

# International Fellows Program Faculty Handbook

UW-EAU CLAIRE



## Acknowledgements

Particular thanks are given to the following institutions for borrowed content contained in this handbook:

Ball State University  
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign  
Lehigh University

Pittsburg State University  
Virginia Commonwealth University

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## INTRODUCTION

This handbook is written specifically for faculty / staff members who are leading an international collaborative research project through the **International Fellows Program**. It contains general information to consider while leading students abroad, as well as specific UW-Eau Claire policies that you need to know when in-country. Please read it carefully and refer to it when you have questions.

### Intercultural Immersion Programs

**Mission of the Intercultural Immersion Office:** 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.

### International Fellows Program at UW-Eau Claire

The International Fellows Program for Research, Service, and Creative Activity is made possible by a multi-year Blugold Commitment Grant. It is an innovative program coordinated by the Intercultural Immersion Coordinator, in collaboration with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) and the Center for Service-Learning (CS-L). The International Fellows Program capitalizes on the strength and success of high impact academic experiences and is dedicated to supporting international student-faculty collaborative research/creative activity and research service-learning (i.e. field research conducted in conjunction with a service-learning experience).

The goals of the International Fellows Program are:

1. To actualize the Centennial Plan's commitment to accelerate global learning,
2. To support the Centennial Plan's commitment to transformational learning, and
3. To fulfill an unmet student and faculty need for financial support to conduct international research and creative activities.

In addition, one hope is that some funded projects might grow into longer-term, self-sustaining international relationships or study abroad programs.

### Immersion at UW-Eau Claire

Nearly one-fourth of all UW-Eau Claire students engage in an international academic experience. UW-Eau Claire regularly ranks in the top 30 Master's granting institutions in the country in terms of numbers of our students who complete part of their undergraduate education abroad.

The Immersions Office, within Academic Affairs and the Office of Undergraduate Studies, organizes all Immersion programs at UW-Eau Claire. The contact persons in the Immersions Office are:

Jeff DeGrave  
Intercultural Immersion Coordinator  
Schofield Hall 17  
t: (715) 836-4471  
e: [degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)

TBD  
Immersion Programs Assistant  
Schofield Hall 17  
t: TBD  
e: TBD

## **PROGRAM POSITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

This section outlines the positions related to IFP, and the roles and responsibilities of each.

### **Faculty / Staff Leader(s)**

Confirm Program Itinerary (pre-departure):

- Communicate regularly with in-country partners to coordinate research activities, cultural events, visits, and general logistics
- Finalize research project and purchase any necessary supplies
- Purchase flights in coordination with the Immersion Coordinator
- Arrange accommodations and transportation in coordination with the Immersion Coordinator
- Meet with the Immersions Office and / or the ASK Center regarding program expenses
- Finalize program budget and confirm cash advance request for in-country expenses

Program Orientation (pre-departure):

- Lead program-specific sessions at orientation
- Provide your own additional orientation or preparation sessions as you see necessary

Leader Training and Preparation (pre-departure):

- Research academic, cultural, and safety resources on program location
- Identify medical facilities in proximity to program locations
- Attend all Community of Practice meetings
- Meet with the Immersions Coordinator and / or the ASK Center regarding program expenses

Lead Program (in-country):

- Provide on-site orientation for all students
- Arrange all excursions, events, research or creative activities, service-learning projects
- Manage detailed program expenses, keep all receipts, track all spending related to project
- Maintain contact with the Immersions Office for updates, even if program is going well

Student Growth and Safety (in-country):

- Support students in adjustment to culture shock and reactions to a new country
- Advise students in both research, academic and personal matters
- Respond to behavior problems, emotional issues, physical ailments of students
- Keep students as safe as possible following emergency and risk management procedures

Program Follow-Up (post-program):

- Finalize expenses and submit receipts to the Immersions Office in a timely matter

- Submit a written post-program report and expense report within 30 days of end of the program
- Lead a program debrief session with students to reflect on learning (optional)
- Support students in project follow-up, such as presentation at CERCA or other conferences

### **Immersion Coordinator**

Confirm Project Details and Budget (pre-departure)

- Receive IFP funding contract and IRB approval if required
- Finalize budget and work with Faculty / staff Leader regarding program expenses, provide information about reimbursement and travel regulations
- Initiate faculty stipend payments
- Review health forms and Dean of Student records, follow-up with students if necessary
- Carry out orientation with students regarding general health & safety, money & budgeting, etc.
- Offer various faculty training sessions

Provide Program Support to Faculty (in-country):

- Be available to faculty with questions or concerns during the program
- Communicate with relevant support on campus if necessary
- Provide suggestions, resources, and support for student growth or issues
- Respond to emergency situations, following risk management policy

Program Follow-Up (post-program):

- Receive and review post-program report and expense report
- Finalize program expenses to close budget before fiscal year end, request return of unspent funds
- Receive and share student surveys and program evaluations with faculty
- Strategize ways to improve program with faculty in future years

### **Program Assistant**

The Program Assistant provides overall logistical and administrative support in the following ways:

- Manage student enrollment in Studio Abroad account, receive and process forms
- Check student eligibility for stipend and process necessary paperwork
- Initiate student stipend payments
- Enroll students and faculty / staff in CISI insurance and U.S. State Department STEP program
- Receive post-program materials and follow-up with missing materials

## **PROGRAM LOGISTICS**

Leading a short-term collaborative research program abroad is a lot of work and there is a lot to remember about what needs to be done! This section is meant to provide some detail about certain logistical aspects of the program planning and implementation.

### **Funding Guidelines**

Funding for the International Fellows Program has been awarded from Blugold Commitment funds. According to the amount on your award letter, all travel and supplies funds will be accessible through the general International Fellows Program account upon receipt of your award letter signed by all participants and / or provide an IRB or IACUC protocol number as appropriate for research involving human or animal

subjects. The Immersions staff will process the CISI insurance enrollment and payment as well as the faculty and student stipends. Funds are released at the beginning of the fiscal year in which you have been awarded (July 1).

International Fellows projects are not intended to be projects without any personal expenses. Please expect some cost and ensure student participants understand that there will likely be personal contribution for the experience.

- The program will provide funding for the cost of round-trip travel to and from the host country for faculty / staff mentor(s) and student(s).
- The program will provide funding to cover the cost of in-country transportation and lodging for each faculty / staff mentor and each student.
- The following expenses are **ineligible expenses**: food / meals, passport, visa, phone and internet, laundry, tourist activities unrelated to the the research project, and other personal expenses.
- Faculty / staff members are not eligible for travel and in-country funding if these expenses will be covered through another funding source.

### Flight Arrangements

**IMPORTANT:** UWEC travel policies are continually changing. So please check with the Immersions Office and the ASK Center for the most up-to-date information. You can also find up-to-date information on the Accounts Payable website, <http://www.uwec.edu/bussvs/acctpay/index.htm>

As required by university policy, all flight reservations and bookings must be made through the UW TravelWise Portal online or through one of UWEC's two travel providers: Travel, Inc. (for individual travel) and Fox Travel (for group travel). You will not be reimbursed by the university if you are not compliant with UW-Eau Claire travel policies. Check with the Immersions Coordinator **before** making your reservations to ensure everything is completely in accordance with UW-Eau Claire travel policies.

### Faculty Stipends

Faculty / staff who receive IFP funding are eligible to receive up to a \$1,500 stipend. This stipend is meant to recognize faculty / staff for the enormous amount of work put in before, during, and after the program to make it a successful and impactful experience for students. Faculty and staff members are not eligible for the \$1,500 stipend if they are being paid to teach/supervise the student fellow(s) through another grant or if they are being paid to supervise the project as part of a class, for which they are receiving salary payments. Faculty members on sabbatical are not eligible to receive the \$1,500 stipend.

Summer faculty stipends will be distributed through a separate summer contract, and Winterim faculty stipends will be distributed as overload. The Immersion Coordinator will initiate the request for these funds through e-forms, and they will be paid as a lump sum after completing the immersion experience. Faculty stipends are not available to be paid before the term of international travel. **NOTE:** Leaders who are not faculty should speak with Jeff about the stipend, as there are specific HR rules regarding the stipend for staff depending on appointment.

### Student Meal Allowance

Students may receive up to a \$1,000 meal allowance as part of the eligible program expenses. **To receive the stipend, students must be degree-seeking undergraduate students at UW-Eau Claire at the time of application and throughout the research project.** At least one student on the research team must have a minimum of one additional semester at UW-Eau Claire after the project is completed. It will be processed through a cash advance that faculty receive and distribute to students right before departure.



## Supplies and Services

Faculty must follow standard UW-Eau Claire purchasing guidelines when ordering or requesting reimbursement for supplies. Use the **eForm Purchase Requisition** found under the “Purchase Orders Processing” heading on the Business Services/Accounts Payable webpage to order supplies:

<http://www.uwec.edu/Bussvs/purch/popurch.htm>.

- Use **your** name, room location, email address and phone number on the purchase requisition so that the supplies go directly to you.
- List your departmental Blugold Commitment account and any other departmental or college accounts that will be used in purchasing supplies for the project.
- Request signatures associated with any departmental or college accounts.

For supplies already purchased, use a Reimbursement Claim Form. The Reimbursement Claim Form can only be used for incidental supplies less than \$250 purchased with your own money. This form is found under the “General Purchasing and Payment Options” heading on the Business Services/Accounts Payable webpage: <http://www.uwec.edu/Bussvs/acctpay/PurchasingPayOptions.htm>.

- Attach original receipts to the form.
- List your departmental Blugold Commitment account and any other departmental or college accounts that will be used in purchasing supplies for the project.
- Request signatures associated with any departmental or college accounts.

Payments to non-UWEC employees are viewed as a service. International Fellows will award these funds under the supply line and transfer them to your departmental Blugold Commitment account. Payments to individuals for services must be made with the Payment to Individual Report Form (PIR) on the Business Services/Accounts Payable webpage: <http://www.uwec.edu/bussvs/acctpay/index.htm>. It is your responsibility to complete this form, list your departmental Blugold Commitment account, and secure the appropriate signature. Please direct any questions about payments to non-US American residents to Vickie Gardner in Accounts Payable.

## Program Budgets

Faculty must work with The Immersions Office once the program is approved to develop the final program budget. If your IFP is a split-year project, your award letter will state how much of your budget is available in each fiscal year. Faculty Leaders should meet with The Immersions Office or the ASK Center before departure to discuss requirements for all expenses, as well as information about bank accounts overseas, purchase of gifts, rates of exchange, etc. Faculty are responsible for knowing all eligible expenses, and keeping receipts and documentation for reimbursement.

While faculty / staff may move around expenses within different budget lines of the same category (for example, if local transportation was less than budgeted but flights were more), faculty / staff **MUST** stay within the overall budget. **Faculty will not be reimbursed for additional expenses due to under budgeting or over spending.** All expenses must be eligible expenses for reimbursement (accommodation, transportation, airfare, meals, supplies NOT personal expenses, passports, visas, or non-program fees).

## Cash Advance

Group travel is eligible for a cash advance from the Accounts Payable Department. You can apply for an advance for group expenses you expect to pay in cash (but not for anything you could put on a university credit card). To receive a cash advance, you must first complete a Travel Authorization and Cash Advance through the TravelWise Portal, which must be approved by your supervisor and account approver. Once both are approved, you will receive this amount into your checking account (same as where your salary is



deposited). Faculty Leaders are responsible for knowing all eligible expenses, and keeping receipts and documentation for reimbursement.

You must collect receipts for ALL expenses paid from the advance. Upon return, you must start the e-reimbursement form from your cash advance form, and include all those expenses in the reimbursement. The amount given previously in the cash advance will be deducted from your overall reimbursement.

### Expense Reports

Faculty Leaders are responsible for submitting all receipts to the Immersion Coordinator, so that the TER can be completed. The Immersion Coordinator will input all expenses into the TER, and then submit to the faculty / staff leader for approval and review. Please note that your final expense report must be filed, and any excess funds returned, within 30 days of the end of the program. If this is not done, your paycheck will be docked for the outstanding amount per UW System regulations.

Please note that government funds cannot pay for prizes, awards, or gifts. If you would like to purchase a gift for an on-site partner or host family, it must follow Accounts Payable Guidelines and be reimbursed from a Foundation or other non GPR account. See details here: <http://www.uwec.edu/Bussvs/acctpay/payments.htm>

### Orientation for Students

All IFP student participants are required to attend the Faculty-Led Programs Orientation, coordinated by Jeff DeGrave, during the semester before travel. In addition, it is the responsibility of the Faculty Leader(s) to carry out a country-specific orientation with all students, either arranged on the same day as the large Faculty-led Programs Orientation or scheduled at a different time. The Orientation should include program-specific information relevant to the student research project abroad, including health & safety, money & budgeting, transportation, and research methods and data collection.

### IFP for Credit

All IFP student participants will be required to enroll in a 1-credit Directed or Independent Study with the Faculty Leader(s) during the semester after the international research. This is meant to recognize the preparation and follow-up work that students and Faculty **already** do on campus related to their project, including student presentations at CERCA in the spring. After consulting with Faculty regarding the specific Directed or Independent Study course within that department, students will be advised to enroll in that course by initiating the e-form.

## INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL INFORMATION FOR FACULTY / STAFF

This section includes useful information for faculty / staff who are traveling abroad, including health/safety information, bringing family abroad, and money tips when abroad.

### Accompanying Partner/Children

Some faculty members going abroad bring their partner and / or children with them. Sometimes these family members travel with the students during the entire program, and sometimes family members visit before or after the program dates. **All necessary arrangements and expenses related to traveling family members are the responsibility of the faculty member.** UW-Eau Claire staff cannot make arrangements for family members. UW-Eau Claire also cannot pay up front for any expenses related to traveling family members and be reimbursed – faculty are responsible for paying for all flights, accommodations and

arrangements separately.

## Health Insurance Coverage

The UW-System requires that all students and faculty going abroad on a UW program carry CISI insurance. All CISI information is available to enrolled participants via the [CISI Participant Portal](#). The Immersion Coordinator will enroll you in the insurance and you will receive an email once your enrollment is complete.

**Creating an Account and Logging in:** Once you are enrolled, you must login to “myCISI” to create an account and reset your password. We will email you instructions for creating an account and resetting your password. You can access these instructions online at [“myCISI” Participant Portal](#). Upon completing this step, you can manage your CISI enrollment via the “myCISI” portal. Via “myCISI,” you can:

- print / download your insurance card,
- print / download your proof of insurance letter for a visa application (if required for your program),
- access policy information,
- access claim forms,
- access emergency assistance numbers, and
- email information to a trusted friend or family member.

**CISI Insurance Card:** You will get instructions on printing / downloading your insurance card in your enrollment email. Be sure to bring it with you abroad. If you lose your card, you can print / download another copy from the "My Documents" page of the CISI portal.

**CISI App:** You can download the “myCISI” mobile app. From the app, you can access your insurance documents, view country-specific travel alerts, search medical providers, etc. The app also has a “Check In” feature that is used to notify UWEC if you are anywhere near a natural disaster, terrorist attack, etc. By checking in, UWEC will be notified that you are safe or need assistance. We strongly encourage all students to download this app. Click [here](#) to download for iPhones. Click [here](#) to download for Android.

**Pre-existing conditions:** Losses (medical expenses incurred) due to preexisting conditions are covered up to \$100,000 in the current UW System CISI policy, if you have been treated for that condition in the past 6 months. CISI does not cover expenses incurred while in your home country. If you have a pre-existing condition that will require treatment while abroad, please:

- Consult with your current US insurance company to see how care abroad will or will not be covered,
- Contact Assist America, CISI’s global assistance provider, at [medservices@assistamerica.com](mailto:medservices@assistamerica.com) or 1-800 872-1414 to open a case so that medical care while abroad can be coordinated. Assist America can:
  - Locate a provider and a treatment facility as close as possible to where you will be studying.
  - Check the availability and legality of medicines that you are currently using and possible alternatives
  - If requested, try to schedule the next appointment that would fall during your study abroad
  - If you will be studying in a non-English-speaking country, they can also try to find an English-speaking doctor.

When contacting Assist America, please provide your full name, date of birth, Assist America ID, coverage start and end dates (if already enrolled), study abroad location (city, country, address if possible), diagnosis/condition, current treatment details, and any current medications.

**Claims to CISI:** Keep in mind that with CISI insurance, you will have to pay up front and then file a claim, since the foreign physician and / or hospital may not be able or willing to process medical bills

through a U.S. insurance company. You can file a claim for reimbursement [here](#).

**Policy Exclusions:** A complete list of exclusions is included in the CISI brochure on the CISI portal. Several high-risk activities are specifically excluded from CISI coverage. In the current policy, specific exclusions include: injury sustained while taking part in mountaineering where ropes or guides are normally used; hang gliding; parachuting; bungee jumping; racing by horse, motor vehicle or motorcycle; and parasailing.

**Extending your CISI Coverage:** The CISI coverage is purchased in one week increments for the length of your program. If you are planning to travel independently either before your program begins or after your coverage ends, you may purchase additional coverage directly from CISI through the on-line portal. You are only able to extend your coverage with CISI at the UW-Eau Claire rate by one month - no more, no less. Choose "Extend Coverage." You can also print a new insurance card that includes the extended coverage dates. There are minor differences in the coverage and cost when you extend your policy for personal travel than what you have while you are on your UW Eau Claire program. You can read the policy for your extended plan on the CISI portal.

**Continuous U.S. Coverage:** The CISI insurance will cover you abroad and includes things such as medical evacuation and repatriation that are not usually covered by a standard policy. However, you should also keep your U.S. coverage in order to have continuous coverage before, during, and after your time abroad. If you stop coverage and are injured or become ill while abroad, you may experience a lapse in coverage while you are seeking to become re-insured and / or higher premiums due to your newly acquired pre-existing condition.

Also, you should contact your U.S. health insurance company prior to your departure to see what type of coverage you will have while abroad. In particular, this is important if you have any pre-existing conditions that would not be covered under the CISI policy.

### **Insurance Information for Accompanying Family Members**

The CISI plan allows coverage for dependents of faculty / staff abroad on university business. The Immersions Office will help you process the necessary forms.

Please note that dependent insurance dates can be shorter than but cannot exceed participant dates.

- The One-Week Rate is for 1-7 days.
- The Two-Week Rate is for 8-14 days.
- The Three-Week Rate is for 15-21 days.

Though dependent rates are different from participant rates, dependent coverage is the same as participant coverage.

### **Bringing Medication Abroad**

You are responsible for making your own arrangements for necessary medication. We can offer advice, but ultimately you will need to contact your doctor, insurance agency, and appropriate government agencies in order to work out your specific accommodations.

When entering the country, the more documentation, the better. You need to have full prescriptions for all medications you are taking abroad. The prescriptions should include your name, birth date, U.S. address,

the commercial and chemical name of the medication, the dosage, the form and the quantity. A copy of your medical record will also be helpful to a local doctor. Controlled drugs require permits. Medication containing ingredients considered controlled substances in the host country usually require a permit from the host country for you to enter with them, in addition to a full prescription. You should plan on declaring all prescription medication you are carrying with you into your host country in order to avoid potential complications later.

Pharmacies abroad are not required to honor U.S. prescriptions. If you need to have your prescriptions filled/refilled abroad, you will need to make an appointment with a doctor in the host country in order to get a new prescription. Shipping medication from home abroad may not work. You often need to obtain permits from host country agencies in order to ship medication into the host country, especially if the medications include controlled substances. It is possible that medications shipped will be hung up in customs, will never be delivered, or will arrive well past the time they are needed. Insurance companies may be able to assist with shipping and make the process smoother.

### Visa / Immigration Information

For some faculty-led programs, both faculty and students need a visa from your host government. The Immersion Coordinator will go over visa requirements and the application process with students during orientation, as well as provide the necessary forms and documentation from the host site or UW-Eau Claire. The Immersion Coordinator will also provide visa instructions and necessary documents for faculty / staff who need visas; however, faculty / staff are responsible for applying for the visa themselves.

### Personal Preparation

As we advise student participants to do, please note the following general recommendations for personal preparation prior to the program:

- Schedule a medical exam and dental checkup
- If you are currently taking medications, talk to your doctor about arrangements for continuing the medications abroad.
- Make three photocopies of the passport page with your name on it. Leave one copy with someone at home and take the other with you. The Immersion Coordinator keeps a copy on file.
- Be prepared in case of loss or theft of financial resources. Keep important information such as credit card numbers and bank phone numbers separate from original documents.
- You may want to consider purchasing supplemental insurance to reimburse you for theft or loss of personal items (personal property insurance), and lost expenses due to travel cancellations (travelers insurance).

### Money Abroad

In addition to spending program funds during your time abroad, it's also important to think about your access to personal funds during the program. We suggest that you combine several approaches to accessing money abroad: credit card, debit / ATM card, and local currency.

Even though most credit cards now charge a foreign currency transaction fee on every purchase, the better exchange rate still makes this the best option. For your credit and debit cards, find out what your daily credit limit is, and **let your card company know that you will be abroad so that they are not concerned when charges start posting from another country.** Without prior notice of your travel plans, many credit card companies will block transactions from abroad as a fraud prevention measure. Finally, keep a copy of your cards (front and back), so that you have all of the information about it should it be lost or stolen.

U.S. banks are allowed to block use of debit cards in countries where they feel “too much fraud” has been reported by the U.S. government. This is an institutional decision and varies by bank. Check with your bank to be sure you can use your card in your host country. Do not bring traveler’s checks as they are accepted relatively few places across the globe.

## **IN-COUNTRY RESPONSIBILITIES**

As the Faculty Leader, you assume multiple roles during the program. You are the professor, advisor, counselor, coordinator, facilitator, dean, and liaison all at once. This section provides resources for faculty / staff while they are on the program to effectively assume all these roles.

### **Who at UW-Eau Claire Knows Where You Are?**

It is very important that multiple people on UW-Eau Claire campus are aware of your destination and itinerary. The Immersion Coordinator will have copies of the program itinerary, as well the flight itinerary and passport copies for you and all students on the program. In addition, it would be good for your department ADA or Chair to have copies of this information as well.

While in-country, faculty / staff should ALWAYS carry copies of all participants’ passports, visas, medical information, and insurance information. In an emergency, that information must be readily available to share with local police, hospitals, or other in-country partners.

### **Communication is Key!**

While only 1-2 faculty / staff members will be traveling with the students internationally, it is important to know that you have a wealth of support and resources around you. You should be able to rely on your in-country partners for help in carrying out the itinerary and making any last-minute changes to activities or events, as well as suggestions of where to eat or what to do!

The Immersion Coordinator should be your first point of contact for support related to emergency situations or risk management, group management and student behavior problems, mental health issues, or budget and expense questions. Essentially, the Immersion Coordinator is the liaison between you and the many resources on UW-Eau Claire campus. Therefore, it’s important to keep in touch with the Immersion Coordinator about small or large questions that come up during the program. Even if a problem seems small, it is better to let the Immersion Coordinator know about it from the beginning, instead of waiting for it to escalate. Again, don’t be afraid to ask for help and utilize the support around you for any questions, concerns, or help you might need.

### **Setting the Tone and Group Contracts**

It is extremely important that Faculty Leaders set clear expectations and rules even before the program starts. This initial tone setting can be done during orientation, and must continue during all pre-program meetings, in-country orientation sessions, and throughout the program activities. If students are acutely aware of the expectations of the Faculty Leader, as well as the consequences of breaking those expectations, they are much more likely to not challenge those boundaries or set rules. Students must be reminded that they are representing not only themselves, but UW-Eau Claire. Often times, faculty-led programs maintain ongoing relationships with in-country partners and international universities, and therefore misbehavior from one group or one individual can threaten that relationship in future years. Students must also be reminded that they have to follow the laws of that country, as well as the rules set by you.

A good activity that not only sets the tone and expectations but also involves students in the formation of their group rules is a “Group Contract.” This can be done during pre-program sessions or during the first day of the program. The contract consists of certain rules first set by the Faculty Leader. Then, students are able to add to those rules to create the environment they would like to maintain within the group. This contract should not only include rules about disciplinary behavior, but also rules around respecting each other, active listening and participation, supporting each other, etc. After everyone is in agreement, each student and faculty / staff sign the contract. If a student then breaks that contract later in the program, this document can be utilized to remind that individual or the group of the rules set communally.

## **In-Country Orientation**

Faculty are required to provide an in-country orientation covering the following topics:

- Up-to-date information on program schedules and itineraries
- Behavior expectations
- Intercultural competence to help student develop awareness and coping strategies for culture shock
- Health and safety issues, including safe food to eat, drinking water, local safety
- Discuss do’s and don’ts in the local culture for living with host families, interacting with local peers, or communicating with in-country staff
- Provide students with necessary contact information
  - Your contact information and other local staff contact information
  - Map of the area
  - Address of nearest U.S. Embassy
  - Written list of local medical clinics or hospitals
  - Written list of English-speaking doctors or psychologists recommended by the U.S. Embassy or some other agency qualified to judge the competence of local medical facilities and staff
  - The local telephone number the students should use to contact emergency services (i.e. the equivalent of “911”).
- Risk management emergency protocols – discuss with students what they should do in the case of an emergency and include a “three-phase” plan regarding meeting locations for the group.

## **Group Management**

Faculty Leaders should make sure to be aware of the group's activities at all times. It is necessary to have systems to keep participants together. Examples may include the use of sheriffs, extra staff, or the buddy system. It is important to have contingency plans for separation and that students are aware of such plans.

Within every organization, there are informal group pressures that influence and regulate individual behavior. Informal groups form to fill needs not met by the larger group. Informal groups formulate unspoken or implicit norms and standards establishing acceptable behavior, and communication tends to be smoother and less inhibited within the informal group than with the larger group. Through these standards or norms groups can support, obstruct, or have no effect on the goals of the larger group.

The degree to which a group satisfies its members' needs determines the limits within which the group will influence the individual members. A group provides the following to its individual members: sense of belonging, identity and self-esteem, stress reduction, and support, especially in times of distress/conflict/insecurity. If the larger group does not fulfill these needs, informal groups form to fill the gaps. Further, group cohesiveness increases whenever the members perceive a conflict/threat from the outside.

Informal groups will form during group activity abroad because students are experiencing new and



unfamiliar contexts with mostly new and unfamiliar people. These informal groups will form to fill the emotional, social and psychological needs of the student participants. While this can lead to new and productive social networks and personal transformations, there are still plenty of opportunities for group dynamics to go wrong. Faculty Leaders can minimize possible negative effects through specific strategies:

- Be accessible to the group and communicate with all members regularly on an informal basis, even before the course goes abroad.
- Keep the group informed and involve them when possible in decision-making, especially regarding revisions to pre-set plans or general travel planning. Make sure all participate.
- Encourage the positive influences of the informal group and all participants.
- Make group members aware (delicately) of any negative influences of their informal group (they may not even be aware of these negative influences and are likely to modify their behavior).
- Remember that first impressions are lasting. Make arrivals into a new locale smooth and provide a special reception for the group.
- When going to new accommodations, be aware of students' comfort and respond to concerns.

## **Behavior Problems**

Most often, Faculty Leaders are challenged by students who display a poor attitude and / or do not want to participate in certain program activities. Most of the problems can be resolved; however, the Faculty Leaders must be prepared to act as disciplinarian. Behavior problems of one individual can have a negative effect on the entire group and may escalate if not addressed promptly. Examples of minor behavior problems include:

- lateness to research activities
- rude behavior toward Faculty Leader or other participants
- indifference toward program activities
- disrespectful comments or behavior towards local culture or local people

In these cases, Faculty Leaders must issue students a verbal warning. The best remedy is often a frank discussion with the student and repeating your expectations for behavior. If a group contract has been created, faculty / staff should remind the student of those rules set as a group. Faculty Leaders should also keep a written log of each incident/offense. Telling the student that you are keeping a log is often an effective way to prevent future incidents. This also serves as a record should you need to take further corrective action.

If the behavior continues, faculty / staff can create a written contract with the student that includes consequences for further offenses. A student must sign that contract and be aware that future offenses could result in dismissal from the program.

Please keep any personal issues or problems that you encounter with students confidential and do not share this information with any of the other program participants. It is important not to ostracize a member of the group by informing the others of his/her behavior/academic/personal problems.

## **Dismissal from a Program**

Major behavior problems are grounds for dismissal from the program. Grounds may include, but are not limited to:

- Behavior that is disruptive and detrimental to the group (repeated offenses)
- Behavior that disturbs other participants



- Alcohol misuse
- Physical or sexual assault
- Harassment
- Possession, use, or distribution of illegal drugs
- Theft
- Repeated bad or offensive behavior for which the student has been warned

The best way to avoid dismissing a student from a program is to continuously discuss behavior expectations before and during the program. Faculty Leaders can also have students sign a contract of expectations and consequences, including dismissal from the program in which the student must cover all expenses of dismissal and transportation home. However, in cases of repeated behavior offenses, the Faculty Leader should be prepared to take corrective action and dismiss a student from the program.

As stated earlier in the section entitled “Communication is Key,” Faculty Leaders should inform the Immersion Coordinator about escalating behavior problems well before it results in dismissal from the program. That way, the Coordinator can inform the necessary parties on campus, as well as involve the student’s parents or guardians if necessary. The Faculty Leader should communicate with the Coordinator if dismissal from the program is appropriate. The Faculty Leader should have documentation of the violations(s) in writing before dismissal. The student should sign a statement that acknowledges that she or he is no longer a participant and must vacate the housing by the designated date. The statement must also indicate that the student understands that all expenses from that point forward are his or her own responsibility, including housing and transportation home. In the case of a dismissal, students are responsible for any incurred expenses, such as flight change fees or increased ticket prices. They will not receive the IFP stipend nor any refund of program costs.

### **Voluntary Withdrawal**

Sometimes, students return early from a program for personal or family reasons, or because they no longer wish to be a part of the program. If a student decides to withdraw, he or she should consult with you to determine whether a solution can be reached that would allow the student to stay. If the student decides to withdraw after the consultation, he or she must sign a written statement that he or she is no longer a part of the program effective on the designated date and that the withdrawal is voluntary. The statement must also indicate that the student understands that all expenses from that point forward are his or her own responsibility, including housing and transportation home. No student will be allowed to remain in the program accommodations after withdrawal. In the case of a dismissal, students are responsible for any incurred expenses, such as flight change fees or increased ticket prices. They will not receive the IFP stipend nor any refund of program costs.

Faculty Leaders should be in contact with the Immersion Coordinator when a student first discusses wanting to withdraw, as well as after the consultation with that student. Faculty Leaders should send the signed statement to the Immersion Coordinator for our records.

### **Emotional Problems among Students Abroad**

By Dr. Kathy Schneider

Recognizing Distressed Students:

As a member of the faculty or staff you may find yourself in a position to observe and recognize changes in students which signal psychological distress. This is not to imply that you are to be a “watch dog,” during your time abroad with students, but rather that students may seek you out to share their distress. Being

cognizant of these distressed students, and being aware of appropriate referral sources that can assist you will allow you to be more in control of situations which may present themselves overseas.

**Depression:** Everyone gets depressed from time to time. That is normal. Having only one symptom is usually not enough to describe someone as severely depressed. Abnormality may be defined as maintaining a larger number of depressive symptoms over a longer period of time with the symptoms tending to become progressively more severe. The symptoms of depression are: insomnia or change in sleeping patterns, inability to concentrate, change in appetite, loss of ability to experience happiness or pleasure, apathy, sloppiness, crying, poor personal hygiene, feelings of worthlessness, no desire to socialize, loss of self-esteem, and preoccupation with death. All of these symptoms, except preoccupation with death, are also symptoms of culture shock/stress. When they last for more than a few weeks or interfere with daily activities, they are cause for concern.

**Unusual Acting Out:** This would represent a change in behavior from normal socially appropriate behavior. It would include being disruptive, overly antagonistic, and may include alcohol or drug abuse.

**Suicidal Ideation:** Most suicide attempts are preceded at some point by messages that the person is considering suicide. These messages can range from “I wish I wasn’t here”, to a very direct “I’m going to kill myself.” Non-verbal messages include giving away valued possessions, putting legal, financial, and university affairs in order. Each type of message about suicide should be taken seriously.

If you are concerned about a student, keep in mind that professionals assess the suicide potential, in part, by asking:

- What the plan for suicide is— how will he or she do it?
- When and where does he or she intend to carry out the suicide?
- Has he or she ever attempted suicide in the past?

The more specific and lethal the plan, the more recent a previous attempt, and the greater the ability to carry out the plan, the higher the risk for a successful suicide. You need not be afraid to ask these questions. For people who are considering suicide, these questions will not furnish them with new ideas. Most people who are actively suicidal are more than willing to discuss their plan. Conversely, many people consider suicide from time to time in passing. The less specific and lethal the plan (e.g. “I guess I’d take a couple of sleeping pills sometime.”), the less likely a suicide attempt.

**Other Signs of Distress:** Again, the more symptoms observed, the more likely the individual is to be truly distressed. These signs include a drop in class attendance; drop in the quality of class work, generally tense or sad appearance such as a change from normal appearance, and typically inappropriate or strange responses to questions.

**Students who may be Dangerous to Others:** You may become aware of or develop a concern that a student may be dangerous to others. This may be manifested by:

- Physically violent behavior
- Verbally threatening or overly aggressive behavior
- Threatening letters or emails
- Harassment, including sexual harassment or stalking
- Possession of a weapon

Sometimes these behaviors are the result of or are exacerbated by mental illness. You need to take appropriate action to protect both the potential victim and the potentially dangerous student, such as getting the student the help and support they need.

### **Suggested Guidelines for Dealing with Distressed Students**

It is important that the Faculty Leader communicates initially with the Immersion Coordinator about any concerns or questions he/she might have about a distressed or depressed student. Again, the Immersion Coordinator can work as a liaison to services provided on campus and can provide guidance or suggestions on how to best deal with the situation.

**Know Your Limits as a Helper:** You may not feel comfortable trying to help someone cope with his or her problem; that is, you may sense that the person is in need of much more time and attention than you can honestly give. Your best course of action probably lies in encouraging the student to contact someone who can provide the necessary services. To facilitate this action, you want to do the following:

- Reinforce the person's decision to confide in you; acknowledge their suffering
- Be accepting and non-judgmental
- Try to identify the problem area
- Indicate in a gentle but direct manner that professional assistance is a positive first step which is needed to deal with pain, and that you will assist them in finding competent professionals

**Counseling and Other Options:** when dealing with distressed students, giving them a professional to talk to might be the best option. However, during faculty-led international programs, referral to a counseling agency is more difficult than it is at UWEC. The student may not be fluent in the language of the counselor available, and / or counseling may not be available at all. Sometimes, a local in-country partner or host university can provide counseling services and / or an interpreter if necessary.

Another option would be to have the student speak to someone on UWEC campus over the phone. While a phone conversation might not be as effective as in person, having someone from UWEC Counseling Services who understands the situation might be the most effective way to get student help. The Immersion Coordinator can assist in setting up a phone conversation with someone from Counseling Services.

### **Insurance with Mental Health**

Assist America (AAI), the 24/7 assistance partner with CISI can help with resources regarding mental health issues. The student, parent, or faculty member can contact AAI and request a mental health provider near a particular foreign address. An English speaking counselor/doctor can be requested and if there are any in that area AAI will let the requestor know. They can also help to schedule an appointment provided the insured lets them know days and times that they would be able to be seen. Their contact information is copied below for your convenience and it is also on each insured's ID card as well as in the coverage brochure just below the claim form.

Assist America: ID number is: **01-AA-CIS-01133**

Phone: (800) 872-1414 (calling toll-free from within the US)

(609) 986-1234 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted)

email: [medservices@assistamerica.com](mailto:medservices@assistamerica.com)

The person calling or emailing Assist America (AAI) will need to identify the insured, their DOB, their address overseas and the AAI ID # which is: **01-AA-CIS-0113**.

## Problems Abroad (That could become yours!)

Below are some examples of cases which we have encountered while students are abroad. While some of these examples are more relevant to study abroad than student-faculty collaborative research, they are all real and it is important to think about how you might react in these situations. Think about how you might respond to the cases and what appropriate or reasonable responses you might take. There are no right or wrong answers in this exercise. These are intended to cause us to reflect on some of the things that can happen, some of the challenges you may encounter as a leader of students abroad, which you would likely never encounter here on campus. Hopefully, this exercise will highlight what resources available to you abroad, as well as what limitations might be imposed by the international setting.

1. Several mornings over the course of the first few weeks of your program, you notice the smell of alcohol on the breath of one of your students.
2. Student takes off for the weekend, tells you about it on Friday. Monday morning comes but they do not return or attend any classes. (For a short-term program, this scenario could be tailored to a student traveling independently during a free day and does not return)
3. They tell you their roommate is very depressed, commenting that faculty are pitted against them, others in the program don't like that person, and they want to go home.
4. Student is continuously disruptive in class and the local professors complain to you. You had this student in class back in the states, and they seemed fine. Is it a cross-cultural issue or something more?
5. Student exhibits irrational behavior, skips class, and is not taking his medications. He is absent for long periods – and is losing weight.
6. Student indicates she feels threatened by the father in her homestay. Nothing specific, but an uncomfortable feeling. She describes it as a form of sexual harassment.
7. You are called in the middle of the night by the local police authorities. One of your students has been arrested for drug possession.
8. While on an excursion, you and your students are lodged in a hotel. A middle of the night knock on the door has one of your students reporting to you that her roommate is still in the room, being assaulted by two guys who broke into the room.
9. Student loses a passport 24 hours before her scheduled return flight to the US.

## RISK MANAGEMENT AND EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Though emergency situations are relatively rare on study abroad programs, it is extremely important that you are knowledgeable about university policies related to emergency response, and are prepared to respond quickly.

The non-emergency number for campus Public Safety is: (715) 836-2222.

### Who Should I Contact in the Event of an Emergency?

In the event of an emergency during business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:00am- 4:30pm), please contact the following people in order (continue down the list if the first cannot be reached):

Jeff DeGrave  
Intercultural Immersion Coordinator  
Phone: (715) 836-4471  
Email: [degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)

Louisa Rice

Undergraduate Studies  
Tel: (715) 836-5276  
Email: [hoffmamf@uwec.edu](mailto:hoffmamf@uwec.edu)

Center for International Education  
Phone: (715) 836-4411  
Email: [studyabroad@uwec.edu](mailto:studyabroad@uwec.edu)

If you should require assistance after working hours, please contact the following staff members at home:

Jeff DeGrave, Intercultural Immersions Coordinator  
[degravjr@uwec.edu](mailto:degravjr@uwec.edu)  
Cell: (715) 559-5759

Louisa Rice, Interim Associate Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs  
[ricelc@uwec.edu](mailto:ricelc@uwec.edu)  
Tel: (715) 836-5276

University Police  
(715) 577-9045

### **Do Emergencies Occur?**

Yes, as a faculty / staff member leading students abroad, you may find yourself facing an emergency involving one or more of the students who are in your care. Students can and do become ill, suffer accidents, fall victim to assaults and muggings, find themselves caught up in potentially violent political situations, fail to return on time to programs at the end of free days, etc. On occasion, students may be involved in perpetrating an assault or a crime against a host country citizen or breaking local laws.

While it is impossible to plan for all contingencies involving our students overseas, procedures need to be followed that will allow us to react in a cool and responsible manner when emergencies do arise. We need to be able to provide, in a consistent and predictable way, for the safety and wellbeing of our students. We also need to take reasonable and prudent measures to limit the University's legal liabilities.

Please be advised that we have a series of procedures designed to safeguard the wellbeing of program participants, and to protect the University's interests. As the program leader, it is your responsibility to follow the procedures outlined below and to be sure to inform the students in your group about these procedures during their on-site orientation.

### **What is an Emergency?**

For our purposes, an emergency is any circumstance that poses a genuine risk to, or that has already disturbed, the safety and wellbeing of program participants (including faculty / staff). Emergencies could include, though are not limited to, the following types of incidents:

- Crime or robbery
- Physical assault
- Sexual assault or rape
- Significant accident and / or injury

- Hospitalization for any reason
- Serious illness—physical or emotional
- Any legal action involving a student
- Disappearance of a student
- Local political crises that create safety concerns
- Terrorist threat or terrorist attack
- Natural disaster
- Death of a student or faculty / staff

## What Should You Do to Prepare for Emergencies?

The Program Assistant will enroll all students and faculty / staff with the Department of State's STEP Program, so they can better assist you in an emergency.

During the orientation on-site, provide all of the students in your group with:

- A “three-phase” plan regarding regrouping of the faculty / staff and students (for example, if there is an emergency, first go to the hotel; if the hotel is unsafe, go here; if that place is unsafe, meet here)
- The address of the nearest U.S. Embassy
- A written list of reputable local medical clinics or hospitals
- A written list of English-speaking doctors and psychologists who have been recommended by the U.S. Embassy or some other agency qualified to judge the competence of local medical facilities
- When possible, the name of a reputable rape crises center, or of an individual trained to respond effectively to a crisis involving a sexual assault or rape
- The local telephone number to contact emergency services (i.e. the equivalent of “911”).

Many of these resources can be found through the US Embassy, CISI, or in-country partners. Each of these in the list should include the address, phone numbers, and hours of the facilities and staff members. Advise students to carry this list with them at all times. A copy of this information should be included in the Travel Information Form submitted to the Immersions Office prior to your departure.

During the orientation on-site: explain to the students that they are required to inform you about any medical emergency, and that you in turn are required to contact UWEC as soon as possible in order to inform the staff about the emergency. Inform the students that this information will be treated with the strictest confidentiality and that it will be shared by you and the staff on a “need to know” basis only.

## How Should You Respond to Emergencies?

1) In an emergency, your **first responsibility is to protect the safety and wellbeing of program participants and yourself**. Do whatever is necessary to assure this, whether this means obtaining prompt and appropriate medical attention, U.S. Embassy intervention, or police protection. You will of course be reimbursed for all expenses relating to the management of an emergency.

2) When you have done all that you reasonably can to ensure the students' and your own wellbeing, **immediately contact The Immersions Office or the Center for International Education** about the situation by phone if possible. Staff on campus will inform other necessary parties, including parents.

\*\*\*The Faculty Leader should under no circumstances release the name of the student or make statements on behalf of UW-Eau Claire. The standard response should be “My first responsibility is to the students in

this program, to their families, and to the University. Thank you for understanding.” All public statements will only be made by the University Relations office.

**3) Notify the local U.S. Embassy or consulate about the crisis and follow whatever procedures they may require;** if there is a continuing risk to the welfare of the students (during a terrorist threat, for example), ask the appropriate Embassy or Consular Officer to advise you on a regular basis about the evolution of the crisis, and about how the students should respond.

**4) In a medical emergency, contact the appropriate health center** at the overseas site so that they can assist you and help coordinate the necessary arrangements. **In any other sort of emergency, notify the local police about the situation,** if you and the Embassy believe this is appropriate; then follow the procedures the police may require of you or the student.

**5) In case of terrorist attack, collect the group at the nearest U.S. Embassy.**

**6) Begin keeping a written log of actions** taken and update it as crisis progresses.

**7) After the Immersions Office is informed about an emergency, and after we consult with you and other appropriate individuals on site and at UW-Eau Claire, we will email you a description of the course of action** that you and the students will need to follow in responding to the crisis. All program participants will be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they have received, read and understand this response plan; after all the participants in your group have signed it, please fax it to the CIE.

**8) When the situation has been assessed and these steps have been completed, the Immersion Coordinator will inform students that they may contact family and friends via phone and / or email. In the case of sexual assault, participants who know about the incident should receive counsel on how to respect and protect the victim’s identity before they are allowed to call home.**

In the event of a significant crisis, students have the option of returning to the U.S. Every reasonable effort will be made to allow them to continue their academic program on campus.

It is highly unlikely that participants would need to be evacuated from a site abroad. If an evacuation should become necessary, the Immersions Coordinator, the U.S. Embassy and State Department, and appropriate individuals on the home campus, and you, would develop an evacuation plan in as much detail as possible.

### **General Recommendations for Crisis Management**

In the **event of a crisis, try not to panic;** the students are counting on you to help get them through a difficult time. We have had experience dealing with crises and are ready to assist you during and after any type of event or incident.

During an **on-going crisis, keep the Immersion Coordinator and the Center for International Education informed on a regular basis,** by telephone, fax, or email about the evolution of the crisis.

**In any emergency, it is the faculty member’s responsibility to give clear instructions to students.** These instructions must be obeyed promptly. Any discussion or disagreements can be brought to the CIE later on, but at the moment of the e m e r g e n c y , we look to the faculty member to provide leadership to the student group.



During a **political crisis or some other emergency during which foreigners in general or U.S. citizens in general may be at risk, tell the students to keep a low profile.** Tell them to avoid demonstrations, confrontations, or situations where they could be in danger; to avoid behavior that could call attention to themselves; to avoid locales where foreigners or Americans are known to congregate; and to take down signs, avoid using luggage tags and wearing clothes that would label them as Americans.

### **Incident Report**

The Incident Report is included at the end of this document. It is very important that any incident concerning students' physical or mental health, finances, misconduct, or students becoming a victim of a crime be documented and added to the program file. The incident should be documented as it is taking place or as soon after as possible so that the information is fresh and accurate. In the event of complaints after the fact about how an incident was handled, the incident report serves as a record to show that Faculty Leaders followed university procedures in resolving the situation. The incident report can also be used by Campus Life as a basis on which to begin judicial sanctions against a student for misconduct.

## **ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION**

UW-Eau Claire is making concerted efforts to improve the assessment and evaluation of high-impact programs on campus. Through strong assessment models, we can collect better data about the true impact of these programs on students, determine if the program is meeting its stated goals, and validate continued funding from Blugold Commitment.

### **Program Evaluation**

All students will be required to complete an online Qualtrics survey that will evaluate the program, including itinerary, staff support, in-country logistics, accommodations, coursework, etc. The Immersion Coordinator and Faculty / Staff Leaders will use these evaluations to improve the program for future years.

### **Post-Program Report**

All faculty / staff must complete an online post-program report on Qualtrics and submit it to the Immersion Coordinator within 30 days of the program end date. This report will ask faculty / staff to evaluate the program on various topics, including the itinerary, accommodations, student growth, in-country partners, and coursework. Faculty must also include any Incident Reports, if applicable. The specific report outline is included in your faculty binder.

### **Student Artifacts (Optional)**

Students receiving Blugold Commitment funding will be asked to produce an artifact after their immersion experience. This artifact could be related to the coursework for credit, or a separate assignment. Perhaps an easy artifact to use would be a reflective essay that asks students to critically reflect on and evaluate their experience and its contribution to that student's cognitive and personal growth. You are welcome to choose your own writing prompt for your students; some examples are available from the Immersions Coordinator. You will be asked to evaluate these reflective essays according to the rubric established for Global Learning Outcomes and provide a summary to the Immersion Coordinator.

### **Liberal Education Requirements**

Students on IFPs are eligible to receive the Skills Outcome 3 (S3): Creativity upon completion of all program requirements. Check the ORSP website for more information.