

JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY
Manual of Policies and Procedures

POLICY NUMBER: II:14

DATE: July 2021

REVISION/REVIEW DATES:

SUBJECT: Study Abroad

APPROVED: Dr. Don C. Killingsworth, Jr., President

PURPOSE

This policy supports efforts of Jacksonville State University (JSU) to increase study abroad while helping to ensure the safety of all participants, including Program Leaders (faculty or staff members) and students, and minimizing risks associated with study abroad programs.

POLICY

This policy delineates the requirements and expectations associated with the study abroad programs for qualified Program Leaders and students.

1. **Applicability to Both Program Leaders and Students:**

1.1. Applicability of JSU Policies

1.1.1. Students:

While participating in an approved Study Abroad Program, students retain their status as JSU students and therefore will be held accountable for any infraction of the JSU Student Handbook as well as the JSU Code of Conduct while abroad. Students are subject to JSU policies when studying abroad just as when on-campus. Infractions that occur prior to the student's Study Abroad experience may jeopardize the student's eligibility to study abroad. All reported infractions that occur while abroad will be reported to and addressed by the Office of Community Standards and Student Ethics in the same way that they would be treated outside of the Study Abroad program. Depending on the severity of the infraction, it may be addressed immediately or upon completion of the study abroad program.

While abroad, students are also subject to the laws of the host country, in addition to the policies of the host institution (if applicable), program provider, JSU, and the Office of International House & Programs.

1.1.2. Program Leaders:

JSU defines “Program Leaders” as faculty members and/or staff members leading or assisting in a study abroad program. The Program Leaders are therefore the instructors of study abroad classes, and/ or the logistical coordinators and/or responsible individual for student support while abroad. Program Leaders must be one of the following:

- Professor
- Associate Professor
- Assistant Professor
- Instructor
- Adjunct Instructor
- Administrative/Professional Staff

While leading an approved Study Abroad Program, Program Leaders retain their status and responsibilities as JSU employees and therefore will be held accountable for any infraction of JSU’s Policies and Procedures, the [JSU Faculty Handbook](#) and/or [JSU Staff Handbook](#) while abroad. JSU policies are applicable when teaching abroad as when teaching on-campus. Infractions that occur prior to the Study Abroad program may jeopardize the Program Leader’s eligibility to lead Study Abroad. All reported infractions that occur while abroad will be reported to and addressed by the appropriate office. Depending on the severity of the infraction, it may be addressed immediately or upon completion of the study abroad program.

While abroad, Program Leaders are subject to the laws of the host country, in addition to the policies of the host institution (if applicable), program provider, JSU, and the Office of International House & Programs.

1.2. Courses and Academic Expectations

Program Leaders must ensure that study abroad courses meet the rigorous academic standards set by JSU. Excursions and activities related to the curriculum upon which a course is based can count towards the required contact hours.

Students participating in JSU Faculty/Staff-Led Programs shall register in the course(s) selected by the Program Leader prior to departure. Academic expectations will be set forth in the course syllabus provided by the Program Leader. Any grade dispute must follow JSU grade appeal policy, available from the dean's office of the College offering the course.

Students participating in a Direct Exchange Program must register for 12 hours of the IHP 399 course, as well as IHP 398 (0 hours) at JSU, prior to departure. Academic expectations will be set forth in the course syllabi provided by the instructors at the host institution. Any grade dispute must be resolved between the student and the instructors at the host institution. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the host institution sends transcripts to JSU in a timely manner.

Students should meet with a JSU Financial Aid Counselor to discuss any full course load requirements that may be applicable during their Study Abroad term.

Students participating in a consortium Study Abroad Program must be enrolled in the IHP 398 (0 hours) at JSU and appropriate course(s), either at JSU or through the consortium.

Regardless of the type of study abroad experience chosen, Program Leaders and students are required to attend mandatory pre-departure orientation offered through the Office of International House & Programs.

1.3. Non-Affiliated Travelers

Non-Affiliated travelers include but are not limited to the following groups of travelers:

a. Recent JSU graduates/alumni

These are the students who may have planned to study abroad during their senior year but were not able to participate in the program due to circumstances beyond their control, such as an international travel ban imposed by nations worldwide, global pandemic, natural disasters in the host country, delayed study abroad plan, etc. A non-affiliated traveler will be required to enroll in the chosen study abroad class as a non-degree student and will be required to complete the JSU study abroad application process. If a student intends for the study abroad credit to be posted as senior year credit on the recently completed bachelor's degree, the student must complete the study abroad program within a year of the student's graduation date.

b. Students enrolled at another university.

These students will have to enroll in the chosen JSU study abroad class as non-degree student to be able to participate in the JSU study abroad program. They will be required to complete the JSU study abroad application process and JSU predeparture orientation.

c. Accompanying family members--

Program Leaders leading a study abroad program are responsible not only for planning and implementing a study abroad program that is academically rigorous, but also for logistical portions of their programs while abroad and must therefore be available for all students in the event of an individual or group emergency.

Due to the time required of Program Leaders to fulfill their responsibilities in leading a study abroad program, the University does not recommend that Program Leaders bring their family members on study abroad programs.

While it is not recommended, Program Leaders are allowed to bring accompanying family members with written prior approval from the department head, dean, Provost, and the President. The Study Abroad Committee and the Office of International House and Programs, as well as Office of the Associate Vice Provost, must be informed of these arrangements. If Program Leaders are working with third-party providers or

partner universities/institutions, they need to notify the third-party provider or partner university/institution of any accompanying family members, as these arrangements will impact the on-site faculty housing, activities, and actions taken during any emergency affecting the program.

If Program Leaders request and receive approval to bring their family member(s) on study abroad programs, they are required to follow the guidelines below:

- Only spouses and children are considered as family members eligible to accompany the Program Leader. If children are under 18,
 - There must be a second Program Leader assisting with the study abroad program, and
 - There must be an alternate caregiver for accompanying children, 24 hours a day and throughout the duration of the program.

- Program Leaders are required to provide a written plan explaining and detailing how they will carry out their responsibilities with accompanying family members present and must state in writing their commitment to be available to all students 24 hours a day in the event of real or perceived emergencies. This written plan must be submitted to the Department Head and the Dean and receive approval from both. The approved plan must then be submitted to the Office of International House and Programs, which will include this plan with the study abroad proposal for review and approval by the Study Abroad committee, Associate Vice Provost, Provost, and the President.

- The arrangements for accommodation, transportation, and other activities of the study abroad program will not extend to the accompanying family members. These arrangements must be made separately with the third-party provider or partner university/institution and cannot be paid for by Jacksonville State University.

- Program Leaders must cover the cost of their own family's meals, housing, transportation, and incidentals.

- Accompanying family members are not covered under JSU's Liability Insurance and therefore, before departure, will be required to sign documents indemnifying Jacksonville State University and submit proof of travel insurance.
- Accompanying family members cannot be housed in student housing, participate in JSU study abroad classes, class excursions, or field trips unless they enroll as a student. Separate arrangements need to be made for excursions or field trips.
- Family members wishing to visit Program Leaders after the start of a program abroad or for a shorter time during a program abroad are encouraged to make their own housing, meal, and transportation arrangements. Family members may not stay at an on-site residence unless pre-arranged and pre-approved in writing by the third-party provider and/or partner university/institution. Family members cannot share a room with the student participants of the program.
- Students are not permitted to bring accompanying family members.

1.4. Cancellation and Travel Advisories

JSU is not responsible for any cost incurred for programs cancelled due to Travel Advisories, for programs which must be changed or modified due to health and safety concerns, or for programs modified or cancelled in the event of unforeseeable events.

JSU may not permit faculty/staff or students to travel abroad to a country which is under either a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Travel Health Warning or for which the US Department of State has issued a Travel Advisory Level 3 - Reconsider Travel or Level 4 - Do Not Travel. JSU reserves the right to decline placement in a program, rescind a student's approval to study abroad, or cancel any program in its entirety in the event the CDC or US Department of State issues a new travel advisory for the country or region in which the program is going to be held.

It is the responsibility of the Program Leaders and/or students to stay informed about travel warning changes concerning the host country and any locations where they will be traveling while abroad. If a new warning is issued after the Study Abroad program has begun, the program assignment may need to be modified, changed, or canceled. Any and all modifications to a Study Abroad program for health and safety must involve close consultation with the Office of International House & Programs and may involve the Office of Provost, the Office of Finance and Administration, and the Office of President. Program modifications in these cases will not necessarily carry with them any refund of program fees.

There may be instances in which the US government, the state of Alabama, JSU, the Office of International House & Programs, or the third-party provider decides that any ongoing Study Abroad Program must be modified or cancelled, due to an unforeseeable event, such as a terrorist attack, pandemic, or natural disaster. In this case, Program Leaders and students abroad must abide by these decisions and follow directions from JSU, including an immediate return home, if directed. In such cases, the Study Abroad Coordinator or Director of International House and Programs will notify the Program Leader and students with the University's instructions.

1.5. Financial Loss

Should at any point a Program Leader and/or student decide to end the process before departure or end participation before the program is finished or should a Program Leader or student become disqualified due to failure to follow guidelines set forth by JSU and the Office of International House & Programs, the Program Leader or student will be responsible for ALL financial losses, including but not limited to airline tickets and any financial assistance that must be returned.

Should the Program Leader and/or students be required to end the program and return home immediately due to an unforeseen event such as a terrorist attack, pandemic, or natural disaster, the Program Leader and/or students will be responsible for ALL financial losses, including but not limited to airline tickets and any scholarships or financial aid that must be returned.

For these reasons, the Program Leader and/or students shall ensure that they have proper travel insurance and shall review the refund policy of all service providers, including but not

limited to the airlines, third-party providers, JSU's partner universities, and other relevant entities.

2. Applicable to Program Leaders:

2.1. JSU Study Abroad Approval

All Study Abroad Programs must be reviewed and approved by appropriate JSU authorities.

2.1.1. Faculty-Led Programs:

Study Abroad programs led by JSU Program Leaders must be reviewed and approved by the following:

- ✓ Department Head of faculty member and/or program
- ✓ Dean of College of faculty member and/or program
- ✓ Study Abroad Review Team within the International Program Advisory Committee
- ✓ The International Travel Risk Committee (ITRC) for travel to countries designated as Level 3 - Reconsider Travel or Level 4 - Do Not Travel, by the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories or Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- ✓ Associate Vice Provost
- ✓ Provost
- ✓ President

2.1.2. Direct Exchange Programs:

Students travelling to JSU's partner universities on an exchange and/or study abroad agreement must be approved by the following:

- ✓ The Office of International House & Programs
- ✓ Academic Advisor of the Student Participant
- ✓ Department Head and Dean of student's academic program
- ✓ The Office of Registrar
- ✓ International University Partner
- ✓ The International Travel Risk Committee (ITRC) for travel to countries designated as Level 3 - Reconsider Travel or Level 4 - Do Not Travel, by the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories or Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

2.1.3. Consortium Programs:

Study Abroad programs offered by a consortium of which JSU is part must be reviewed and approved by the following:

- ✓ Respective Department Head
- ✓ Respective Dean of College
- ✓ Study abroad review team within the International Program Advisory Committee
- ✓ The International Travel Risk Committee (ITRC) for travel to countries designated as Level 3 - Reconsider Travel or Level 4 - Do Not Travel, by the U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories or Centers for Disease Control (CDC)
- ✓ Associate Vice Provost
- ✓ Provost
- ✓ President

2.2. Faculty Compensation

Faculty teaching or leading student abroad programs may have courses count as part of the regular course load or as an overload, pending appropriate approvals. Typically, JSU faculty are not compensated by the university for leading or teaching study abroad programs and should acknowledge that they are participating as a volunteer. However, transportation costs, phone plans, and subsistence may be reimbursed. Faculty will not be reimbursed by JSU for any costs covered by the study abroad provider, consortia, third-party provider, or partner. Some consortia compensate faculty for teaching, and some cover per diem costs. Faculty are encouraged to seek details about compensation from consortia and third-party providers.

2.3. Program Changes

Changes to the Study Abroad program (participants, participant information, itinerary, instructional plans) must be filed with the Office of International House & Programs in a timely manner, so that the office can adjust marketing, costs, and anything else relevant to reflect those changes.

The Study Abroad Coordinator serves as JSU's official emergency contact person for all Study Abroad participants. The coordinator must be provided with detailed, correct, and updated information by the Program Leader, by deadlines given. This information includes information on all participants, a detailed itinerary which includes dates, correct names, addresses, and phone numbers for the accommodations, local contact person information, excursion locations, or other destinations to help in an emergency situation.

The Office of International House and Programs collects and maintains this information electronically and shares the information as needed with appropriate authorities.

2.4. Excursions and High-Risk Activities

Faculty-Led programs that include excursions must be handled by a qualified excursion travel company that provides liability insurance coverage for all transportation, housing, excursion venues, program elements, as well as certification and qualification of translators and excursion leaders. The company must be able to provide services in case of disaster and emergencies.

JSU will not support a program that involves high risk activities such as bungee jumping, parachuting, paragliding, etc. JSU Program Leaders should actively counsel and discourage against such high-risk activities and may not endorse them if students plan such activities for their free/personal time.

2.5. Program Leader & Student Ratio

All JSU faculty-led study abroad programs shall maintain a maximum ratio of 15 students to 1 faculty/staff member, and where possible, 2 faculty/staff are preferred for study abroad programs. Faculty/staff must provide a written plan in case of Program Leader incapacitation.

3. Applicable to students participating in study abroad program:

3.1. Student Eligibility

JSU students participating in any Study Abroad Program must meet the eligibility requirements. However, meeting eligibility requirements does not automatically guarantee placement in a Study Abroad Program. Even if approved, students must maintain eligibility prior to departure.

3.1.1. Prior Study

Students must have completed two full semesters at JSU prior to studying abroad.

3.1.2. Academic Standing

Students must have a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.5 or higher (depending on specific program requirements), both at the time of application and immediately prior to the program's start date.

3.1.3. Disciplinary Status

Students on disciplinary probation are not eligible to submit a Study Abroad application or participate in a Study Abroad Program. If a student was previously on disciplinary probation, one full semester (fall or spring) must have passed with no additional disciplinary incidents.

3.1.4. International Students

JSU international students who are considering studying abroad must be able to maintain student immigration status while participating in a JSU-approved Study Abroad Program.

3.1.5. Credit hour limitations

Undergraduate students may not take more than 24 hours of Study Abroad courses during a bachelor's degree program. The limits are established by the University, but individual degree programs may have stricter limits. Graduate students will need to consult with their respective department to know the limitation on number hours of Study Abroad courses during their graduate degree program. Prior to enrollment in a Study Abroad course, students must follow course approval process that involves getting courses approved by the academic advisor, department head, and the Office of the Registrar.

3.1.6. Non-JSU Participants

For a Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program, occasionally students from other universities will want to join, should the home university not offer a similar Study Abroad program. Such a student must be admitted to JSU as a Transient student and must meet the same requirements as JSU students for prior study, academic standing, and disciplinary status. The student must follow the same policies and procedures that JSU students follow, as well as those of the home university. The student is required to stay in contact with both the JSU Study Abroad Coordinator and the equivalent person at the student's home university throughout the application process and the Study Abroad Program.

3.2. Non-Discrimination and Accommodations:

Prerequisites, recruitment, selection, and admission of study abroad participants must be published, transparent, and consistent with JSU's policies and any applicable course requirements and standards. In accordance with federal and state laws and regulations, all qualified students seeking admission to a travel program will receive equal consideration without unlawful regard to race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, marital status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

It is important to note that although JSU is committed to providing full and equal access to all its programs, educational institutions and other organizations abroad may not be required to provide certain accommodations which may be deemed appropriate at JSU.

3.3. Student Program Placement:

The Office of International House & Programs will consider students' Study Abroad applications on a rolling basis. An applicant will be notified of application status and decision via an email message to the student's JSU email address. Pending applications that are incomplete after any initial application deadlines posted may be automatically withdrawn.

PROCEDURES

- A. The Program Leader must follow all procedures set by the Offices of International House & Programs, academic department, college, Academic Affairs, and JSU.

- B. Students must follow all procedures set by the Offices of International House & Programs, academic department, dean, the Office of Registrar, the Office of Financial Aid, JSU, third party provider if applicable, and JSU's partner universities, if applicable.

RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of International House & Programs is responsible for this policy.

EVALUATION

This policy and its procedures will be evaluated at least every five (5) years.