

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION ACAF Academic Affairs		POLICY NUMBER ACAF 2.08
POLICY TITLE Instructor-Led International Programs for Students		
SCOPE OF POLICY USC Columbia		DATE OF REVISION May 14, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost		ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE Office of the Provost

PURPOSE

This policy establishes protocols for creating and operating instructor-led international programs for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students. This policy does not relate to academic major degree programs that are conducted internationally.

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this policy, the terms **abroad, overseas and international** refer to any location outside of the fifty United States of America and District of Columbia (Washington, D.C.).

Invited Guests: individuals who do not have an official role in the program.

POLICY STATEMENT

The University of South Carolina encourages faculty and staff participation in programs that provide students with international educational opportunities. These opportunities include credit-bearing courses with an international component as well as non-credit bearing international travel programs.

A. Proposals for all credit-bearing or non-credit bearing instructor-led international programs for students shall be reviewed and approved by the International Program Approval Committee (IPAC) based upon established criteria, which should include:

1. For all international programs:

a. Safety of the program destination and program activities

The program proposal should demonstrate awareness of all major health, safety, and security risks present in the program destination or inherent to the program activities.

b. Program leader experience

i. The program developer should have transferrable experiences in international travel, education abroad, and/or experiential education.

- ii. If the program developer lacks prior experience in the international destination, an approved service provider with standing operations in the destination must be utilized.

- c. Program leader expertise and program subject matter compatibility

Program developers must have instructional and/or professional expertise that would add value to the learning environment; they must be able to make an intellectual contribution to a student's understanding of the social, historical, political, economic, linguistic, cultural, environmental, or academic context(s) specific to the international location.

- d. Daily itinerary

The proposal should include a detailed day-to-day itinerary capturing all the planned activities, tours, and instructional time.

- e. Anticipated cost of the program

The program proposal should include an accurately anticipated cost of the program that each student participant will be charged inclusive of accommodations, in-country transportation, activity expenses, and, if applicable, some meals. The anticipated cost does not need to include USC tuition or international airfare.

- f. Departmental support

The program proposal must include a completed Program Leader Agreement Form signed by the Dean or Director of the sponsoring college or division.

- 2. For credit-bearing international programs

- a. Academic merit

A credit-bearing proposal must include a complete syllabus with a detailed course outline, learning outcomes, and assessment procedures suitable for the credits earned and course level.

- b. Compatibility of academic focus and destination

Course developers should demonstrate the synergy between the academic content and the international setting.

- B. The International Program Approval Committee is chaired by a Vice Provost with oversight of Global Carolina. Other committee members include, but are not limited to, the Director of Education Abroad and one or more representatives from the university faculty. Committee members are appointed by the chair of IPAC.

PROCEDURES

A. Overseas Program Development and Approval Process

1. To develop an instructor-led international program for students, the program developer follows the procedures established by the Education Abroad Office for the development of an international program.
 2. To obtain approval for the international program, the program developer submits a completed international program proposal form by the established deadline to the Education Abroad Office, which will forward the proposal to the International Program Approval Committee.
 3. If IPAC has follow-up questions, the Education Abroad Office will collate and forward the Committee's questions or concerns to the program developer. Upon receipt, the program developer should acknowledge receipt and aim to respond to all questions in a timely manner (i.e. within 10 business days of receipt).
 4. IPAC returns approved proposals to the Education Abroad Office, which communicates the Committee's initial approval to the program developer. Initial approval allows the program developer to proceed with the next steps of the development process.
 5. Once the program is approved by IPAC, the program developer submits a contract between USC and any service provider or international partner institution with an accompanying Contract Approval Form to the Education Abroad Office by the established deadline. The Education Abroad Office will route the contract through the Office of the Provost, the Office of General Counsel, and the Board of Trustees for approval.
 6. Upon receipt of a copy of the service provider/overseas partner institution contract approved by the Board of Trustees, the Education Abroad Office communicates final program approval to the program developer and to the sponsoring Department, School, or College. Program deposits may not be collected from students, and payments to the service provider may not be made prior to the program developer receiving this final approval.
- B. Throughout the duration of the program, program leaders are required to comply with the relevant policies, procedures, and guidelines outlined in the Education Abroad Office's Instructor-Led Program Handbook. IPAC may revoke approval of an international program if the leader(s) fails to comply with the Instructor-Led Program Handbook and/or other university policies and regulations.
1. Invited Guests on Education Abroad Programs

Invited Guests are generally not permitted to accompany the group, nor participate in program-related activities. This includes but is not limited to spouses, partners, dependents, family, community members, and friends. This policy applies to all short-term, instructor-led, travel-based programs. Exceptions may be granted on a case-by-case basis with prior written approval from designated Global Carolina leadership and under specific conditions related to safety, liability, and program logistics.

Exception for “In Residence”: Program leaders are considered “in residence” when leading programs that are four weeks or longer and based in a single location. In these cases, invited guests may accompany the group abroad. However, they will not be considered participants of the program and therefore will not be eligible to participate in program-related activities and excursions.

- C. University faculty and staff must receive approval from IPAC to lead an international credit or non-credit educational program for students. Faculty or staff non-compliance are subject to appropriate disciplinary action. Student teams and groups acting as official representatives of the university (e.g. Athletics, University Bands) traveling internationally to complete a university-sanctioned activity (e.g. participate in a tournament) are not required to undergo IPAC review, but student participants should register with the Education Abroad Office via the non-credit enrollment process.

Per policy [FINA 2.50 Travel Expenditures](#), sharing of the same bedroom or sleep space is strictly prohibited when a power differential exists between travelers. A power differential exists when one party has supervisory authority, academic authority, or other authority over another party.

RELATED UNIVERSITY, STATE AND FEDERAL POLICIES
[ACAF 2.00 Creation and Revision of Academic Programs](#)
[FINA 2.50 Travel Expenditures](#)

HISTORY OF REVISIONS

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
June 4, 2013	New policy approval
May 5, 2017	Office name change and committee composition.
June 13, 2023	Updated to standard template and update to current practices
May 14, 2025	Overseas Program Approval Committee name changed to International Program Approval Committee. Updates to current practices.