



IU Program Leadership Roles, Responsibilities & Eligibility

Program Leader Role

The role of a program leader is complex, even with the support of a program coordinator. Accompanying students on an educational endeavor abroad, whether they earn credit or not, entails responsibilities that may not normally be exercised in a traditional campus-based classroom situation.

While the core activity of an academic program abroad is the teaching and learning that take place, additional responsibilities outside of the classroom also demand program leader attention including but not limited to:

- administrative and fiscal duties;
- managing student life issues ranging from homesickness to physical/mental health issues;
- and sometimes emergencies or other unexpected incidents.

Handling additional non-program teaching duties, including online teaching, while leading a program abroad is generally not possible given the extended expectations and demands on time while in-country. In addition, faculty should avoid committing to significant research or service responsibilities concurrent to the program, unless they are directly related to the program. While exact responsibilities may be divided up differently from campus to campus, or from academic unit to academic unit – for example, when an office team vs. an individual faculty member is supporting a program’s logistical development and recruitment functions – the responsibilities as outlined below provide the foundation for program leader expectations.

Program Leader Responsibilities

Prior to the submission of a program proposal, the program leader must:

- Know the geographic and academic area well and be prepared to handle both with the IU student group.
- Have sufficient expertise in travel to recognize/anticipate the pitfalls, routes, safety concerns, and advantages the proposed destination offers.
- For-credit programs: be academically qualified to teach the course associated with the travel experience.
- Not-for-credit programs: have an area of expertise that matches the program objectives.
- Propose the program in a timely manner to their department and associated committee(s) for discussion and approval as necessary.
- Be prepared to be present with the student group for the entire duration of the program.
- Be emotionally and physically prepared to deal with the 24/7 presence of an assortment of students and their varied concerns and needs.
- Be prepared to deal in a timely and patient manner with the steps and issues involved with bringing about the faculty-led program from planning through final evaluation: academic issues, financial issues, personnel issues, student issues, etc.
- Be prepared to submit to the Overseas Study Advisory Council a complete program proposal approximately 12 months prior to program departure.

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During the development and execution of the program, the program leader must also:

- Be responsible for the academic program, teaching students, and evaluation and assessment.
- Endeavor to use an Education Abroad recommended logistics provider, or a knowledgeable, reliable and compatible travel agent that has been thoroughly researched and can meet the needs of the program. In some cases, an overseas partner institution or organization may serve in this capacity. Seek comparative price quotes, examine prices, and consider alternatives in order to keep the program fee financially feasible for students.
- Work with their unit's fiscal officer to develop a financially sound program budget which ensures that all program related expenses are adequately covered.
- Work with the business manager from their department/school to monitor the income and expenses associated with the program in accordance with University fiscal policies.
- Support student recruitment by marketing the program on campus and potentially to other campuses, for example: participating in Education Abroad campus events; conducting in-class presentations and informational sessions; posting flyers and on social media; developing program descriptions for the web, etc.
- Be prepared to submit all necessary paperwork, as outlined in the Program Development Timeline, to Education Abroad by the posted deadlines.
- Be responsible for managing student issues – including *mild homesickness, acute emotional distress, minor or major health issues, physical or sexual assault, accidents, thefts, and other unexpected incidents* – and respond to crisis situations.
- *If the airfare is included in the program fee*, and thus the international flight is part of the formal program, at least one program leader (faculty or staff) member must ensure that all participants make their way to the departure airport abroad and board the plane. In such cases, it is advised that at least one program leader return with the group whenever possible.
- Designate a program assistant or a contracted on-site staff member to provide back-up assistance in the event of an emergency abroad.
- Be prepared to stay behind with a student who is unable to travel on with the group or return to the US, and/or have plans in place to support the student as outlined in the Health, Safety and Security Plan.
- Adhere to all policies, procedures and deadlines as outlined in the Program Development Handbook.

Program Leader Eligibility

For credit-bearing experiences, the faculty member proposing and leading the overseas program will be teaching in their recognized field of expertise. If a faculty member wishes to propose a program with a focus outside their recognized field of expertise (or if an administrator wishes to develop a program), they must partner with a faculty member capable of teaching within the proposed subject area. This faculty member will be responsible for the academic component of the program. Likewise, if a faculty or staff member wishes to propose a non-credit program, they must have expertise that aligns with and supports the program objectives. Program leaders should have a deep knowledge of the intended destination, including cultural and geopolitical knowledge, and ideally familiarity with the local language.

Adjunct faculty, part-time faculty, or professors' emeriti may lead programs abroad provided that they have obtained the support of their department chair and dean prior to proposing a program. In addition, the sponsoring academic unit must ensure there is an appropriate, contractual relationship in place between the individual and the University. The individual must be officially employed by IU for the duration of the program and be prepared and qualified to manage the range of program leader responsibilities.

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Program Coordinator Role

When one program leader is leading an overseas program, they must designate a program coordinator or a contracted, local, on-site staff member to provide back-up assistance in the event of an emergency abroad. When two faculty members are co-leading a program, they serve as each other's back up (and therefore no additional program coordinator is required). It is the responsibility of the sponsoring unit to ensure that the designated program coordinator meets the requirements of the job description and qualifications as described below, and that there is an appropriate, contractual relationship in place between the individual and the University for the duration of the program. Non-exempt/hourly staff may not be appropriate to fill this role given the limitations to their working hours. It is advised that University policy governing non-exempt staff and hourly employees be consulted well in advance.

Program Coordinator Responsibilities

This position serves as the assistant to the program leader prior to and during the program. To build trust, establish authority, and promote community, the program coordinator is also expected to actively engage with the student group both before departure and throughout the program. Duties generally include:

- Gather student information and materials
- Manage group funds and budget
- While abroad, assist with ill students by accompanying them to the doctor or hospital, or managing the student group while the primary leader accompanies the ill student
- Assist with crisis management should any emergency arise
- Serve as another point of contact for Education Abroad while the student group is abroad
- Take over the direction of the program should the leader become unable to do so
- Be "on-call" and available at all times during the travel portion of the program
- Take an active approach of overseeing students and handling a broad range of student issues that may arise
- Participate in all preparatory workshops and training conducted by Education Abroad, and the sponsoring academic unit.

Program Coordinator Eligibility

The program coordinator must be an IU faculty member or staff member (employment by the University is required for liability purposes). The program coordinator should have previous travel experience (ideally international travel experience) in order to understand the demands of such travel and be able to sufficiently support students. The individual should have the ability to manage student funds and budget appropriately, as well as strong interpersonal, communication, organization, and leadership skills and the ability to handle emergencies and other student behavior issues as they arise. Previous knowledge of crisis management and experience traveling with student groups and/or working with students one-on-one is preferable.

Departmental support for participation is required. A highly qualified graduate student may also serve as a program coordinator, provided they are employed in some way by the University for the duration of the program. It is expected that such appointments are reviewed by the sponsoring unit on a case-by-case basis and are dependent on the graduate student's background (e.g. level of maturity and confidence, ability to manage a group, familiarity with program destination, etc.) and the program structure.

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General Information

In general, it is important that the faculty or staff members who commit to serve as on-site program staff realize the extent of the responsibility they have taken on through this process. The faculty member's academic unit should be prepared to assist them in preparing to respond to a crisis. Indiana University will protect and defend the faculty/staff member if their actions are in consonance with institutional expectations, should a crisis occur. The staff of IU Education Abroad is available for guidance and advice during moments of crisis. The office will bring in the expertise of other units such as the Dean of Students or Counseling Services, as appropriate, to respond to a crisis. Even with the support of the university resources, faculty must be prepared to be the first responder in any kind of situation. Decisions related to health, safety and security are made in consultation with the student's family as well as IU administrators.

IU ascribes to best practices in these circumstances and will advise faculty or staff regarding legal requirements related to privacy issues (i.e. HIPAA, FERPA, etc.). For more information about managing emergencies, please refer to the detailed documentation provided by IU Education Abroad regarding crisis management.