Study Abroad Programs
Director's Guide

Educating Citizen-Soldiers of the World

General Guidance for VMI Study Abroad Programs

(Note: This pamphlet has been created for summer program directors but may be useful for any VMI faculty or staff member who takes cadets abroad.)

A successful summer study abroad program requires close coordination and cooperation between the faculty member serving as the Program Director (PD) and the Office of International Programs (OIP). The faculty member is responsible for planning and conducting the program and the OIP is responsible for providing assistance to the PD, particularly in the areas of planning, budgeting, advertising and recruiting.

The PD and OIP must maintain a good flow of communications from the planning stage through the execution stage of the program. While the program is abroad the PD and OIP must ensure the continuity of communications using e-mail and telephone in order to pass information in a timely manner.

Summer study abroad courses may be of any subject matter and should be designed to take advantage of the unique nature of the host country. In addition to classes, summer study abroad programs should include excursions to important historical and cultural sites. The goal of summer study abroad programs is to allow students to earn academic credits while they are increasing their cultural awareness and knowledge of the world. A summer study abroad program is a wonderful opportunity for growth and enrichment.

This Resource Guide is divided into sections that will assist you in planning a summer study abroad program from conception through execution. You must use this guide in order to have a successful program, so refer it to it frequently and definitely take it with you when you go abroad. The guide is divided in the following sections:

1 Summer Study Abroad – Planning Guide: A chronological guide to the planning and execution process which includes the administrative and logistical issues you will be dealing with.

2. Summer Study Abroad – Planning Template: A worksheet used to provide the OIP basic information about your program.

3. Summer Program Director's Contingency Plan: A guide for handling emergency situations that arise while you are abroad.

4. Summer Program Director's Checklist: The "Ten Commandments" for conducting a summer study abroad program. You should use this checklist as a reference to ensure that you have completed all of the required actions for your program.

5. Summer Study Abroad Forms: The forms that OIP will have your participants fill out prior to departure. You should have a copy of these forms for each of your participants with you throughout the program.

REFER TO THIS GUIDE FREQUENTLY!

TAKE IT WITH YOU WHEN YOU GO ABROAD!

VMI Summer Study Abroad – Planning Guide

September: Begin coordinating with the Director of International Programs to put together the basic plan for the program: location, dates, courses, excursions, and budget.

Program cost - The Director of International Programs will work with you, the Dean's Office, and the VMI Treasurer to determine the cost of each program.

November: Begin advertising the program.

Advertising and recruitment - Use e-mail, flyers and meetings with cadets to recruit participants. The International Programs Office will take the lead on this but will need program directors to be involved.

Academic courses - Work with your Department Head and the Registrar to choose course numbers for the courses that you will offer. Inform the Registrar of the course numbers so that the courses can be entered into PostView.

Early March: Applications due.

Meetings - Meet with cadets who have applied for your program to discuss the details of the program with them. It is important to maintain their enthusiasm and interest in the program. You can also solicit their ideas about what they want to get out of the program.

Fee Payment - Encourage your cadets to pay their fees. They can pay via check made out to VMI, which they should deliver to the Comptroller's Office (Bursar) or pay with a credit card.

Passports - If your participants have not already applied for a passport, have them do so immediately. Check to be sure that your passport will not expire soon.

Early April: Participants' fee payment is due in full.

"Go/No go" - At this point the decision can be made about whether or not your program has enough participants. The Director of International Programs will consult with you on this. If you have enough participants who have paid the fee, your trip is a "go" and you can begin to make financial arrangements for the trip. Each program is unique, but some basic items can be addressed in the following checklist:

Airline transportation – Contact Martin Travel to make your own flight reservations. Inform your participants of the flights that you want them to take and have them make their own reservations. The representative from Martin will contact Anita Davis in the Comptroller's Office about payment. For some carriers, the payment is made through an established contract. For other carriers, Anita will contact you and ask you to prepare a "receiver". Here is the link to the VMI website for the "receiver" form:

http://www.vmi.edu/media/forms/AP%20Receiving%20Report%20Request%20for%20Disbursment%20Form.pdf

Planning Guide (con't.)

NOTE: The process that VMI Summer Session uses is for summer study abroad program directors to prepare all funding documents (receivers, travel authorizations and travel claims) and give them to the Director of International Programs. He will review them and pass them to the Summer Session Director for signature. The receiver will then go to Anita Davis.

Tuition or fee to host institution – If your host institution requires this, prepare a separate receiver for payment. The format is similar to that for the airline transportation receiver. Terry Manuel in the Comptroller's Office can give you advice on how to prepare the receiver. You should give it to the Director of International Programs, who will review it and pass it on to the Summer Session Director for signature. The receiver will then go to Terry Manuel.

Lodging abroad – Make lodging arrangements for the participants and for yourself. The host institution may take care of this or can help you make arrangements if they do not provide housing.

Ground transportation abroad – Make arrangements for all transportation needs in-country. For example, bus/van transportation from the airport to the host institution. Be sure to use a company that is registered with the local government and is insured.

Medical insurance – All participants (and you) should have medical insurance and it has been included in the program fee. The International Programs Office will purchase the insurance for you and your participants and will give you the documentation for medical coverage prior to your departure. The company VMI uses for medical insurance is Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI):

http://www.culturalinsurance.com/

Travel authorization – Fill out a travel authorization form. If you have ever traveled on VMI business, you have filled out one of these forms. Use it to itemize the expected costs for your travel and for the cadets. You will want to request an advance payment on this form so that you have enough funds to cover many of the program expenses. Anita Davis is the travel expert in the Comptroller's Office and can give you advice if necessary. Here is the VMI website for the travel authorization form:

http://www.vmi.edu/media/forms/Travel%20Travel%20Expense%20Reimbursement%20Voucher.pdf

Brief your participants – You should meet with your participants as a group several times prior to departure in order to keep them informed about the program. Make sure that they register on Post View for the courses in your program. You will want to make recommendations to them about what to bring on the trip and what not to bring. If you can provide them a packing checklist for your trip, it will be helpful. Make absolutely sure that they know when and where to meet you at the departure airport and that they must have their passport and airline ticket with them. Remind them of this repeatedly!

Planning Guide (con't.)

Maintain a budget – You will want to develop a very simple budget to keep up with the status of your funds. Your sole source of funds is the fee paid in by your students. Your expenses will vary from program to program, but basic categories include: airfare, ground transportation, fees to language institute or university, lodging and board, medical insurance, and excursions. Be sure to keep an accurate record of expenditures and save all receipts so that you can recoup your expenditures on the travel claim when you return to VMI.

Here are the Summer Program Account Numbers:

Morocco – 10-03-011-92400-1351
Japan – 10-03-011-92650-1351
Hungary – 10-03-011-92350-1351
South America – 10-03-011-92250-1351

Pre-departure – Check Post View to ensure that all of your participants have registered for the courses in your program. Make final recommendations to the participants about what to take on the trip. Confirm that they understand where to meet you. Get a contact phone number for them in case you have to contact them after they check out of Barracks and before they meet you on the trip.

Conduct the program –

Communications: During your time abroad we must have a good communications capability. In most cases, it will be necessary for you to purchase a cell phone abroad (charge to the program) and e-mail me your number. If a situation arises from the U.S. side, I will contact you via your cell phone. If you have any problems or questions, contact the Director of International Programs at (540) 464-7421- work, (540) 463-3004-home, (540) 460-7531-cell, or via e-mail (mcelhannonts@vmi.edu).

Accountability: Maintain a list of your students' names, passport numbers, home addresses, home phone numbers, and the names of emergency contacts for each student. If all goes well, you will not need it but if an emergency arises, you will be glad you have the information.

Grading – Submit grades for the program via Post View as soon as the program is completed.

--- **Final accounting –** When you return from the program, be sure to fill out a travel expense reimbursement voucher to recoup your expenditures for the trip that have not otherwise been paid for with receivers or with funds from the advance payment. When you fill out the voucher, you should not exceed the amount of funds available. If you are in doubt about this, please see me.

Here is the link to the VMI website for the travel expense reimbursement voucher:

http://www.vmi.edu/media/forms/Travel%20Travel%20Expense%20Reimbursement%20Voucher.pdf

Summer Study Abroad – Planning Template

Location of your trip:
_____

Dates of your trip:
_____

Courses offered:
_____

Description of the trip – Please type on a separate sheet of paper a short descriptive paragraph about your trip suitable for posting on the IP website.

Cost Estimate:

Airfare –
_____

(Airfare will not be included in the cost of the trip.)

Fee to university or Language School - _____

(Estimate the cost per person.)

Cadet Lodging -
_____

(Include normal lodging plus the cost of lodging for excursions.)

Cadet Meals -
_____

What meals are included?
_____

Your lodging/meals -
_____

(How much will you need for lodging and food for the trip?)

In-country transportation -
_____

(Include ground transportation for group excursions.)

Insurance -
_____

(Cost per participant is _____ and I have _____ participants.)

Other Costs -
_____

(Costs for books, metro passes, etc. – if they are to be included in the price.)

Summer Program Director's – Contingency Plan

Purpose: The purpose of the Contingency Plan is to aid VMI Program Directors' decision-making process in the event of an illness, injury or other significant issue.

Procedures: The Contingency Plan cannot possibly address all of the potential issues that could occur during a study abroad program. The intent is to provide Program Directors with simple guidelines for addressing the issue and reporting back to VMI. The Program Director's common sense, experience and good judgment will result in the best possible outcome for any situation.

Preparation: Prior to departing the U.S. for the trip there are several steps that you can take to make your response to a contingency easier:

Create a file with copies of all participants' important documents: passport, medical insurance policy, program applications forms (OIP will give you these), and any other documents that you think you might need.

Make a contact list with names and phone numbers of important contacts abroad and at VMI (see list at the end of this document).

Review the information on the following State Department web pages:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html

Register with the Embassy: https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/

Preparing for Emergencies Abroad

1. **Share faculty cell phone numbers with students.**
2. **Make sure students know what to do, where to go, and whom to contact if the faculty member is incapacitated or unavailable during any part of the trip.**
3. **Convey local emergency numbers with students.**
4. **Advise students of potential risks and any other safety and security issues. (e.g. high crime areas to avoid)**
5. **Obtain student cell phone numbers.**
6. **Create a communications tree for students.**
7. **Implement the "Buddy System."**
8. **Advise students to never leave their residence without ID and money.**
9. **Designate a primary meeting place.**
10. **Designate a secondary meeting place.**
11. **Create an emergency plan.**
    - **What to do with the rest of the group in an emergency involving one student.**
    - **How best to reach insurance company, on-site medical providers, and local authorities.**

Responding to Emergencies

<u>Illness or Injury</u>: At the first sign of a significant illness or if an injury occurs, seek immediate medical attention for the participant. Notify the Director of International Programs. A decision will be made about what subsequent steps to take, including notification of the participant's family.

<u>Other Issues</u>: In the event of any activity or situation that is a security concern, take the immediate actions necessary for the safety of yourself and your participants, then contact the Director of International Programs. If there is a significant administrative issue, including financial, that you need assistance with, contact the Director of International Programs at your convenience.

<u>Contacts</u>: Once you have taken the immediate actions required to address the situation, contact the Director of International Programs.

	To report an emergency call
IP Director:	**(540) 464-7421 (work),** **463-3004 (home),** **460-7531 (cell)**
Dean's Office:	**(540) 464-7212**
VMI Post Police:	**(540) 463-9177**

<u>Follow these "Ten Commandments" for pre-departure planning</u>:

1. ____ Provide the Registrar your course names and numbers.
2. ____ Receive list of participants who have paid for the program from OIP.
3. ____ Meet with participants and advise them which airline flights to take.
4. ____ Verify in Post View that participants are registered for program courses.
5. ____ Get copies of insurance documents and other paperwork from OIP.
6. ____ Make copies of participants passports (photo page) and take them with you.
7. ____ Submit a VMI Travel Authorization and request a travel advance.
8. ____ Submit receivers if necessary for any required advance payments.
9. ____ Submit a permit to the Commandant's Office (if departing before graduation).
10. ____ Meet with participants (again) and give them final instructions.

<u>At the conclusion of the program, be sure to</u>:

*** ____ Submit grades via Post View - you must do this yourself.
*** ____ Submit your travel claim with receipts for reimbursement.