

COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON
STUDY ABROAD
FINANCIAL HANDBOOK

Created by the Controller's Office and the Center for International Education

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
Financial Responsibilities as Program Director	3
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT	3
Budget Development.....	3
Account Review	4
Surplus Considerations	4
Funding	5
Use of Program Providers	5
TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION AND PREPAID EXPENDITURES	6
Travel Authorization	6
Expense Payments Prior to Trip	7
EXPENDITURES DURING PROGRAM	7
Cash Advances.....	7
Foreign Currency	8
Travel Reimbursements.....	8
Program Deficits.....	9
Change in Approved Travel Plans.....	9

INTRODUCTION

This guide applies to all College of Charleston study abroad programs. It is a supplement to the College's policies and procedures intended to provide additional information to program directors and is not meant to replace College policies. Refer to the Travel Policy and the Student Group Travel policies on the Controller's Office website, and the Handbook for Study Abroad Program Directors on the Center for International Education's (CIE's) website.

In order to gain College approval for international student group travel, program directors must submit a signed Study Abroad Program Proposals no later than the due date for their intended term of travel. Program proposals are typically due to the Center for International Education approximately one year prior to program implementation; exact deadlines are indicated on the Study Abroad Program Proposal Form. The program proposal must include an itemized budget which outlines anticipated program expenses.

Financial Responsibilities as Program Director

As indicated in the Handbook for Study Abroad Program Directors, the role of Program Director carries more responsibilities than in the typical role as a professor at the College. One of the largest responsibilities is the fiscal management of the program budget. Program Directors are responsible for developing the program budget (see Handbook for Study Abroad Program Directors), ensuring all items requiring payment before the trip are processed, maintaining accurate financial records, preparing a travel reimbursement report after the trip, and submitting it to CIE within 10 business days after returning. Program Directors are also responsible for the safekeeping of any currency obtained prior to the trip, the safe return of all unused funds, and for ensuring that total expenses do not exceed the program budget. All Program Directors must attend a financial training session sponsored by the Controller's Office and the Center for International Education held in the February preceding the term abroad.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Budget Development

As part of the program proposal process, program directors should develop a program budget, estimating costs for each aspect of the program. The CIE provides a template to help determine the program fee. See Appendix A for the program budget template included in the Program Proposal Form. The program fee is the cost of the program as described in the program's brochure and/or other advertising. This generally covers airfare, lodging, some meals, excursions, ground transportation, and the expenses for each program director traveling with the group (airfare, lodging, and local transportation). It also should include the \$50 study abroad application fee as well as the \$32/month per person – including the program director(s) – medical insurance fee.

Program budgets should be calculated based on a minimum of 10 students. Program directors must take into account the director(s)' costs when calculating the program fee. If you set the program fee based on a minimum of 10 students, you should divide the program director(s) costs by 10 and then add the total to the per student cost. For example:

- Per student cost is \$3,500
- Program directors' cost is \$7,000 (\$3,500 for each program director)
- Divide \$7,000 by 10 students, which amounts to \$700 per student
- $\$700 + \$3,500 = \$4,200$ (advertised program fee)

The program fee advertised is an estimate; however, it is important that your budget is as accurate as it can be. Transportation and housing can be affected by the number of participants (housing can also be affected by the male/female participant ratio) and currency exchange fluctuations. You must plan on a "contingency fund" of \$50-\$100 per student for unexpected occurrences (emergencies, opportunities that arise after you're in the host country, etc.).

Please note that tuition is not included in the program fee. For summer study abroad courses, all students are charged the equivalent of in-state tuition; however, out-of-state students are assessed an additional 30% of the in-state rate.

Program directors are encouraged to seek proposals from a licensed service provider who can assist with the logistical arrangements on-site. See "Use of Program Providers" under #4 – Travel Arrangements below.

Account Review

Program directors can view the status of their accounts using Cognos. For information on how to use Cognos, please see the "Quickguide to Cognos" for a brief overview; and the "Consumer Navigation Guide" for a more detailed description. Both links can be found at the following website, <http://it.cofc.edu/bi/Additional%20Documentation.php>, or by going to <http://it.cofc.edu>, clicking on 'Business Intelligence', then clicking on 'Additional Documentation'. If you do not currently have access to Cognos, you may submit a request by logging into MyCharleston, clicking on the 'My Forms' tab and selecting the link for 'Finance Access' under Business Intelligence > Cognos Access Requests.

Surplus Considerations

The program budget and program fee should be as accurate as possible in order to avoid a significant surplus or deficit. The Program Director and the CIE should communicate about specific treatment of annual balances. Small surpluses will remain in the index for the following year's program. If a surplus for a program is identified before the trip, the amounts billed to the students should be adjusted, upon approval by the Associate Provost for International Education. **If a surplus is not identified until after**

the program ends, the Program Director must communicate with the Associate Provost for International Education prior to communicating any possible refunds to the student participants.

Funding

Once the program fee is charged to the student participants via eBill on myCharleston, funds are deposited into the individual program account created specifically for the study abroad program. The Treasurer's Office determines the billing cycle each term (<http://treasurer.cofc.edu/billing-schedule/index.php>). Funds may be spent prior to the collection of program fees. Program participants must sign a financial agreement as part of their online study abroad application, which indicates that expenditures will be made on their behalf. Please see Appendix B for the Financial Agreement.

Another CofC department may choose to contribute funds to the study abroad program (i.e. the faculty member's academic department); however, the departmental account **must** appear on the Travel Authorization (TA) Form prior to obtaining signatures. The TA should list the exact amount and the specific expense that the departmental account will contribute to. The fund administrator for the departmental account must also sign the TA. For further information on TA processing, please see Travel Authorization Form section below.

Use of Program Providers

The use of program providers for logistical arrangements is highly encouraged. These service providers not only ease the burden of making multiple reservations and payments for on-site logistical arrangements, but they also provide support during the program. This support allows the program directors to focus on their teaching responsibilities while relying on the provider to ensure the logistics associated with the program are running smoothly. In addition, service providers can share the responsibility of maintaining a safe environment for the students and faculty directors while abroad, and can assist in case of an emergency.

Program providers can typically provide a wide range of services and can customize what is needed depending on the needs of the particular program. For instance, the program provider can assist with as little as one or two logistical aspects, or they can facilitate all the logistical arrangements needed to run the program. If a program director has a particular on-site contact that he/she would like to work with, such as an expert who will lecture on a particular topic, the program provider can facilitate arrangements with the on-site contact.

Service providers should be contacted a couple months prior to the program proposal deadline to allow adequate time to develop a quote. It is also recommended that several service providers are contacted for a quote to provide a point of comparison. The Center for International Education can suggest reputable program providers depending on your specific logistical needs.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION AND PREPAID EXPENDITURES

Travel Authorization

- CofC will not be responsible for any unscheduled and/or unauthorized student-group travel. All applicable campus travel forms must be completed, approved, and received in the Controller's Office prior to the trip. Please ensure the most economical means of travel is used when making travel arrangements to keep student costs as low as possible, while maintaining adequate safety.
- An approved Travel Authorization form is required for all study abroad programs, and is located on the Controller's Office website. CIE will prepare all TA forms. The form serves three basic functions as follows:
 - i. Administrative approval of the trip and travel arrangements
 - ii. Commitment of funds
 - iii. Supporting documentation for reimbursement claims
- One Travel Authorization form should be completed for the Program Director and all students traveling with the program. The Program Director is responsible for the management of the funds, must account for all expenditures of the group and will be reimbursed by the submission of a Travel Reimbursement Request form. If there are two Program Directors, the other Program Director's individual costs, such as airfare, per diem, cell phone charges, etc. must be on a separate Travel Authorization under the second Program Director. Only group costs (lodging ground transportation, activity fees) should be indicated on the group Travel Authorization under the first Program Director.
- All Travel Authorization forms must be signed by the director's department chair, dean AND the Associate Provost for International Education. Written information on all logistical arrangements abroad must be provided to the Associate Provost for review and approval before any payment can be made for services.
- All funding sources must be identified up front, and the appropriate indexes included on the Travel Authorization form. If the travel expenses/reimbursements are to be paid from multiple indexes, the fund administrator for each index must sign the Travel Authorization form, and be listed as an authorized signer on the Index/FOP Access Form for that index. Do not change funding sources after the TA form has been approved.
- The approved Travel Authorization form should be submitted to the Controller's Office **not less than ten (10)** business days prior to the commencement of travel.

- A copy of the approved TA form must accompany all requests for payment or reimbursement submitted to the Controller's Office.

Expense Payments Prior to Trip

Expenditures are made directly from the program index. An invoice is required for any and all payments to service providers. Invoices must include the name and address of the vendor, services to be rendered, payment amount and due date. All invoices and other payment requests must be submitted to the CIE at least two weeks in advance of the deadline to ensure adequate time to process payment. Failure to comply with this may result in late payment and cancellation of your reservations or higher fares. The CIE will complete the necessary paperwork to submit to the Controller's Office for payment. The vendor/service provider's W-9 or W-8BEN forms must be on file in Procurement before payment can be processed.

Direct Payment – if at all possible, the first option for payment of lodging and transportation expenses such as airfare should be to arrange for direct payment to the vendor using the regular Procurement and Accounts Payable processes (purchase orders and Expenditure Authorization forms). Direct payments can be made via wire transfer, or check/ACH (if it's a U.S. entity). For wire transfer payments the invoice must also include the beneficiary name and address (this may be different from the vendor name/address), bank name, bank address, account number, IBAN, and SWIFT/BIC code. Wire transfers will incur a fee ranging from \$15-\$35 per wire.

State Purchasing Travel Card – CIE has access to a travel card that can be used to **prepay** student group travel expenses if direct pay is not possible. Allowable student group travel expenses may include lodging, airfare, group meals, ground transportation while they are in travel status, and activity costs such as entrance fees for museums. A secure website address may be sent to the CIE in place of a website. Instructions must be given on the exact items to be purchased or arrangements that need to be secured. The CIE may request a meeting to ensure that the correct arrangements are made.

Personal credit cards must not be used to cover student travel expenses in anticipation of receiving an advance reimbursement prior to taking the trip.

EXPENDITURES DURING PROGRAM

Cash Advances

- Cash advances are allowed for 98% percent of the budgeted amount of lodging and group meal expenses, if not prepaid before travel.
- Cash advances are allowed for 100% of entrance fees related to group activities.

- The cash advance form is located on the Controller's Office website, and must be submitted no later than 10 business days prior to the beginning of the trip.
- Cash advances will not be issued earlier than 5 days prior to travel, even if the request is received before that date.
- Students are not eligible to receive cash advances.
- Program directors must work with CIE on all requests for cash advances.

Foreign Currency

- All travel forms must be completed in U.S. dollars.
- It is the Program Director's responsibility to convert actual currency prior to/after travel where necessary. Unused currency should be returned to the Treasurer's Office in U.S. dollars no later than 10 business days upon the completion of the program.
- **Students should not be asked/allowed to carry program funds at any time.**
- For all receipts in foreign currency, the Program Director must convert the amounts to U.S. dollars prior to requesting reimbursement or closing out the cash advance. The appropriate day's exchange rate for each expense should be used.

Travel Reimbursements

- Travel reimbursement forms should be submitted to CIE within one week of returning from the trip.
- Original receipts are required for all expenditures, and should be pasted or taped on plain white paper. Please do not staple or overlap receipts.
- Receipts should be categorized as noted on the template (airfare, lodging, group meals, per diem, other transportation, or miscellaneous expenses).
- Examples of miscellaneous expenses include activity fees, gasoline, parking, phone charges, and supplies
- Daily expenses should be tracked using the study abroad program expense report, located on the Controller's Office website (and Attachment A).
- Please provide thorough documented explanation for those expenses for which an original receipt does not exist.
- Meals/Per diem - the foreign per diem rate is \$52 per day, for all locations. Receipts are not required when reimbursing per diem rates.
- The arrival and departure dates and times need to be noted on the reimbursement form.
- Tips will be reimbursed based on the nature of the related expense and the customs in the particular country of travel. Amounts must be reasonable, and be accompanied by an original receipt where possible.
- No reimbursement is permissible for expenses incurred outside the travel dates on the approved TA.

Program Deficits

The program budget and program fee should be as accurate as possible in order to avoid a surplus or deficit. CIE will communicate with the Program Director about specific treatment of annual balances. If program expenses result in a deficit, the Program Director may or may not be reimbursed depending on what caused the deficit. Deficits caused by poor fiscal management will not be reimbursed, where deficits caused by legitimate emergency expenses may be reimbursed. The Associate Provost for International Education must approve such reimbursements. Deficits may not be charged to departmental operating indexes.

Change in Approved Travel Plans

Any change in travel plans must be communicated to the Center for International Education immediately. The CIE will then assess whether the Travel Authorization Form needs to be updated and communicate any changes to the Controller's Office. Please note that any proposed change in location, term, program director, or course must be reviewed and approved by the Associate Provost for International Education.