# Checklist for Student Groups Abroad Trip Leaders

## Section I: Checklist for Education Abroad

Below are the chronological steps that a student organization should follow before conducting a group trip abroad. Education Abroad is here to assist with any questions you have about the process.

| 4 – 6 months prior to departure | □ Begin the **Student Group Abroad Registration** in the Education Abroad Portal. Visit [http://abroad.tamu.edu/People/Faculty-and-Program-Leaders/Student-Groups](http://abroad.tamu.edu/People/Faculty-and-Program-Leaders/Student-Groups) and click on "Student Group Abroad Registration page." |
| Check for updated information about your destination: | □ **Texas A&M Country Risk List:** [http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf](http://assets.system.tamus.edu/files/safety/pdf/travelrisk.pdf). If your destination country or region is on the list, additional approval will be required. □ **U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory:** [https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html](https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html) |
| 2 – 4 months prior to departure | □ Once a leader for the student group trip abroad begins the group registration, the Education Abroad advisor will open the individual student group application in our portal and send registration instructions for students to the trip leader. **You must forward these instructions to all student participants.** All students participating on the trip must complete the individual registration process by the date indicated by the Education Abroad advisor. |
| | Complete the following items in the **Student Group Registration**:
| | □ Student Group Abroad Name, Dates, Leader(s)
| | □ List of all Participants
| | □ Color Copies of Participants’ Passports
| | □ Acknowledgement Forms
| | □ Funding and financial aid resources for students
| | □ University Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures
| | □ On-Site Emergency Form, including itinerary, lodging, and transportation details
| | □ Pre-Departure Training information for Trip Leader(s)
| | □ CISI Enrollment Information for Trip Leader(s), if staff/faculty involved
| | □ Pre-departure Orientation information for Trip Leader(s) to share with all students
| | □ Complete a **Pre-Event Planning Form** through Student Activities MaroonLink for approval by your organization’s advisor. |
| 1 – 2 months prior to departure | **Payment of $100 Administrative Fee** *(trip leader selects one option below in group registration)*
| | □ If the **college/department** coordinating the trip will be paying the fee on behalf of the participants, the Education Abroad advisor will send an invoice for the total amount owed along with a payment deadline and instructions.
| | □ If the **student organization** coordinating the trip will be paying the field trip fee for the members, the student leader must submit an Approval to Charge form to the SOFC. A copy of the completed form must be sent to the Education Abroad advisor.
| | □ If the **student participants** will be responsible for paying the fee, the Education 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 Education Abroad advisor:**
| | □ Any updates/changes to information pertaining to the field trip
| | □ Any updates/changes to emergency contact information. |
| 2 – 4 weeks prior to departure | **Education Abroad advisor will e-mail trip leader(s) an exit packet, to include:**
| | □ CISI insurance card for each participant and leader
| | □ CISI invoice to be paid ($1.26 per person per day)
| | □ A copy of each participant’s medical consent and information
| | □ Emergency contact information for each participant
| | □ Additional resources for emergency assistance

Once all items are complete, the Education Abroad advisor will change the Student Group 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**
  - Education Abroad 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 or organization business office to post program fees to student accounts, if applicable.
  - Coordinate with the college 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 who do not have a passport or who have an expired passport apply for one at least 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](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. Each country has different validity requirements. For country-specific requirements, visit [https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html](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 Education Abroad portal. Students should also carry a color copy of their passport.

- **Visa Requirement**
  - A visa might be required by the host country (-ies) and/or in layover country (-ies). For more information on country-specific entry and exit requirements, visit [https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html](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 TAMU’s 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](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](http://cdc.gov)) for country-specific vaccination requirements. **IMPORTANT:** For those groups staying at one of the A&M Centers or Partners (Santa Chiara, Soltis Center, or Santa Clara), students 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 University’s policy with CISI, including coverage limits, see [http://abroad.tamu.edu/Parents/insurance](http://abroad.tamu.edu/Parents/insurance). All participants are enrolled for the duration of the trip.
  - **Doctors and Medical Facilities**—for information regarding doctors and medical facilities worldwide, consult the CISI website and log into their online portal.
  - **Emergency Contacts, Medical Information & Consent Form**— The form collects information about allergies, medications, and medical conditions that the student discloses. Should a participant need medical assistance and is incapacitated, this information 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 trip leaders by the
Education Abroad advisor along with all participants’ insurance cards. Trip leaders should travel with a copy of this document, keeping it in a secure place at all times. This document must be destroyed upon completion of the trip.

- **Pre-Departure Preparation and Orientations**
  - All students are required to attend an in-person health and safety pre-departure orientation offered by Education Abroad. Therefore multiple orientations to choose from each semester. You will be provided a link to share with your students. Each student can sign-up for an orientation that best fits his or her schedule.
  - Field Trip Leaders should also 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
  - Education Abroad also provides an “Affording Education Abroad” presentation each month during the fall and spring semesters that is open to any student and discusses scholarships and financial aid for international experiences. Field Trip Leaders can encourage students to attend or read through the online material.
  - The trip leader must check and make sure that students are enrolled in the required courses, if the program is credit bearing, prior to departure.

- **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/](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 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 information, etc.)
  - Pay the CISI invoice that will be provided by Education Abroad. The current cost is $1.26 per person per day.

- **Final Check for Safety of 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](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](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](https://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html)

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**Questions?**
Contact the Education Abroad Student Group Team:
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