



TEXAS TECH™

Operating Policy and Procedure

OP 34.20: Study Abroad Programs

DATE: November 3, 2023

PURPOSE: The purpose of this Operating Policy/Procedure (OP) is to enable more students to participate in TTU study abroad programs by ensuring that those programs are:

1. Student-centered;
2. In conformity with standards of safety and responsibility in study abroad as established by recognized international education professional organizations (e.g., NAFSA: Association of International Educators, the Forum on Education Abroad, and Diversity Abroad), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Administrative Code, and TTU operating policies and procedures; and
3. Operated by all TTU academic units in a manner that meets certain operational and program standards.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed every two years after publication. The Director of Study Abroad will coordinate revisions within International Affairs (IA) with the Vice Provost for International Affairs (VPIA) and the International Affairs Council. Substantive revisions will be forwarded to the Provost and Senior Vice President for final approval.

POLICY/PROCEDURE

1. Definitions

a. Study Abroad Advising

Providing students with choices among program and destination options and assisting students with the application process

b. Academic Advising

Students' academic advisors help determine where and when students go abroad and how study abroad course equivalents fit into their TTU degree program.

c. Credit Processing

- (1) Course credit within degree program
- (2) Course equivalence determination

d. Exit Counseling

Debriefing students who have completed their study abroad program to obtain their evaluation of the program and their experience, including reentry adjustment

e. Fee Collection

(1) Education Abroad fees

(2) Program fees for TTU faculty-led programs

Includes the student's costs and costs to cover the airfare, housing, board, and excursions of faculty leading the program

f. Funding

Scholarships, grants, and financial aid that are available to TTU students to assist them in paying for study abroad programs

g. Logistics

Assisting students with the application process and any other information pertinent to living at a specific site. The partner institution or program furnishes much of the site-specific material.

h. Orientation

(1) Safety and security orientations providing routine and emergency procedures abroad;

(2) Program-specific orientations providing site-specific information, including information on expectations of faculty, organization of classes, cultural adjustment, and practical information on day-to-day living (e.g., how to obtain money, call home, and health and safety issues that are site-specific); and

(3) General orientation providing general information on health issues abroad and general cultural adjustment strategies.

i. Visa Information

Providing information to students on where they can obtain the most up-to-date information for a country-specific visa and delivering visa applications/picking up in person passports with visas for certain destinations

j. Recruiting

Encouraging students to participate in study abroad programs

k. Screening

Evaluating and selecting applicants to study abroad

1. Acronyms

BIT – Behavior Intervention Team

TEO – Transfer Evaluation Office

Emergency response procedures are found in section 10 of this OP. The 24-hour emergency contact telephone number is the Texas Tech University Police Dispatcher 806.742.3931.

2. Types of Programs

- a. Faculty-Led Programs

Faculty-led programs are those established by TTU faculty in their area(s) of expertise to teach catalog courses to TTU students in an environment outside the United States. Faculty design the program in consultation with IA, recruit students for the program, accompany the students abroad, administer the program abroad, and act as instructor of record for classes taught. Students register directly at TTU in the courses they will take while abroad and receive credit and grades for the coursework they complete. Non-TTU students may participate as visiting students or through a consortium agreement.

- b. TTU International Centers

TTU International Centers establish a permanent Texas Tech presence abroad as the focus of TTU academic activity in that location. A resident director is on site to administer the program, and TTU faculty teach Texas Tech classes to students at the location. TTU students are registered directly at TTU in the courses they will take while abroad and receive credit and grades for the coursework they complete. Non-TTU students may participate as visiting students or through a consortium agreement.

- c. Reciprocal Exchange Programs

TTU students participating in reciprocal exchange programs pay TTU tuition and fees for the semester abroad and exchange places with students from a partner institution. Partnerships with international institutions are established through written agreements, which stipulate the terms under which students are accepted for placement and define the means for achieving balance. The defined balance must be achieved within four years of implementation of an exchange agreement.

- d. Affiliated Programs

Affiliated programs are those for which TTU has an agreement with an institution or organization to provide study abroad opportunities to Texas Tech students. TTU students pay tuition and fees directly to the affiliate partner. TTU students who receive national/international scholarships will be considered as participating in affiliated studies during their participation in the program.

- e. Joint and Dual-Degree Programs

Joint and dual-degree programs are those in which TTU students take some coursework for a TTU degree at an international partner institution. Joint and dual-degree programs may utilize

a reciprocal exchange program if it is established in the written agreement. Students receive credit and grades for coursework completed abroad, and this coursework counts toward the degree at the home institution.

Participants in joint programs receive a single diploma with the seal of the home (TTU) and host (international) institutions.

Participants in dual-degree programs receive a diploma from each institution.

These types of agreements are typically made between departments/colleges rather than at the institutional level.

f. **Consortium Programs**

Consortium agreements allow consortium members to pool resources to offer study abroad experiences to all of the institutions' students. Each member may send its students to partner programs. Consortium programs may be exchange, affiliate, or TTU Center programs.

g. **Faculty Taking or Sending Students Abroad to a Conference for Research or on a Non-credit Tour**

TTU faculty who arrange for students to go abroad or take students abroad for any reason must contact International Affairs for paperwork required of all TTU students going abroad.

3. Establishment of Study Abroad Programs

- a. Inaugurating Agreements with Foreign Entities – See [OP 34.28, International Partnership Agreements for Students, Faculty, and Researchers](#).
- b. Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs – See [OP 34.26, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs](#).
- c. Establishing New Texas Tech University International Centers – See [OP 34.27, TTU International Centers](#).
- d. Establishing a Reciprocal Exchange Program – See [OP 34.28, International Partnership Agreements for Students, Faculty, and Researchers](#).
- e. Establishing an Affiliated Program – See [OP 34.28, International Partnership Agreements for Students, Faculty, and Researchers](#).
- f. Establishing Consortium Programs – See [OP 34.28, International Partnership Agreements for Students, Faculty, and Researchers](#).

4. Eligibility Requirements to Participate in a TTU Study Abroad Program

Texas Tech students are eligible to participate in a study abroad program if they meet the following eligibility requirements:

- a. Be a sophomore by years, not credits. Students who begin as first-year students at Texas Tech must complete two long semesters before becoming eligible to study abroad. Transfer students must complete one semester at Texas Tech before being approved to study abroad.

- b. Have a TTU GPA of 2.0 at the time of application. Faculty leaders as well as TTU colleges and departments may have higher GPA requirements, as do many affiliate and reciprocal exchange programs. All students must be in good academic standing.
- c. Be in good disciplinary standing at the time of applying to study abroad and remain so up to and including the study abroad term.
- d. Students may not study abroad in the semester they plan to graduate unless they go on a faculty-led or center program. Students may study abroad in the last thirty (30) hours of their degree plan (their penultimate semester) if they meet with the dean of their college and receive permission to do so.
- e. Students postponing graduation to study abroad must be enrolled at Texas Tech during the term in which they graduate.

5. Prior to Departure

- a. Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs – See [OP 34.26, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs](#).
- b. TTU International Centers – See [OP 34.27, TTU International Centers](#).
- c. Reciprocal, Affiliated, Joint and Dual-Degree, and Consortium Study Abroad Programs
 - (1) In the case of departmental reciprocal exchange agreements, the sponsoring department will publicize the program and recruit students. IA will assist as possible.
 - (2) In the interest of university-wide standardization, whether the agreement is departmental or university-wide, the department should direct students to IA, which is responsible for the following:
 - (a) Assisting students in the application process;
 - (b) Screening applicants to ensure that they comply with GPA and student conduct requirements;
 - (c) Providing financial aid verification, information on the Study Abroad Competitive Scholarship, and other campus, national, or international scholarships;
 - (d) Informing the student of emergency and liability issues, providing insurance information, and providing online access to students for completion of items required by TTU of all students who participate in TTU study abroad programs;
 - (e) Providing a mandatory pre-departure orientation on issues of personal safety, security awareness, health, cultural adjustment, differences in academic expectations, organization of foreign institutions, and practical issues related to travel;
 - (f) Providing information on housing, transportation, and costs at the site;
 - (g) Registering students in the appropriate general studies course;

- i. IA will register students into one of the following course designations for the term in which they plan to study abroad. For undergraduates, this will generally be 12 to 15 hours for the fall or spring semester and 3 to 6 hours for each summer session. For graduate students, this will be 9 hours for a fall or spring semester and 3 to 6 hours for a summer session.
 - ii. Reciprocal Exchange – Undergraduate = RCP 2001
 Reciprocal Exchange – Graduate = RCP 5001
 Affiliated Studies – Undergraduate = AFF 2001
 Affiliated Studies – Graduate = AFF 5013
 - iii. Students participating in TTU study abroad will not be registered until they have done the following:
 - Met all program qualifications;
 - Met with an academic adviser in their department to receive counseling and approval of courses to be taken in the study abroad program;
 - Completed and submitted all forms required by IA; and
 - Participated in the IA pre-departure orientation session.
- (h) Initiating the process of obtaining TTU credit for the coursework completed abroad (see section 7 below); and
 - (i) Maintaining an accurate and up-to-date database of all past and present study abroad participants.

d. Joint/Dual-Degree Programs

For joint/dual-degree programs not based on reciprocal exchange, students are registered in the appropriate general studies course and must complete all TTU requirements for participation in study abroad.

6. Costs and Refund Policy for Study Abroad Programs

All students who have committed to a study abroad program will be billed the non-refundable Education Abroad fee in the term before they go abroad. For other costs and refund policies, see below. Regardless of the type of program, out-of-pocket costs incurred by the student, such as airfare, are the responsibility of the student should the student withdraw from the program.

- a. Faculty-Led Programs – See [OP 34.26, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs](#), and withdrawal and refund policy.
- b. TTU International Centers – See [OP 34.27, TTU International Centers](#), and withdrawal and refund policy.

c. Reciprocal Exchange Programs

Students may pay some expenses directly to the reciprocal exchange partner, such as accommodations. Any refund will be at the discretion of the partner.

d. Affiliate Programs

Students will pay tuition and fees directly to the affiliate partner. Any refund will be at the discretion of the partner.

7. Study Abroad Credit Procedures

a. Pre-approval Process

- (1) It is the student's responsibility to provide the Study Abroad Counselor with a list of courses to be taken abroad. The Study Abroad Counselor will check the TEO website for TTU course equivalencies and complete the appropriate credit pre-approval form for those courses with TTU equivalents. For courses with no TTU equivalent identified, IA will request syllabi and forward to the relevant academic department approver for approval. Courses taken on a reciprocal exchange program must be identified as a specific course and cannot be considered block credit.
- (2) When course equivalencies have been identified for all courses to be taken abroad, students will meet with their academic advisor to determine how the courses will fit into their degree plan. If there is no TTU equivalent course, the student will be advised that credit will not be granted for that course. All students are expected to bring back any class notes, syllabi, or projects after completing their study abroad program. This is especially critical for courses with an undetermined equivalent and/or for any classes taken that were not pre-approved.
- (3) IA will keep a copy of the completed pre-approval form in the student's file.

b. After Program Completion

- (1) Students are responsible for having an original transcript with the emblem and seal of the institution at which they have studied sent directly to IA upon the completion of their program of study. The Study Abroad Credit Coordinator cannot begin the process of posting credit to the student's TTU transcript until the official transcript from abroad is received.
- (2) Upon receipt of the official transcript, IA will save the transcript into the student's electronic file.
- (3) IA will work with the department, the student, and the TEO to determine final credit approval for the courses.
 - (a) If a course equivalency is posted in the TEO equivalency table, IA will note this and post a scan of it and the transcript to the Office of the Registrar.
 - (b) In the event that there was no pre-approval, IA will advise the student to make an appointment to meet with the approver and to take in course notes, papers,

projects, and any other documentation of the work the student completed in the course.

- (4) Once equivalents are approved, IA will post a scan of the student's original transcript and note the signed course equivalencies to the Office of the Registrar so that credit can be posted.

8. Incoming Exchange Students

Students coming to Texas Tech on reciprocal exchange programs work with the Incoming Exchange Coordinator in IA, who facilitates the following:

- a. Works with partner institutions and TTU departments to maintain the exchange balance;
- b. Provides the application and other pertinent information to the exchange coordinator at partner institutions;
- c. Coordinates with appropriate departments to determine course availability and registers the students in courses; and
- d. Works with the Registrar to enter students in the TTU system and obtain identification numbers.

9. Insurance for International Programs

- a. Faculty-Led Study Abroad
 - (1) At the TTU Center in Sevilla, students are covered by Spanish insurance for health and accident. In addition, students may be required to purchase an ISIC card for emergency evacuation and repatriation.
 - (2) For all other programs, students will be covered for health, accident, emergency evacuation, and repatriation through insurance contracted by Texas Tech. The cost will be billed to the student's account.
- b. TTU Centers
 - (1) At the TTU Center in Sevilla, students are covered by Spanish insurance for health and accident. In addition, students may be required to purchase an ISIC card for emergency evacuation and repatriation.
 - (2) At other TTU Centers, students are covered for health, accident, emergency evacuation, and repatriation through insurance contracted by Texas Tech. The cost will be billed to the student's account.
- c. Reciprocal Exchange Programs

Students will be covered for health, accident, emergency evacuation, and repatriation through insurance contracted by Texas Tech. The cost will be billed to the student's account.

d. Affiliated Programs

Students will be covered for health, accident, emergency evacuation, and repatriation through insurance contracted by Texas Tech. The cost will be billed to the student's account.

e. Joint/Dual-Degree Programs

Students will be covered for health, accident, emergency evacuation, and repatriation through insurance contracted by Texas Tech. The cost will be billed to the student's account.

f. Faculty Taking or Sending Students Abroad for a Conference, Research, Athletic Event, or Other Activity

Students will be covered for health, accident, emergency evacuation, and repatriation through insurance contracted by Texas Tech. The cost will be billed to the student's account.

10. Emergency Procedures

- a. The responsible TTU officials will evaluate all emergency situations to determine their nature, extent, and severity before making any decisions regarding possible responses and courses of action. TTU officials will base their decisions on an emergency action plan that, while not applicable to all situations, addresses a set of factors common to most emergencies.
- b. Cancellation of a TTU Study Abroad Program Because of Safety Concerns Prior to Departure
 - (1) The decision to suspend a TTU study abroad program can have serious consequences and will be considered carefully in view of how the cancellation will affect other TTU international programs. The Director of Study Abroad will consult with any and all affected department(s)/college(s) in making a decision to suspend a program and in implementing the cancellation process.
 - (2) If the decision to temporarily suspend a TTU study abroad program concerns issues of safety or security of TTU students, the VPIA must be consulted. IA closely monitors current safety information available from all sources, including insurance providers for the program, and will be able to provide the timeliest information if concerns arise.
 - (a) If no such warning exists, the Director of Study Abroad will gather information and consult with the VPIA. The Director of Study Abroad and the VPIA will inform the Dean of Students of these concerns and provide a recommendation of how to proceed.
 - (b) If a faculty leader decides not to take students abroad for personal reasons, the department has an obligation to the participants of the program to find an alternate leader or to make every effort to accommodate the students in a comparable program. The sponsoring academic department may face financial penalties for altering and/or canceling the program.
 - (c) If an academic department wishes to cancel a previously approved faculty-led study abroad program, the department must consult IA. If participants have already applied and/or been accepted to the program, the department should make every effort to accommodate the students in a comparable program. The

sponsoring academic department may face financial penalties for altering and/or canceling the program.

c. Emergency Response When a TTU Study Abroad Program is in Progress

- (1) When a travel advisory or warning is issued advising U.S. citizens to leave or not to travel to a specific location, the Director of Study Abroad will contact the VPIA, Dean of Students, and the appropriate insurance provider to discuss bringing the students to an alternative, suitable location.
- (2) If IA receives information that the study abroad site is dangerous for TTU students, the Director of Study Abroad will contact the VPIA, the Dean of Students, and the appropriate insurance provider to discuss the option of moving the program to an alternate site.
- (3) In the event of less immediate emergency situations in which the Director of Study Abroad determines that there is risk to the group, s/he will gather information from the U.S Department of State's Citizen Emergency Center (202.647.5225), TTU's insurance provider, and other U.S. institutions with students in that location and inform the VPIA and the Dean of Students of the situation as quickly as possible to begin evaluation of the situation and to implement a response.
- (4) Once the essential facts have been gathered for non-exigency situations, the Director of Study Abroad, the VPIA, and the Dean of Students will call a meeting of those members of the BIT necessary to make a decision as to what action is needed. The decision of the BIT will be reviewed by the Provost and Senior Vice President. The group will consider the following:
 - (a) Any immediate measures needed to maintain the safety and welfare of students and staff;
 - (b) Additional issues of health, security, academics, financial aid, public relations, and legal liability;
 - (c) The appropriate course of action to be taken overseas (e.g., dealing with initial student panic, recommending appropriate student behaviors, developing a written course of action, having students acknowledge in writing receipt of such direction, etc.);
 - (d) Developing and assisting with an appropriate evacuation plan, if necessary, (e.g., considering the safety of various modes and routes of travel, the costs of evacuation and the method of meeting those costs, the possibility of reducing the level of threat by dispersing students in small groups to reconvene later in another locale, available in-country resources, etc.);
 - (e) Designating one individual as point-of-contact to assume responsibility for the situation at the home institution;
 - (f) Developing a written strategy to be used by all individuals involved (consistency is crucial);

- (g) Preparing a contact list of individuals, including parents and emergency contacts, to be alerted when the entire plan is ready;
- (h) Developing a daily communication plan;
- (i) Coordinating with a TTU media spokesperson;
- (j) Providing appropriate individuals, including parents and emergency contacts, with a daily situation report until the crisis is over; and
- (k) Preparing an “after action” report to assess and document the impact of the event and document all actions taken.