	Yes	No	Further Steps
During orientation at the program site, do you require program leaders to address the following topics, as appropriate for the location: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 1749 846 1822">▪ Information about your institution's crisis management plan and a list of emergency contacts on the home campus 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="250 1843 678 1875">▪ Contact information for local authorities 			

A. On-Site Student Orientation	Yes	No	Further Steps
▪ Different cultural practices and beliefs			
▪ Particular risks of criminal activity			
▪ Health care			
▪ Specific health risks (for example, HIV/AIDS or other communicable diseases)			
▪ Risks posed by the political climate, including war, civil unrest, or terrorism and action plans should these risks unfold			
▪ The plan of action following possible natural disasters for the area, such as earthquakes or tsunamis			
▪ Transportation problems, such as poor roads			

B. Managing Key Risks	Yes	No	Further Steps
<p>1. Accidental Death or Injury. To reduce the risk of liability for a student's death or injury during the program, do you:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that all written marketing materials and program materials clearly identify which activities are sponsored as part of the program and state that any others will be undertaken independently 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Limit sponsored activities to those integral to the academic component of the program 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ State clearly that inherently dangerous activities (for example, cliff climbing and bungee jumping) are not part of the sponsored program 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Prohibit faculty or staff program leaders from promoting or participating in nonsponsored activities 			
<p>2. Motor Vehicle Accidents. To reduce the risk of liability for motor vehicle accidents during a program, does your institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Maintain and periodically review a list of approved charter bus or transportation companies for any sponsored activities 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider revising any vehicle usage policy on the home campus to apply to STPs 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Encourage faculty and staff to use public transportation or approved transportation companies, even if they are allowed to drive during the program 			

B. Managing Key Risks	Yes	No	Further Steps
<p>3. Sexual Assault. With respect to allegations of sexual assault against or by anyone involved in a STP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do you require program leaders who learn of an alleged assault during the program to report it promptly to designated administrators on the home campus (for example, the dean of students, risk management, public safety, or legal counsel)? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are the designated administrators prepared to provide immediate guidance to on-site staff regarding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Obtaining medical attention for the victim 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Reporting the assault to local authorities 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Advising other program participants of the reported assault and necessary details (for example, location and general circumstances) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Taking appropriate action if the alleged perpetrator is a program participant 			
<p>4. Discrimination and Harassment. Because some court decisions indicate that U.S. laws against discrimination and harassment protect students on study abroad programs, institutions and legal counsel should review internal policies prohibiting such conduct to be sure they can reasonably be applied abroad, and revise them if not. Once this task is accomplished, does your institution:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train both program leaders and student participants during orientation on the policies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ The definition of discrimination and harassment under the policies 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ How and to whom to report violations 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require program leaders to report any violations to the home campus promptly 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provide participants with an alternate contact person on the home campus, in case the alleged perpetrator is a program leader on the same trip 			

B. Managing Key Risks	Yes	No	Further Steps
5. Student Disciplinary Proceedings. Materials for STPs should make clear that student handbooks and codes of conduct apply to overseas study just as they do on the home campus. In addition, do you: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Train program leaders to notify the home campus if a participant is involved in any violation of academic or disciplinary rules, or of any specific rules applicable to the particular program 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Require program leaders to provide the home campus with written documentation of the alleged violation 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure that all appropriate institutional procedures for investigation and discipline are followed after a violation is reported 			

III. Evaluation After the Program

Institutions should consider establishing a system to solicit feedback from both program participants and leaders, especially since many STPs lack a track record. Post-program evaluations can be useful if the same or a similar STP is proposed in the future.

A. Student Evaluations	Yes	No	Further Steps
Do you request student participants to complete a post-trip survey covering such items as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well the orientation prepared them for the location (for example, differences in culture, language, and customs) 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How prepared they felt the program leaders were 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Whether they experienced any problems on the trip related to their health or safety 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ What overall impressions they had of the program, both positive and negative 			

B. Faculty and Staff Reports	Yes	No	Further Steps
Do you require faculty and staff program leaders to complete a written post-trip report covering such matters as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The effectiveness of pre-trip planning and orientation 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ratings of services provided by vendors and contractors 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information about the location that should be considered for future trips 			

Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: Travelers' Health Information. www.cdc.gov/travel
- Hoye, William P. *Understanding and Managing the Risks of Short-Term International Programs*. Chevy Chase, Md.: United Educators, 2008. www.ue.org/membersonly/getDocument.asp?id=1054
- Hoye, William P.; Rypkema, Pamela J.; and Zerr, Robert. *Legal and Risk Management Issues Involving Student Foreign Travel*. Chevy Chase, Md.: United Educators, 1999. www.ue.org/membersonly/GetDocument.asp?id=68
- U.S. Department of Education. U.S. Network for Information Exchange. Retrieved on March 4, 2009, from www.ed.gov/NLE/USNEI.

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