

Guidelines for Non-Students Traveling on All Study Abroad Programs

The Provost upon recommendation of the Study Abroad Program & Policy Committee and the Study Abroad Crisis Task Force approves these guidelines. These guidelines were developed to assist faculty in making informed decisions related to including guests and family members on all or part of a study abroad program. Faculty-led study abroad programs are academic programs and, like their counterparts on campus, these classes, field trips, and cultural excursions are never designed to cater to the needs of individuals who are not part of the academic experience. Accompanying dependents and spouse/partners should not interfere with the function of the study abroad program in any way. As an academic program director you are responsible for your students first and foremost. However, WTAMU recognizes the importance of family and allows faculty members leading programs to include their family members as part of the study abroad experience bearing in mind the need to adhere to these guidelines. Please contact the Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships for more information.

A. Spouse/Partner

- i. The term *partner* is used to refer to either the spouse or the domestic partner of a faculty member, including the domestic partners of unmarried faculty.
- ii. A spouse/partner may accompany the faculty member for the duration of the program or a significant portion of the program as long as their presence does not interfere with the faculty member's duties to the program and to the study abroad students.
 1. The Study Abroad Program & Policy Committee recommends, whenever possible, that the faculty member's partner be included in assisting the faculty member with program responsibilities. This may include, but not be limited to, planning, risk mitigation, emergency response, individual counseling, conflict resolution, and possible disciplinary actions as needed. The spouse would be required to be employed at 0% FTE and participate in all pre-departure orientation sessions and post program debriefing sessions. The program budget would need to include expenses such as room, board, and transportation associated with this arrangement. To facilitate this, the faculty leader will need to "justify" the spouse's appointment by defining his/her duties through the Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships. If this is not an option, then the following section applies.
- iii. Spouses/partners should understand that their primary role on the study abroad program is that of spouse/partner and/or caretaker of any dependent children also accompanying the faculty member. For liability purposes, it is important that spouses/partners do not have responsibilities related to the academic program (e.g. taking roll,

monitoring tests, managing working funds), unless they have been formally engaged as mentioned above.

- iv. Students participating in study abroad may not include spouses, partners, parents, or other family members, or friends on any portion of the program. While it is possible for these individuals to visit in off program hours, they may not be included in any program activities. Also, any visitors who may be at or near the program location and visiting during program off hours, are not to detract the student from study time or affect the student's attendance in program classes and required activities. Such distractions may affect the student's grade.

B. Children

- i. Grandchildren, nephews, and nieces who are not a faculty member's legal dependents and who are not considered dependents but rather extended family ARE NOT permitted on any portion of the program unless they are enrolled as degree-seeking students at an institution of higher education and who have formally applied and been admitted to the study abroad program. Such participants are subject to the same rules and regulations required of other participants and are to be treated with the same privileges and restrictions, as are all other participants.
- ii. Anyone under the age of 18 can be considered a minor. At the age of 16, you may legally apply for an adult passport. What this means is that children who are 16 to 17 years old can have an adult passport, but do not have permission to travel unaccompanied. It would be prudent for the parent to give consent for the child to travel unaccompanied if they are 16 to 17 years old. If the child is 15 or younger, the faculty member must provide a caretaker. This caretaker must be eighteen years of age or older. A sibling under the age of eighteen may not act as the caretaker for his/her younger siblings. This caretaker could be the spouse/partner of the faculty member. The following applies:
 1. The faculty member must cover all caretaker and children's expenses. In those instances where expenses are not clearly defined, the faculty member must provide a written explanation of the expense. Reimbursement will be made based on the justification as determined by the travel/study abroad offices.
 2. The caretaker may not participate in the program in any way.
 3. Students on the program shall never be asked to serve as a caretaker. It detracts from the program and the student's experience and is counter to the purpose of the program. In addition, it places the faculty member in a difficult position to defend if the student alleges that he/she felt pressured to perform personal services for a faculty member as part of the course grade.

4. The faculty member cannot be considered the caretaker.
 5. Other faculty or staff members involved with the program should not be asked to serve as a caretaker.
- iii. It is strongly recommended that faculty members consider carefully the number of children being taken on study abroad programs. Logistically, the more children that are involved, the more difficult it becomes to make arrangements that will accommodate large families, and the more difficult it is for the faculty member to focus their full attention on the study abroad program. Past experience shared by other faculty members suggests that a spouse/partner and several dependent children taken abroad require more attention from a faculty member than they require at home due to language barriers as well as lack of usual friends, recreational, and educational activities.
 - iv. All minors who are travelling on the program must be disclosed to the Office for Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships as early as possible during the planning process. Once the planning process has been completed, minors may not be added. Once the request has been made, it will be reviewed by the study abroad crisis management team and a recommendation made to the dean and provost who will make the final approval. The following will be taken into consideration: program location, program length, number of program participants, and nature of the program (i.e. field vs. classroom, in country travel/excursions vs. stationary, rural vs. urban). It must be understood that this not intended as a punitive process but rather that accompanying minors, spouses, family members add a dimension to managing a group abroad that in the event of a crisis situation increases complexity and liability in managing the event.

C. Extended family member and acquaintances

- i. Extended family members and acquaintances may participate in travel opportunities under the same terms and conditions as spouse/partners and children with the approval of the faculty member's Dean and the Provost/VPAA. Please be aware that often non-students permitted on faculty-led programs present a liability as you will have no authority over their behavior or control over potential interaction with students. From a risk standpoint, it is not recommended that non-students participants be allowed to accompany a faculty-led program.

D. Financial Considerations

- i. State regulations require that faculty members pay all expenses of their spouse/partners and dependents. Current Texas A&M fiscal policies do not allow such expenses to be paid by student program fees or monies mixed into student program fee accounts. This means that separate payments directly from the faculty member will be required for dependent expenses. This information must be made transparent for all

those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student program fees are, in any way, subsidizing non-participants. Please refer to the Working Fund Guidelines for more details or contact **Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships** for questions about this information.

- ii. Dependents are not guaranteed potential “group discount” prices due to restrictions on such rates (e.g. age limits, student only prices, etc.)
- iii. In cases where a faculty member requires a logistical arrangement for a dependent or spouse/partner that costs more than the price paid by a student, the faculty member is responsible for the cost difference (e.g. if paying for a double room instead of a single room in a hotel, the faculty member would pay the difference between the single and the double to accommodate an accompanying spouse/partner).

D. Logistical Arrangements

- i. Program arrangements are not primarily made to accommodate the needs of dependents and spouse/partner. All program accommodations are made with the understanding that this is an academic program designed to meet the needs of the students and the faculty members.
- ii. Faculty members are responsible for obtaining passports and visas for their spouse/partner and dependents.
- iii. Faculty members are responsible for obtaining health insurance for their spouse/partner and dependents. In addition, they are responsible for purchasing additional insurance for their spouse/partner and dependents through the **Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships**
- iv. Faculty members must organize dependents’ travel arrangements whenever these arrangements deviate from those made for the planned study abroad program, such as (but not limited to)
 - 1. Transportation to and from the study abroad location
 - 2. Excursions in the host country
 - 3. Hotels
 - 4. MealsWhen travel arrangements exactly coincide with the planned study abroad program, these will be coordinated with the **Office of Study Abroad and Nationally Competitive Scholarships**, using the same program deadlines that apply for students engaged in the program.
- v. Dependents may room with the faculty member if accommodations allow, but the faculty member must pay the difference for any room upgrade.
- vi. Dependents ARE NOT permitted to share accommodations with students.
- vii. Dependents should not compromise the planned academic program in any way, such as (but not limited to)
 - 1. preventing the faculty member from attending or leading field trips or other academic elements of the program.

2. disrupting class or field trips.
3. preventing students or other faculty members from engaging fully in the academic program.