

Checklist and Pre-Departure Considerations for International Field Trip Leaders

Section I: Checklist for Study Abroad Programs Office

Below are the chronological steps that a Field Trip Leader should follow before conducting an international field trip. The Study Abroad Programs Office is here to assist with any questions you have about the process.

6 months – 1 year prior to departure	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Field Trip Approval Form to request approval of your field trip. For questions regarding the form and approval process, contact the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academics at (979) 845-4016. Submit a copy of this form to the Director of the Study Abroad Programs Office. Please note that this form must be complete before students can register for the field trip.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin Field Trip Registration in the <i>Study Abroad Portal</i> Visit http://studyabroad.tamu.edu/People/Faculty-and-Program-Leaders/Field-Trips and click on "Field Trip Program Registration page."
	Check for updated information about your destination: <input type="checkbox"/> Texas A&M Country Risk List: http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf . If your destination country is on the list, additional approval may be needed. <input type="checkbox"/> U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html
6 months prior to departure	<input type="checkbox"/> Once the Trip Leader begins the group registration, the Study Abroad Advisor will open the student field trip application in the Study Abroad portal and send registration instructions for students to the trip leader. You must forward these instructions to all field trip participants. Participants <u>must</u> complete the registration process by the date indicated by the Advisor in order to allow ample time for insurance enrollment.
2-4 months prior to departure	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the following items in the Field Trip Registration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Field Trip Name, Dates, Leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> List of Participants <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement Forms <input type="checkbox"/> Funding and financial aid resources for students <input type="checkbox"/> University Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures <input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Emergency Form <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Departure Training information for Field Trip Leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> CISI Enrollment Info for Field Trip Leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Departure Orientation information for students
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trip leader shares the Pre-departure Orientation information with students.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trip leader provides students with a completed Study Abroad Financial Aid request form (if program is credit-bearing). Student will provide the form to the Financial Aid office to determine additionally funding available to assist with program expenses.
1 - 2 months prior to departure	Payment of \$70 Field Trip Fee (<i>trip leader selects one option below in group registration</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If the college/department coordinating the field trip will be paying the \$70 fee on behalf of the participants, the Study Abroad advisor will send an invoice for the total amount owed along with a payment deadline and instructions. <input type="checkbox"/> If the student participants will be responsible for paying the \$70 field trip fee, the Study Abroad advisor will post the fee to their individual TAMU student accounts. Please remind students that they must pay this.
4 weeks prior to departure	Send the following to the SAPO Field Trip Leader: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Any updates/changes to information pertaining to the field trip. <input type="checkbox"/> Any updates/changes to emergency contact information.
2-4 weeks prior to departure	Study Abroad advisor will email designated trip leader(s) an exit packet, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CISI insurance card for each participant and leader <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of each participant's medical consent, medical information, and emergency contact information <input type="checkbox"/> Additional resources and information Once all items are complete, the Study Abroad advisor will change the Field Trip Registration to "Confirmed".



Section II: Pre-Departure Considerations

Below are some basic pre-departure considerations and recommended information to collect from participants. The list is not exhaustive of all that could be covered during the pre-departure planning.

Trip Logistics

The Study Abroad Programs Office can provide advice and recommendations upon request. However, it is expected that the Trip Leader will coordinate or assist in coordinating the following:

- Trip location(s) and dates
- Number of participants and support staff needed
- In-country arrangements, including lodging accommodations, transportation, cultural and educational activities, etc.
- Bus, flight or transportation arrangements to/from the destination

Budgeting & Payments

- Create budget based on itinerary and program activities.
- Coordinate with the college, department or organization business office to post program fees to student accounts, if applicable.
- Coordinate with the college, department or organization business office to execute payment of all trip-related expenses (e.g. hotels, airfare, and other vendors) or work with third-party provider to pay associated fees.

Passports

- Ensure that students that do not have a valid passport apply for a passport at least three (3) months prior to departure. More information on the passport application process, fees, and processing time can be found at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html.
- Ensure that all participants' passports will be valid for the required length of time after the trip's end (usually six months). Each country has different validity requirements. For country-specific requirements, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>
- Collect color copies (scanned or hard copies) of each participant's passport (photograph and information pages). These must be uploaded to the group registration in the SAPO portal. Students should also carry a color copy of their passport.

Visa Requirement

- A visa might be required by the host country(-ies). For more information on country-specific entry and exit requirements, visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>
- If required, contact the appropriate Consulate to begin the visa application process.

Non-U.S. Citizens (including International Students & Green Card Holders)

- Non-U.S. Citizens may need a visa to enter the destination country. Refer to the destination countries' embassy website for entry requirements based on citizenship. International students also need to have a valid student visa to re-enter the United States upon return from the field trip.
- International students are required to check their visa status and obtain a Travel Signature with International Student Services (ISS) prior to going abroad.

Research International Travel and Security Information

- Determine appropriate carry-on and checked baggage allowance. More information can be found on your airline carrier's website or at: <http://tsa.gov>.
- Recommended airport check-in time: 3 hours prior to departure (for international flights); 2 hours prior to departure (domestic flights).

Health and Medical Considerations

- **Vaccinations**—might be required. See the Center for Disease Control's website (<http://cdc.gov>) for country-specific vaccination requirements. **IMPORTANT: For those groups staying at Soltis Center, must provide proof of bacterial meningitis vaccinations for all student participants per University regulations.**
- **Prescription Medications**—should be transported in its original container with the prescription attached. Remind participants to bring a sufficient supply.
- **CISI Medical Insurance**—for more information regarding Texas A&M's policy with CISI, including coverage limits, see <http://studyabroad.tamu.edu/Parents/Insurance>. All participants will be enrolled in CISI for the duration of the trip.
- **Doctors and Medical Facilities**—for information regarding doctors and medical facilities worldwide, consult the CISI website, or the Study Abroad Programs Office.
- **Emergency Contacts, Medical Information & Consent Form**—The form collects information about allergies, medications and medical conditions that the student might have. Should a participant need medical assistance and is incapacitated, this form can be given to the assisting doctor or medical personnel. This form is embedded in the student's application. Approximately 1 month before the program starts, this form will be sent to the faculty leaders by the study abroad office along with all participants' insurance ID cards. Trip Leaders should travel with a copy of this document. This document must be destroyed upon completion of the trip.



☐ **Pre-Departure Preparation and Orientations**

- The Health & Safety Pre-departure orientation is embedded in the group registration. Trip leaders have access to this material as soon as they start a group registration and are asked to incorporate this material in their pre-departure meetings with students.
- Field Trip Leaders should provide *at least one* orientation specific to their trip for all student participants. Suggested pre-departure orientation topics include, but are not limited to:
 - Behavior and expectations (pre-departure and while abroad)
 - Budget and financial information
 - Cultural and country-specific information
 - Health and safety advice
 - Travel and packing guidance
- In addition to the pre-departure orientation, SAPO provides an “[Affording Study Abroad](#)” presentation each month during the fall and spring semesters that is open to any student and discusses scholarships and financial aid for study abroad. Field Trip Leaders could encourage students to go to the presentation or read through the online material.
- Before the group starts, the trip leader should check and make sure that students are enrolled in the required courses, if the program is credit bearing.

☐ **Copies of Documents**

- Encourage participants to make copies of all important documents (e.g. passport, visa, airline tickets, credit cards- front and back, etc.).
 - Have them leave 1 copy with a trusted family member/friend in the U.S.
 - Take 1-2 copies with them abroad; should be stored securely.

☐ **Register with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate**

- This can be done online at: <https://step.state.gov/step/>
- Group or individual registration is available

☐ **Destination Considerations**

- Arrange a cell phone for while abroad
- Consider destination country/area food and water safety
- Prepare a first-aid kit for the group
- Determine rendezvous locations, dates and times if group will not always travel together

☐ **Final Trip Preparations**

- Confirm all in-country logistics, including accommodation reservations, transportation, museum appointments, etc.
- Finalize and distribute a final copy of the field trip itinerary, emergency contact information, etc. to all participants
- Confirm that participants requiring special documentation (e.g. visa) are prepared for international travel
- Verify that all participants have submitted required materials (e.g. copies of important documents, Medical Consent Form, etc.)
- Verify **Destination Considerations**

☐ **Final Check for U.S. Department of State Travel Announcements**

- Check to see if there are any warnings on the Texas A&M Country Risk List: <http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf>
- For information regarding U.S. Department of State Travel Advisories, visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>
- For other news involving international travel for U.S. citizens, visit: <https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>

Questions?

Contact the Study Abroad Programs Office Field Trip & Student Group Team:

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