

International Programs

Office of the Dean/Vice President for Academic Affairs

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by International Programs Committee, Academic Planning Committee, Dean Jorge Gonzalez, Dean Wendy Sternberg

Faculty-Led Education Abroad Courses

POLICY AND PROCEDURES ~ ACADEMIC POLICY

1. As a member of the Forum on Education Abroad, the College adheres to the [Standards of Good Practice for Short-term Education Abroad Programs](#).
2. Education abroad courses are defined as a 4-unit course conducted on-campus during the semester covering a minimum of 60-80% of the academic content plus an academic international travel component conducted following the end of the academic term to complete the course material, such as:
 - A. spring semester course followed by a 3-4 week summer travel component,
 - B. fall semester course followed by a 3 week January travel component.
3. Travel components must be integral to the course content such that the travel contributes to the total academic material and extends the Occidental curriculum. The course should not replicate one that could otherwise be taught on campus.
4. Together, the on- and off- campus components of the course requires 45 *instructional* contact hours with academic content directly related to the approved theme of the program including historical, sociological, and cultural background materials as appropriate to the academic discipline of the course. Delivery formats may include project-based work abroad including guided student research projects, service-learning, studio, lab or field work. Activities not considered instructional time are those normally understood as student “out-of-class” preparation (i.e. writing, reading, research, unfacilitated conversation), social time, and in-country travel time.
5. The course will be counted in the regular year teaching load of the faculty member. See Financial Procedures #1 regarding stipends.
6. Minimum enrollment is twelve or higher depending on in-country partner requirements and/or financial viability.
7. One full-time tenure-track faculty member teaches the course. Team teaching is defined as more than one faculty member offering a separate course or lab section for the same program each of which meets or exceeds the enrolled student minimum.
8. Courses are intended to be sustainable and integral to the department curriculum. The department chair must endorse the medium-term viability of the course within department priorities and commit to staffing the course (including alternate instructors) without replacement salary. Courses usually repeat alternate years, or every third year, 3 or more times. The chair defines how the course fits into department offerings (e.g. is integral) in a number of ways such as by verifying how the course will be counted in a major, confirming the inclusion of this course in the individual’s and the department’s overall teaching grid,

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and/or by confirming that whatever the faculty member normally teaches will be covered without additional teaching funds from the College.

Sustainability might include a commitment to offer the course every 2-3 years, or to identify other faculty members to alternate teaching responsibilities.

The chair may signal both by describing how the course fits into department offerings in proposed and subsequent years.

9. Participants receive a "Course in Progress" grade at the end of the semester. At the end of the international field component and once all the coursework is completed, directors post the final grades with the Registrar. **Spring semester courses enrolling graduating seniors require special consult with the Registrar.**
10. In a collaborative process, the International Programs Committee (IPC), the Academic Planning Committee (APC), and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean consider new and repeat course proposals submitted by the published deadlines. Final approval is granted by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Dean.
11. IPC/APC shall endeavor to recommend for approval by the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean a balanced set of courses to reflect a diversity of disciplines, regional geography, variety in eligibility requirements, such as language, and in accordance with the strategic goals of the College.
12. Approved courses are subject to College policies and practices including IPO policy and procedures governing faculty-led courses abroad.
13. Substantive course/itinerary changes such as changes in location, teaching faculty or theme are not permitted after a proposal has been approved by the International Programs Committee unless health, safety or other circumstances require. Substantive changes must be filed with IPO and approved by the IPC and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean of the College.
14. Pre-departure preparation must include logistical information, development of group cohesion, an introduction to the culture of the country, specific on-site safety, and the regulations to be followed while abroad.
15. So that faculty may focus primarily on teaching and learning and to limit institutional exposure, the College will by policy contract with organizations, universities, agents or companies who can provide in-country logistics, academic content and resources and crisis management. Faculty may not serve as travel agents. Potential conflicts of interest with these entities must be disclosed in advance. See Administrative Procedures, #5.
16. Courses may repeat as approved through the process described herein only if in compliance with all procedures and policies and if course evaluations and IPO program evaluations are strong. Weaknesses in implementation or identified in course evaluations must be addressed in the proposal to repeat the course.

17. Exceptions to policy may be considered by the IPO Executive Director, IPC and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean.

FINANCIAL PROCEDURES

1. IPO provides a \$2,000 course development stipend to each faculty member whose NEW proposal is approved through the regular process. Stipends are awarded at the time the full proposal is approved and are intended to compensate for the additional effort of designing and launching a new course. Repeat course directors are not eligible for this stipend. Upon completion of a course, IPO compensates course directors with a \$2,500 honorarium for the international travel component in addition to the regular salary earned for the on-campus course. Faculty teaching abroad for less than the three-week course minimum will be subject to salary adjustment.
2. Participants pay flat-rate tuition plus a program fee for additional costs incurred by participating during the semester of the on-campus course. Financial aid will be adjusted accordingly.
3. IPO and Financial Aid maintain a pool of need-based scholarships for participants. Following College policy, Financial Aid and IPO offer a combination of loans and scholarships to meet the need of qualified participants.
4. Approved participants who accept their place in the course by the published commitment date will be charged a non-refundable commitment deposit (\$500) in the first student accounts billing cycle prior to the start of the semester course. Students who withdraw after the add/ drop period will be responsible for all unrecoverable expenses incurred on their behalf according to the cancellation fee schedule.
5. Each course will operate out of a restricted IPO account in accordance with College practices. Money in the account pays for all program expenses.
6. All receipts and a travel expense report must be completed within 6 weeks of course completion in order to facilitate reimbursement and to justify the expenses covered by a travel advance. A written statement which includes the date, amount, and the nature of the expense may be required. Reimbursement will be permitted as long as the expense is co-signed by IPO. Expense reports must adhere to the guidelines set forth by the College Business Office.
7. Since the course account is self-funding, a course director who overspends an advance will only be refunded for approved expenses *if there are sufficient funds remaining in the program account*. If a travel advance was under-spent, the remaining balance must be repaid to the program account.

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

1. The College will contract with lawfully constituted, full-service, in-country program facilitation organizations who will provide essential access to academic resources (speakers, guides, academic

facilities, libraries, labs, studios, historic and cultural sites) and that will assume primary responsibility for all fundamental program logistics such as housing, in-country transportation, some meals, etc. In engaging such organizations, IPO and faculty directors shall reasonably investigate partners to ensure that they follow local host country law and Occidental standards including employment, visa, registration, tax, insurance, and contract issues. The College shall seek to engage the services of legitimate, licensed, insured, and bonded agents, entities, tour guides, etc. as US independent contractor laws do not apply overseas.

2. If an in-country facilitator cannot be secured, the College may require a second faculty or staff member to accompany the group. The expenses for a second faculty or staff member will be included in the overall student program fee.
3. Due to the demands of leading a course abroad and to limit institutional exposure, directors may not be accompanied by guests (i.e. family, partner, friend, colleague, etc.).
4. All participants must complete mandatory IPO paperwork in order to participate in the travel component. It is the course director's responsibility to ensure that all participants have completed this by the published deadlines.
5. Faculty directors are required to attend the student pre-departure orientation and on-site orientation. Additionally, faculty directors must attend a mandatory faculty pre-departure meeting.
6. [College policy](#) prohibits travel to destinations designated as [Advisory level 3 or 4 by the US Department of State](#) or under other conditions not conducive to the safe and orderly conduct of the course. Directors who wish to seek exception to this policy must do so in writing to the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean.
7. Faculty directors are primarily responsible to recruit participants in time for course pre-registration through class visits and information sessions. IPO provides web presence and other administrative support.
8. Upon return, faculty directors attend a required post program-debriefing meeting with IPO and the program provider.

Updated: May 2016, May 2017, May 2018, October 2019, April 2020, February 2022

COURSE PROPOSAL PROCESS

Occidental College encourages faculty-led education abroad courses as a dynamic extension of the curriculum. These courses challenge students to test theories and concepts in a dynamic intercultural setting. On a carefully organized and intentionally designed course, faculty directors frequently find teaching “in-situ” to be some of their most stimulating and deeply rewarding teaching and learning experiences. Delivery formats may include project-based work abroad including guided student research projects, service learning, studio, lab or field work.

The College shall endeavor to offer a balanced set of courses to reflect the strategic direction of the College and a diversity of disciplines, regional geography and variety in eligibility requirements such as language. The **criteria** applied in evaluating proposals are academic quality, student costs, impact on existing programs, administrative efficiency, financial solvency, and student health and safety. Proposals are typically prepared with assistance from the International Programs Office (IPO) and their home department(s). Participation in workshops on study abroad course development, such as Faculty Learning Communities, may result in stronger proposals. IPC and APC recommend participation in such workshops when available.

Preliminary proposals including Department Chair approval, a course goal statement, general description, preliminary itinerary with site-specific learning goals will be considered by IPO and IPC for advancement for full development and implementation. Academic Planning Committee and the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean of the College provide final approval for implementation.

PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT

Advance planning and collaboration with IPO is essential. **Begin planning two academic years in advance of the projected implementation year.** See the timeline, below. Seek feedback from the Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs or Dean, Department Chair and IPO early to increase course viability. Course directors should consider the time and effort required to develop a preliminary proposal into a complete course, obtain necessary course approval, budget and financial aid development, and necessary logistical arrangements both on-campus and overseas prior to submitting a preliminary proposal.

TIMELINE

Academic Year 1 – Preliminary Proposal Exploration & Development

Spring: Consult with IPO, department chair, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

Mid-April: *Preliminary proposal DUE to IPC.* IPC selects proposals for full development.

Summer: Develop full proposal and attend series of 3 collaborative proposal development workshops offered in-person and/or remotely June and July.

Academic Year 2 – Full Proposal Development

October 15: Full Proposal due to IPO/IPC for implementation in the subsequent academic year (Academic Year 3). Full proposal includes: itinerary, budget, contracts with Occidental’s program partners such as IES, CIEE, or other appropriate organization.

November: Selected candidates work with Chair to include in Year 3 course grid; IPO includes in College Budget Process for Year 3.

Academic Year 3 – Course Implementation