

# Domestic Intercultural Immersions

Student Handbook

## Student Handbook

UW-EAU CLAIRE



2023-2024

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# INTRODUCTION

## *Who Should Use this Handbook?*

This handbook contains policies, procedures, and general information that apply to all students participating on **faculty-led, short-term domestic immersion programs** coordinated by the Intercultural Immersions Office under Academic Affairs **at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire** (UW-Eau Claire).

## *Intercultural Immersion Programs*

**Mission:** To enhance the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire student experience by administering and supporting high-impact intercultural immersion programs that are integrated into the curriculum. We aim to deepen student intercultural competence through experiential learning opportunities and engagement with people, cultures, languages, environments, and systems different than their own, in order to foster engaged citizens who have personal and professional skills for lifelong learning in a diverse world.

We fulfill our mission through a commitment to

1. Work with Faculty / Staff and departments to develop and promote a diverse array of high-impact intercultural immersion programs through mutually beneficial collaborations with international and domestic partners.
2. Foster development of intercultural competency and a respectful understanding of diverse cultures, populations, and environments through transformative learning opportunities.
3. Increase access to immersion experiences and encourage participation by all students, particularly those traditionally underrepresented in off-campus high-impact practices.
4. Develop faculty expertise in building global relationships through cultural immersion and international research opportunities.
5. Bring knowledge, increased capacity, and understanding back to UW-Eau Claire.

## *Program Goals*

Funded by the Blugold Commitment Differential Tuition program, the Domestic Intercultural Immersion (DII) program provides students with a **high-impact practice** that helps prepare them to take part in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world. A domestic intercultural immersion experience at UW-Eau Claire is defined as a guided, critically-reflective intercultural experience outside the classroom designed to challenge and transform students' perspectives regarding cultural norms and values.

People's beliefs, customs, experiences and environment create shared ways of perceiving and engaging in the world. Through dialogue and relationship building, students become more aware of and reflect on multiple perspectives. Guided, critical reflection is a key component to students' transformations as they seek a deeper understanding of another culture as well as their own. A meaningful engagement within the cultural environment inspires students to analyze the foundational assumptions that govern their thoughts and actions.

Specifically, the DII program works to:

1. Engage learners firsthand in various cultures, populations, and environments within the United States
2. Deepen learners' understandings of intercultural dynamics as they relate to the UW-Eau Claire Liberal Education Learning Goals

**Please note:** The goals of the Blugold Commitment are to extend access and affordability to these exceptional high-impact practices for all UW-Eau Claire undergraduates, to ensure that more of these opportunities are available for these students, and to increase the numbers of students who participate. Therefore, while UW-Eau Claire undergraduate students are encouraged to participate in multiple high-impact immersion programs, **each student is eligible to receive BCDT funding for only one DII experience.** Any student who has participated in a previous DII experience can certainly participate in more than one program, but is not

eligible to receive funding through BCDT for a second DII experience and must pay the full program cost of participation. The only exception to this is if a student who participated in a previous DII experience returns as a student leader to the same program.

### **Staff Resources**

Academic Affairs and Undergraduate Studies are the units on campus responsible for UW-Eau Claire faculty-led immersion programs. The coordinator of all programs is **Jeff DeGrave**, Intercultural Immersions Coordinator.

Contact Jeff DeGrave ([degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu) or 715-836-4471) with questions about the program, activities, academics, health and counseling services, housing, or the cost for your program.

**Assistant Coordinator:** Kim Reed ([reedka@uwec.edu](mailto:reedka@uwec.edu) or (715) 836-5940) works with all faculty-led immersion programs on general information.

**Faculty / Staff Leader:** Your program will have 1-3 UW-Eau Claire Faculty / Staff Leaders. They will work with you before you leave to get you ready for the program, complete any academic preparation and readings, and discuss cultural adjustment. Please contact your Faculty / Staff Leader with questions regarding the program itinerary, course requirements or syllabus, or local accommodations or activities.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT**

### **Your Responsibilities as a Participant**

**Pre-Departure:** Participating in a UWEC immersion program is a privilege, with that privilege comes several responsibilities:

1. Turning in all forms/materials required for your program by the stated deadlines.
2. Attending any preparation meetings set by your Faculty / Staff Leaders.
3. Being responsible for the information in this handbook.
4. Checking your UWEC e-mail account at least weekly.

5. Remaining in good standing (academic, financial and conduct) at UWEC from the time of your application until the end of the program.
6. While on the program, you are expected to follow all state and federal laws. This includes not engaging in underage drinking or illegal drug use.
7. Making all program payments on time.

Failure to live up to these responsibilities may result in termination of participation.

**During Program:** While you are on the program, you are still a UWEC student, and you are subject to the same code of conduct and disciplinary measures that are in place on the UWEC campus. The **Blugold Code** includes policies for both academic and non-academic misconduct.

If we receive a complaint of misconduct involving you, we will consult with the Dean of Students Office to determine whether misconduct as defined by the Blugold Code has occurred and what disciplinary sanctions may apply.

If the Dean of Students Office determines misconduct has occurred, based on the information they have been provided, they will contact you to arrange a conference. This may happen after your return. At the conference you will have an opportunity to present your information. You will then be notified as to whether you were found responsible or not, details regarding any sanctions assigned and information on how to file an appeal.

As stated in the **Enrollment Agreement** that you signed as part of the application process, failure to maintain good academic standing or academic requirements of the program, personal conduct that adversely affects other students or faculty, and/or conduct that violates the rules and regulations published in the Blugold Code, or conduct which violates the local laws, may result in termination of participation.

**Upon return:** You are responsible for completing all program requirements due after the travel portion of the program ends. This might include a

final project, reflection paper, or presentations on your experience.

### *Specific Program Policies*

Each DII program also has its own program policies around student behavior and conduct. These are put in place to minimize risk and ensure your safety as a participant on the program. This could include but is not limited to a program curfew, rules around rental car use, limited free time, and group dynamics. On all programs, you are expected to demonstrate respect for yourself, your Faculty / Staff leaders, other students, and the local partners or organization of the program.

## **ACADEMICS**

### *Program Prerequisites*

To participate in a UW-Eau Claire faculty-led immersion program, you must **be in good academic standing**. Some programs also have other prerequisites, such as a specific course(s) or being within a specific major. Click [here](#) to see the requirements for each DII program.

### *Academic Credit*

Some domestic programs are offered in combination with a course for academic credit, while others are not. However, all programs are coordinated and offered by UW-Eau Claire and thus considered educational and academic programs. Even non-credit programs will have readings, assignments, and projects – and you are expected to complete all program requirements.

### *Program Participation*

While on the program, you are required to attend all regularly scheduled classes and actively participate in all program activities unless illness or other unavoidable circumstances make this impossible. Absences must be approved in advance by the Faculty / Staff Leader.

### *Liberal Education Requirements*

All faculty-led domestic intercultural immersion programs fulfill the Responsibility Outcome 1

(R1): Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity upon completion of all program requirements.

### *Service-Learning*

Some programs, but not all, provide the opportunity to complete your service-learning requirement. Service-learning is a hands-on learning approach that helps connect abstract theory with practice, strengthen interpersonal and communication skills, promote the value of diversity, and foster civic engagement.

Please contact your Faculty / Staff leaders to determine whether or not the program will fulfill any of the requirement. For some programs, you must obtain prior approval of your service-learning project from your Faculty / Staff Leader and the Center for Service-learning.

## **MONEY MATTERS**

The estimated cost of participation in each DII program is listed [here](#). This includes costs you will pay directly to UW-Eau Claire, and costs while on the program.

### *Payment Deadlines at UW-Eau Claire*

Once you are accepted into a program, you will receive an acceptance email with specific payment amounts and deadlines. Most non-credit programs require a non-refundable deposit to hold your spot in the program, as well as a final payment of the remaining balance. Some non-credit programs require only a one-time payment of the entire program cost. For-credit programs will have a special course fee that includes the program cost, which is paid as part of your tuition/fees bill for each term.

### *Program Refunds from UW-Eau Claire*

Any program deposits are non-refundable. If you commit to the program once accepted, and then later withdraw at any point, you are still responsible for paying any program costs already paid on your behalf. Depending on when you withdraw, this could include the roundtrip airfare to your location, lodging deposits, or reservation payments. If you are considering withdrawing,

please contact your Faculty / Staff leaders immediately to determine any financial consequences of withdrawal.

### ***Blugold Commitment Funding***

All domestic intercultural immersions receive Blugold Commitment funding through the DII program. Undergraduate students who withdraw will lose their DII funding. As such, you will be expected to pay ALL non-refundable program costs to UW-Eau Claire. DII program support is based on student enrollment and can only benefit students actually participating in program. If you are considering withdrawing, please contact your Faculty / Staff leaders immediately to determine any financial consequences of withdrawal.

### ***Withdrawing After Your Program Begins***

Withdrawing from your immersion program after the start date involves a number of serious academic and financial consequences. You should contact your Faculty / Staff leaders as soon as possible if you are considering withdrawing to discuss these consequences. The process and outcomes are governed by the academic/registration and billing calendars at UW-Eau Claire.

**Academic consequences.** Depending on when you withdraw from a for-credit program, you will most likely either receive a "W" or an "F" for your program, if offered for credit. If you withdraw after the UW-Eau Claire last day to drop with no record, UW-Eau Claire requires that an academic record be submitted on your behalf.

**Financial consequences.** You will be expected to pay your full UW-Eau Claire program costs, including any flight change fees or additional costs associated with leaving the program early.

**Financial aid implications.** If you received any type of financial aid (e.g. grants, scholarships, or loans) to fund your experience, you may be required to return all or a portion of the aid. Your withdrawal date and the UWEC refund and financial aid repayment notice will govern how much of your aid you will need to repay.

### ***Additional Required Costs***

Depending on your program, you may be responsible for paying some costs, such as meals or personal expenses while on the program.

**Be sure you understand what you will pay for, how much the cost is estimated to be, and when payment is due.** Contact your faculty / staff leaders or Jeff DeGrave ([degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)) with questions regarding payments.

## **HEALTH ISSUES**

### ***Before You Go***

UWEC's [Student Health Service](#) or your regular healthcare provider can assist you with your health care needs when preparing for your immersion. You can schedule a travel consult to discuss your current health care needs, including medications.

### ***Prescriptions***

If you take prescription medication, bring a supply for your **entire** time on the program. This can take time to arrange -- start now, if you haven't already! Also, bring a copy of the prescription with the generic name of the drug in case you need to get it filled while on the program.

### ***Mental Health***

If you currently see a mental health professional, it is important that you speak with her/him prior to going on an immersion. Cultural adjustment is a normal part of traveling to a new place, but sometimes feelings of sadness, anxiety, and/or depression may be more than culture shock. Discuss with your counselor how you might cope with these feelings.

If you do not currently see a counselor and would like to discuss travel concerns, or any other matter, Counseling Services on campus are available. Contact them at (715) 836-5521 or visit them in Old Library 2122 to make an appointment.

## *Health Records*

After you are accepted into the program, you will complete a medical form. Please feel comfortable disclosing as much information about your health on there as you would like, as this form is meant to help keep you safe and healthy while on the program. This information is shared with your Faculty / Staff leaders, as they must be aware of any allergies or health conditions that might impact your participation.

## **SAFETY**

### *Traveling Safely*

The primary rule for safe travel is to use common sense. When everything around you is new and exciting, it is easy to forget the simple safety precautions you would use at home. Suggestions for safe travel include:

- **Do not carry all your valuables together** in a purse, wallet, or backpack. If that is lost or stolen, then you don't have any back-ups.
- **Never carry large amounts of cash.** Use debit/credit cards if possible. Only keep as much cash on your person as you may need for the day.
- **Travel itinerary.** Make sure someone has your itinerary. Making others aware of your travel plans is an important step in planning for unseen emergencies. The travel itinerary also helps friends and family locate you in the event you do not arrive at your location on the expected day and time.
- **Use common sense!** Hold your bags when checking train schedules; do not carry your ID or other valuables unless necessary; lock doors, especially at night.
- **Do not walk alone at night.** This advice applies to both men and women, especially if are in unfamiliar parts of a city, or are in isolated areas. Walking alone at night makes you an easy target for assault, theft, and in some places transportation accidents.

## *Sexual Assault*

Sexual assault occurs off-campus just as it does on campus. Sexual assault is 100% the perpetrator's fault; victims / survivors are not to blame. Anyone can be a victim of sexual assault, and the most important thing you can do for yourself if you are a victim is to get support and medical care.

### *Reporting Health/Safety Concerns to UW-Eau Claire*

**Why Report?** In the event that you or a friend experiences a health or safety incident, we strongly encourage you to report the incident to the Program Coordinator and Faculty Leader.

1. **Most importantly, reporting allows us to provide you or your friend support or resources that might be needed to manage a health or safety concern.**
2. In some instances UWEC has a legal obligation to report incidents that occur on off-campus programs under the Clery Act. Your report will help us determine if an incident needs to be reported to the federal government. No personally identifying information will be shared.
3. Reporting incidents assists UWEC in evaluating the safety of program locations.

**What to Report?** UW-Eau Claire would like to be made aware of any of the following incidents:

- Aggravated Assault
- Arrests
- Death
- Sexual Assault or Harassment
- Theft
- Illness or Injury
- Missing / Separated Person
- Other Safety Concerns: disease outbreak, fires, floods, equipment failure, etc.

**How to Report?** You can report an incident through a form found [here](#). This report form allows you to report an incident anonymously or to provide your name and contact details.

# USEFUL NAMES & ADDRESSES

## **Jeff DeGrave**

Intercultural Immersions Coordinator

Schofield Hall 17

[degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)

(715) 836-4471

## **Andrew Akey**

Immersions Program Assistant

Schofield Hall 17

[akeyal@uwec.edu](mailto:akeyal@uwec.edu)

(715) 836-5940

## **Cashier's Office**

Blugold Central

Vicki Lord Larson Hall 1108

(715) 836-3000

[cashier@uwec.edu](mailto:cashier@uwec.edu)

## **Counseling Services**

Vicki Lord Larson Hall 2122

(715) 836-5521

## **Financial Aid**

Blugold Central

Vicki Lord Larson Hall 1108

(715) 836-3000

[blugoldcentral@uwec.edu](mailto:blugoldcentral@uwec.edu)

## **Registrar's Office**

Blugold Central

Vicki Lord Larson Hall 1108

(715) 836-3000

[registrar@uwec.edu](mailto:registrar@uwec.edu)

## **UW-Eau Claire After Hours Numbers**

In an after-hours **emergency**, you can call one of these numbers  
and the University police will contact a staff member.

(715) 839-4972 or (715) 577-9045