

THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

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STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE
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“ We need a group of
academic leaders
to challenge us,
to make us dream,
to lead us to sacrifice a little
for the long-term
benefit of our nation
and the world. ”

—THE LATE SENATOR PAUL SIMON OF ILLINOIS

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STANDARDS: THE NEW EDITION



This revised set of “Standards” for education abroad is the product of many minds and hands. It replaces our June 2004 document of the same name. More than 100 participants at The Forum’s annual conference in November 2004 contributed to the thinking and the revising. The Advisory Council’s Goals Committee on Standards of Best Practice communicated regularly with their colleagues, in the U.S. and elsewhere, and we received a great deal of comment and advice through our electronic communications. In addition, several organizations have made early use of the document and communicated their suggestions for changes to the committee. The process has been consistent with our commitments and with The Forum’s status as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for U.S. education abroad.

This new version has many changes from the first draft, and they are outlined in “Changes...” However, one of the biggest changes cannot be seen in this format because “hot links” just do not spring to life in the printed version. We have reserved them for inclusion only on our website. These “resources” provide information, advice and best practice documents that the committee and their consultant, David Comp, have assembled over the past year and a half.

We expect to further develop the “resources” as we move through the forthcoming Pilot Program for Standards. Through much of 2006 we will be conducting field tests of the “Standards” on colleges, universities and providers here and abroad. We will be inviting approximately two dozen institutions to participate in a structured approach to the field testing, making sure that we involve a representative sample of institutions. Thus, as we stated in the first edition, we expect “Standards” to be an evolving process.

If we can hold to this timetable, we will be able to use “Standards” for member institutions that wish to show their dedication to best practices and quality development. The query-based approach to standard-setting seems to puzzle some colleagues, but it is an increasingly common way of approaching best practice development in education, assessment and elsewhere. Those who have followed the structure of this document to conduct an institutional self-study have attested to the focus it brings to quality assessment and to the capacity to highlight areas where improvement is needed.

DR. GEOFFREY BANNISTER

President, *The Forum on Education Abroad*

PREAMBLE

THE 2005 “STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE” represent the product of over three years of collaboration and reflect the input and shared vision of study abroad professionals from around the world. In the same way that we have built on earlier efforts to formulate practical guidelines for international educators, we anticipate that this new document will continue to evolve so that the Standards remain an accurate reflection of best practices.

It is our hope that the Standards will continue to serve educators around the world as a touchstone by which they might periodically review their own accomplishments. For if there were one core precept for members of the new *Forum on Education Abroad*, it is that we are committed to the continuous evaluation and improvement of our work as educators.

The Justice Department, Anti-Trust Division has designated *The Forum* as a standards development organization (SDO) to develop standards for the education abroad profession in the U.S. The criteria for SDO standards definition are: openness, balance, transparency, consensus, due process.

The Forum Board and Advisory Council have the responsibility to decide how to implement *The Forum's* SDO prerogatives.

The Standards Committee's responsibility is to ensure that our standards are open, balanced, transparent, and the product of consensus. These principles have guided our work. What the reader will not find in the standards are simplistic solutions to the myriad complex challenges inherent in international education and inter-cultural understanding. We affirm that there are certain basic principles that ought to be accepted without question by study abroad practitioners and programs and these include:

- providing students with clear information and goals for a program
- non-discrimination
- strong and careful financial management
- the need for a plan for academic oversight
- attention to safety in planning
- observance of U.S. and host country laws.

We recognize as well, that there are no “one-size-fits-all” answers for how organizations and programs should address a broad range of study abroad standards. After all, our students come from all manner of backgrounds and have a variety of disciplinary interests. It would make no

more sense to impose monolithic standards on all international programs than it would to assume that all study abroad programs ought to aspire to identical educational goals. The Standards are therefore designed to fit a wide range of academic program types including direct enrollment programs, hybrid programs, island programs, and field research programs. They are applicable to semester and year programs, summer programs, short-term programs, programs organized by U.S. universities, international universities, and study abroad providers. It is not our vision to impose a long list of requirements of good practice that apply in the same way to all educational programs and professionals. We expect that practitioners, institutions, consortia, and associations will employ these standards for different reasons and at different times in their organizations' history, each with legitimately varying goals.

Our solution to the challenge—how to set high standards, without promoting standardization of a particular model for education abroad—is to anchor the standards in queries rather than prescriptive statements. These queries provide a process for voluntary periodic self-evaluation by individual professionals, their programs, and their institutions. The queries are illustrated with a variety of examples coming from different institutions that illumine the variety of ways that study abroad professionals and others have responded to similar queries.

Self-evaluation can then, potentially, form the basis for external review and/or certification. Through a process of structured self-evaluation, we envision practitioners meeting from time-to-time, either as an office staff in a summer retreat; or consultants conducting a five-year external program review; or as administrators drafting long-range institutional plans. By asking the right questions and by providing good examples of model resources and documents of practice, we hope that the active professional will find the process of self-review both intellectually engaging and professionally enriching. Ultimately, our common goal is to establish standards that will improve practices, such that our students' international academic experiences are as rich and meaningful as possible.

MICHAEL STEINBERG, Chair of the Standards Committee
WILLIAM ANTHONY, Director, Office of Study Abroad,
Northwestern University

CHANGES IN THE NEW EDITION

For those who read the first edition of the “Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad” and would like help locating the changes, here is a brief summary of some of the major changes. There were also many small changes, some of which were subtle but extremely important, giving a new definition and power to the standards and the queries. Still, we know to expect many more changes as the process unfolds, especially in the Pilot Program phase of 2006.

There is an entirely new section on marketing. We chose to include it under “Mission, Policies and Procedures.” This section focuses upon ethics and accuracy in the representation of programs.

A new standard has been added to “Ethics and Integrity” to address how the organization acts with consideration and

respect toward the ethics and culture of countries other than its own.

Several standards have been subtly redirected and many of the queries have been revised in the following ways:

- ✓ 43 of the queries have been modified, based largely on feedback from colleagues
- ✓ 17 of the queries have been dropped
- ✓ 37 new queries have been added

In addition, several “U.S.–centric” phrasings and suggestions were modified at the request of our non-U.S. colleagues. All this goes to show how much education abroad has to be a multinational team effort. Thanks to our non-U.S. colleagues for this help.

THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE FOR EDUCATION ABROAD

SECOND EDITION
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BASIC PRINCIPLES

Members of *The Forum on Education Abroad* are committed, as a condition of membership, to the following:

- Remaining informed of, familiar with and adhering to ethical standards and good practices developed by the major national and international professional organizations,
- Supporting excellence in all aspects of international education, including continuous evaluation and improvement of their work and programs,
- Fostering genuine international partnerships,
- Fostering student growth in intellectual and international awareness and cultural understanding.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

EDUCATION ABROAD PROGRAM (EdAP) In-classroom and out-of-classroom related activities that comprise a credit-bearing education abroad experience.

HOME INSTITUTION The college or university at which the education abroad student is earning the primary degree.

HOST INSTITUTION An overseas college, university or other entity that provides academic and program related support to the education abroad student.

PROVIDER An institutional unit or a stand-alone profit or non-profit entity that administers one or more education abroad programs.

ORGANIZATION A college or university that sponsors study abroad programs or a provider.

“The standard for ethical practice in this profession must be that our students’ needs come first.”

—Kathleen Sideli
Indiana University

THE STANDARDS

1. ETHICS AND INTEGRITY: THE ORGANIZATION REMAINS INFORMED ABOUT, EDUCATES ITS EMPLOYEES IN AND ADHERES TO THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF THE PROFESSION.

- a. **Operations:** The organization operates its programs in accordance with ethical principles.
- b. **Student Life:** The organization conducts its affairs with students in an ethically responsible way.
- c. **Cultural Sensitivity:** The organization acts with consideration and respect toward the ethics and culture of countries other than its own.

2. MISSION, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: THE ORGANIZATION HAS A FORMALLY ADOPTED MISSION STATEMENT FOR ITS OVERALL OPERATIONS AND FOR ITS INDIVIDUAL EdAPs THAT IS KNOWN TO AND ACCEPTED BY ITS FACULTY AND STAFF.

- a. **Mission and Commitment:** The organization has mission statements appropriate for each EdAP.
- b. **Policies:** The organization has adequate and published policies that govern its education abroad programs.
- c. **Personnel:** The organization has defined policies with respect to personnel issues.
- d. **Communications:** The organization is committed to and practices open, accurate and honest communications.
- e. **Marketing:** The organization follows ethical practices in marketing
- f. **Affordability and Financial Assistance:** The organization provides pro-active assistance to students and families concerning the provision of internal and/or external financial aid.
- g. **On-Site Administration:** The organization provides adequate administrative support for the EdAP programs and students.
- h. **Program Assessment:** The organization has a formal review and evaluation processes.

3. ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK: THE ORGANIZATION MAINTAINS CLEARLY STATED AND PUBLICLY AVAILABLE POLICIES ON ACADEMIC MATTERS RELATED TO EDUCATION ABROAD.

- a. **Academic Credit:** The organization has clearly stated and publicly available policies on the awarding of academic credit.
- b. **Academic Coursework:** The organization provides an academically challenging program of study.

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c. Internships and Field Research: When offered for credit, internships and field opportunities have appropriate academic and field supervision.

d. On-Site Advising: The Provider or EdAP advises students in their academic endeavors.

e. Academic Integration: The organization fosters the integration of student overseas learning with requirements and learning at the Home Institution.

4. ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM RESOURCES:

THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES ADEQUATE FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ITS EdAPs.

a. Personnel-Academic: EdAP faculty members have the qualifications, knowledge and an appropriate level of engagement to support the curriculum and the learning environment of students inside and outside the classroom.

b. Personnel-Administration and Support: EdAP staff members have the qualifications, knowledge and an appropriate level of engagement to administer the program effectively and to promote the learning, health and well being of students.

c. Financial Resources: The organization devotes adequate financial resources to each EdAP.

d. Learning and Academic Support Facilities: Each EdAP has adequate facilities as appropriate to the host environment and culture.

e. Student Housing: Students are provided with or helped to gain access to appropriate housing.

5. STUDENT SELECTION AND CODE OF CONDUCT:

THE ORGANIZATION MAINTAINS, AND MAKES PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE, ITS COMMITMENT TO FAIR AND APPROPRIATE POLICIES REGARDING STUDENT SELECTION AND CONDUCT.

a. Student Selection: The recruitment and selection processes are open and fair.

b. Code of Conduct: The organization makes explicit its student code of conduct and disciplinary processes.

6. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES ADVISING AND ORIENTATION SUPPORT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE EdAPs MISSION AND THE NEEDS OF ITS STUDENTS.

a. Pre- and Post-Departure Advising and Orientation: The EdAP provides appropriate advising support to meet student needs.

b. Returning Student Support: The organization and EdAP provide support for students returning from abroad.

c. Language Development: The EdAP provides language development opportunities appropriate to the mission of the program.

“Campus internationalization is moving rapidly to the forefront of institutional strategy, largely driven by campus leaders who see how critical it is to a quality education.”

—Madeleine Green
American Council
on Education

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7. STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

THE ORGANIZATION HAS ESTABLISHED AND REGULARLY UTILIZES INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REVIEW PROCESSES FOR ASSURING THAT ITS EdAPs ACCOMPLISH THEIR STATED EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES FOR FOSTERING STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

a. Inter-Cultural Understanding: The organization fosters inter-cultural understanding.

b. Language and Communication: The organization encourages the development of language and/or inter-cultural communication skills.

8. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND SECURITY: THE ORGANIZATION HAS ESTABLISHED AND CONTINUOUSLY MAINTAINS EFFECTIVE HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY AND RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND FACULTY-STAFF TRAINING.

a. Safety and Security: The organization ensures continuous attention to safety and security issues.

b. Health: The organization ensures continuous institutional attention to health issues for EdAP students, faculty and staff.

c. Liability: The organization maintains adequate insurance policies and conducts regular risk-management programs involving appropriate talents and personnel.

d. Emergency Communications: The organization and EdAP have adequate and clearly defined emergency communications plans.

QUERIES

Queries are the means through which organizations, providers, and EdAPs can test themselves against the standards. The query approach is designed to avoid prescriptive statements and to elicit a variety of responses. Queries marked with an asterisk are designed to encourage documentation. Queries are linked to resources from a variety of organizations and institutions that can be useful in self-evaluations.

1. ETHICS AND INTEGRITY: THE ORGANIZATION REMAINS INFORMED ABOUT, EDUCATES ITS EMPLOYEES IN AND ADHERES TO THE ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF THE PROFESSION.

a. Operations: The organization operates its programs in accordance with ethical principles.

- i. What ethical and legal standards does the organization apply in the marketing and operations of its EdAPs?
- ii. Do staff and faculty consistently abide by U.S. and host country laws, regulations, and guidelines that may affect EdAPs?

- iii. Does the organization keep staff and faculty apprised of these laws, regulations, and guidelines?
- iv. Do faculty and staff act ethically, guided by professional ethical standards of the field?
- v. Do the organization and its personnel operate to avoid situations where there might be conflicts of interest or have appropriate ways of addressing these issues? Is this policy documented and distributed to personnel?
- vi. Does the organization provide proper credit to other sources in its publications?
- vii. Does the organization take care not to denigrate or to interfere with the operations and programs of competitor organizations?

b. Student Life: The organization conducts its affairs with students in an ethically responsible way.

- i. What ethical guidelines are in place for advising and interacting with students?
- ii. How does the organization protect student rights to privacy and confidentiality?
- iii. Does the organization assure long-term protection of students' records?
- iv. Does the organization value, welcome, and provide a supportive environment for all students regardless of gender, age, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and national or ethnic origin?

c. Cultural Sensitivity: The organization acts with consideration and respect toward the ethics and culture of other countries.

- i. Does the organization have sophisticated knowledge about the ethics, culture, society, and politics of the countries where it operates?
- ii. Does the organization rely on specialists knowledgeable about the countries where it operates?

2. MISSION, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES: THE ORGANIZATION HAS A FORMALLY ADOPTED MISSION STATEMENT FOR ITS OVERALL OPERATIONS AND FOR ITS INDIVIDUAL EdAPs THAT IS KNOWN TO AND ACCEPTED BY ITS FACULTY AND STAFF.

a. Mission and Commitment: The organization has mission statements appropriate for each EdAP.

- i. Does the organization have a mission statement for its EdAPs?
If so, what is it?
- ii. Does each EdAP have a vision, mission, and/or objectives?
If so, what are they?
- iii. Does the organization clearly define expected outcomes?

“Even the best designed program fails its students if the support system is not fully articulated and adequately funded.”

—Mary Dwyer
Institute for the International Education of Students

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b. Policies: The provider has adequate and published policies that govern its education abroad programs.

- i. Does the organization have criteria in place for establishing and terminating EdAPs?
- ii. Does the organization have standards for accepting and reporting student credits from an EdAP?
- iii. Does the organization have appropriate waivers and agreements with students participating in EdAPs?
- iv. Does the organization have contractual agreements with international educational and/or cultural institutions when appropriate?
- v. Does the organization have contractual agreements among participating home and host institutions, providers, and EdAPs when appropriate?
- vi. Does the organization support, mentor and learn from others in the general field of international education?
- vii. Does the organization play an active role in professional organizations at the local, regional or national level?

c. Personnel: The organization has defined policies with respect to personnel issues.

- i. Do EdAP faculty members make an effort to establish professional working relationships with the organization’s academic leaders and faculty, and vice-versa?
- ii. Does the organization provide feedback to provider and EdAP staff and leadership?
- iii. Does the EdAP or provider have procedures for evaluating faculty and staff?
- iv. Does the organization offer opportunities for EdAP staff and faculty development?
- v. Do staff and faculty participate in professional development opportunities?

d. Communications: The organization is committed to and practices open, accurate and honest communications.

- i. How does the organization inform faculty and staff about the goals of the EdAPs?
- ii. How does the organization inform faculty and staff about the program activities of the EdAPs?
- iii. Does the organization have a communication and articulation agreement with other organizations with which it works?
- iv. Do the faculty and staff in the various entities involved in the EdAPs treat and interact with each other with professional respect?
- v. Does the home institution cultivate and maintain working relationships with key administrative units at an institution (e.g., Financial Aid, Health Services)?

- iii. Are students provided an opportunity to evaluate each course as well as the overall program and do EdAP staff and faculty review these evaluations?
- iv. Does the organization have academic standards approved and monitored by faculty or an equivalent qualified body?
- v. Does the organization provide an opportunity for periodic independent peer review?
- vi. Does the organization have a plan in place to assess student's academic, linguistic, cultural, and/or personal development in a program?
- vii. How are these external and internal evaluations utilized for EdAP improvement?
- viii. Where appropriate, does the organization share evaluation findings with home and host institutional, provider and EdAP staff and academic leaders?
- ix. Does the organization have a program for data collection, analysis and dissemination?
- x. Does the organization have procedures for academic approval of courses and credit arrangements?

3. ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK: THE ORGANIZATION MAINTAINS CLEARLY STATED AND PUBLICLY AVAILABLE POLICIES ON ACADEMIC MATTERS RELATED TO EDUCATION ABROAD.

a. Academic Credit: The organization has clearly stated and publicly available policies on the awarding of academic credit.

- i. Does the organization have clearly articulated policies and procedures for awarding or recommending course grades and course credit?
- ii. Is the award of academic credit consistent with standards expected by the students' home institutions?
- iii. How does the EdAP inform students in advance about policies with respect to course credit?

b. Academic Coursework: The organization provides an academically challenging program of study.

- i. Do courses meet the academic requirements of students' home institutions?
- ii. If courses are taken at a foreign host institution, does the EdAP insure that students will be appropriately evaluated in the courses, and that the amount of credit and the grade translation is based on clear and careful guidelines?
- iii. Are course requirements clear to students?
- iv. Are students provided clear guidelines for what is expected of them; how their performance in the course will be evaluated; and the host country teaching styles and expectations?

“The earning of academic credit remains at the heart of integrated study abroad. Therefore, curriculum integration and institutional and discipline-specific policies need to be clear and advising systems pro-active in this regard.”

—Al Balkcum
University of Minnesota

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d. On-Site Advising: The Provider or EdAP advises students in their academic endeavors.

- i. Are students guided in developing learning strategies and special skills necessary to integrate into the host academic culture?
- ii. Does the EdAP encourage qualified students to enroll in appropriate locally taught (or available) university courses?

e. Academic Integration: The organization fosters the integration of student overseas learning with requirements and learning at the Home Institution.

- i. Does the organization’s faculty play a role in ensuring that the education abroad experience is integrated into the academic core of the student’s academic program?
- ii. Do academic leaders meet with EdAP faculty and staff to discuss ongoing and possible new academic opportunities?
- iii. Does the organization have a content-qualified curriculum committee or process to address issues of curriculum development?
- iv. How does the organization support curriculum integration between programs and universities at home?

4. ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM RESOURCES:
THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES ADEQUATE FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES TO SUPPORT ITS EdAPs.

a. Personnel-Academic: EdAP faculty members have the qualifications, knowledge and an appropriate level of engagement to support the curriculum and the learning environment of students inside and outside the classroom.

- i. Do EdAP faculty members have qualifications and in-depth experience appropriate to the mission of the program and the courses taught?
- ii. Do instructors in university courses at the site have appropriate qualifications and in-depth experience?
- iii. Are EdAP instructors aware of and trained to manage cultural differences in order to work with international students in the host culture?
- iv. Do EdAP instructors have academic credibility and appropriate credentials in their host country?
- v. Do the scholarly achievements of the EdAP faculty meet local university equivalent standards?
- vi. Do EdAP instructors ensure that student academic experiences meet the academic expectations of the sending institutions?
- vii. Do EdAP instructors accept their role as educators and fulfill their responsibilities to each student?
- viii. Do EdAP faculty and/or staff have appropriate information on learning styles and expectations of students from another culture and do they employ appropriate teaching strategies?

- ix. Do EdAP faculty and staff have the necessary skills and background to prepare students for the educational system they will be entering?
- x. Are EdAP faculty engaged in scholarship, or other appropriate activities in the arts or their chosen profession?
- xi. Are EdAP instructors involved in developing new courses according to the organization's approved curriculum design?
- xii. Do EdAP instructors assist students to make informed and independent academic choices?

b. Personnel-Administration and Support: EdAP staff members have the qualifications, knowledge and an appropriate level of engagement to administer the program effectively and to promote the learning, health and well being of students.

- i. Is the ratio of staff-to-students appropriate for the mission of the EdAP?
- ii. Does the organization have standards of competencies in selecting staff and a protocol for periodic staff evaluation?
- iii. Does the organization have a training program for staff that includes new employee training and continuing education?
- iv. Does the organization have appropriate policies in areas such as harassment, diversity issues, and hiring and termination policies?
- v. Are the on-site senior administrators adequately trained and experienced for the duties they must perform?
- vi. Are guides qualified to lead field trips?
- vii. Is on-site staff knowledgeable about cross-cultural learning?
- viii. Is staff aware of and trained to manage cultural differences in order to work with international students in the host culture?
- ix. Are sending institution staff knowledgeable about the destinations where they send students?

c. Financial Resources: The organization devotes adequate financial resources to each EdAP.

- i. Does the organization have a financial management plan?
- ii. Does the organization have financial oversight processes appropriate to the size and complexity of the programs?
- iii. Does the organization provide adequate logistical and academic support for new EdAPs?
- iv. Does the organization have sufficient financial resources to deal with crises and/or to weather sudden and unanticipated financial changes?
- v. Does the organization have access to emergency funds?

“Education abroad has made more progress in standards for health, safety and security than in any other area of operations, but the legal, operational and international security issues of tomorrow demand that we find new ways of imagining and tackling the challenges we have yet to meet.”

—David Larsen
Arcadia University

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“By the middle of the century, there will be no ethnic majority in the country. An outward-looking and internationally-educated America will make best use of the talents and skills of our diverse population.”
—The Honorable
Lee Hamilton
Indiana

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d. Learning and Academic Support Facilities: Each EdAP has adequate facilities as appropriate to the host environment and culture.

- i. Do EdAPs follow a written plan for routine, preventative and deferred maintenance of facilities, equipment and grounds?
- ii. Is reasonable accommodation made to meet the needs of students with physical disabilities?
- iii. Do students have access to adequate library resources?
- iv. Do students have adequate study space?
- v. Do students have access to equipment and technologies appropriate to the program design?
- vi. Do students have access to Internet services appropriate to their academic needs?
- vii. Are classrooms equipped with instructional technology as appropriate?
- viii. Are faculty trained in the use of this technology?
- ix. Are the program facilities adequate to the size and type of the program?

e. Student Housing: Students are provided with or helped to gain access to appropriate housing.

- i. Does the organization have standards for managing student life issues?
- ii. Is the location of student housing accessible to appropriate transportation?
- iii. Do housing contracts adhere to the laws of the host country?
- iv. Does student housing promote student access to local culture?
- v. Is the housing evaluated and inspected regularly?
- vi. Are adequate provisions made for changing a student’s housing assignment when warranted?
- vii. Does the housing meet appropriate security measures?

5. STUDENT SELECTION AND CODE OF CONDUCT: THE ORGANIZATION MAINTAINS, AND MAKES PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE, ITS COMMITMENT TO FAIR AND APPROPRIATE POLICIES REGARDING STUDENT SELECTION AND CONDUCT.

a. Student Selection: The recruitment and selection processes are open and fair.

- i. Has the organization defined its participant pool and set appropriate admissions standards?
- ii. Does the organization encourage students from traditionally underrepresented groups to study abroad?
- iii. Does the organization encourage students from a wide variety of majors and fields of study to study abroad?
- iv. Does the organization encourage students to apply who have the necessary background for the specific programs/disciplines offered?

- v. Does the admissions process reflect a policy of non-discrimination on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, or national and ethnic origin?

b. Code of Conduct: The organization makes explicit its student code of conduct and disciplinary processes.

- i. Does the organization have a drug and alcohol abuse policy?
- ii. Does the organization have student disciplinary codes and processes, and are these made available to students?
- iii. Do students meet the minimum behavior standards as specified by the organization's code of student responsibility?
- iv. Does the organization have an appeal process for decisions about admissions and code of conduct violations?
- v. Does the organization have a policy with respect to sexual harassment and assault?

6. LEARNING ENVIRONMENT: THE ORGANIZATION PROVIDES ADVISING AND ORIENTATION SUPPORT THAT IS CONSISTENT WITH THE EdAPs MISSION AND THE NEEDS OF ITS STUDENTS.

a. Pre and Post-Departure Advising and Orientation: The EdAP provides appropriate advising support to meet student needs.

- i. Does the organization provide appropriate advising and pre-departure support to meet student needs?
- ii. Does pre-departure information include accurate information about academic credit, program requirements, living and travel arrangements, safety and health considerations, and expectations about expenses?
- iii. Does the home institution facilitate students' use of support services on campus (e.g., financial aid, student health) before they study abroad?
- iv. Does the program ensure that students have sufficient prerequisite knowledge of the language of the host country to satisfactorily meet the program's academic expectations before enrolling?
- v. Do students have sufficient academic preparation and appropriate course prerequisites at the home institution before enrolling in the EdAP?
- vi. Does the organization require or inform students about the need for health and repatriation insurance?
- vii. Does the EdAP conduct an extensive initial orientation program appropriate to the goals and nature of the program and needs of the students?
- viii. Does the orientation program contain accurate advice on health, safety and security issues and inform students about the potential risks involved in study abroad and the specific risks at the study abroad location?

“Education abroad is best seen not as a short-term event but as an experiential sea of learning for which the student needs both pre-preparation and structured time for post-experience reflection and internalization.”

—Adrian Beaulieu
Smith College

NOTES

b. Returning Student Support: The organization and EdAP provide support for students returning from abroad.

- i. Does the organization offer a re-entry program for returning students?
- ii. Does the organization assist returning students to share their experiences with other students at the home institution?
- iii. Does the organization assist returning students to take advantage of their experiences upon return to campus, as well as after graduation?

c. Language Development: The EdAP provides language development opportunities appropriate to the mission of the program.

- i. Is language instruction, when appropriate, integrated into EdAP courses and activities?
- ii. In language development courses, do students gain a perspective of the host country’s values, history, culture and current status?
- iii. Are students provided out-of-classroom opportunities to develop oral, listening and writing skills in the language of the host country?

7. STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT:

THE ORGANIZATION HAS ESTABLISHED AND REGULARLY UTILIZES INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REVIEW PROCESSES FOR ASSURING THAT ITS EdAPs ACCOMPLISH THEIR STATED EDUCATIONAL PURPOSES FOR FOSTERING STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.

a. Inter-Cultural Understanding: The organization fosters inter-cultural understanding.

- i. Are students encouraged to reflect on their own value system in a structured manner in the context of living in a different culture?
- ii. Do academic studies, support services and integrative activities such as ethnographically oriented observational activities or journaling exercises contribute to students’ appreciation and respect for persons with differing cultural values?
- iii. Are integrative activities designed to assist students in acquiring general adaptive skills that prepare them to live in a foreign culture or cultures?
- iv. Do opportunities exist for students to interact with persons of different backgrounds? For example, do EdAPs have agreements with universities or other similar entities for access to sponsored activities and student clubs?
- v. Are students assessed for their comparative knowledge of multiple cultures?
- vi. Are assessments made of the students’ ability to adapt to a different culture?

“Setting and holding to standards of good practice in education abroad is critical to Senator Simon’s call to challenge, dream and sacrifice ‘for the long-term benefit of our nation and the world.’”
—Geoffrey Bannister
The Forum on Education Abroad

NOTES

b. Health: The organization ensures continuous institutional attention to health issues for EdAP students, faculty and staff.

- i. Do EdAP staff members inform students about local health and safety concerns?
- ii. Is staff sufficiently trained to determine when students require professional assistance for mental health issues, alcohol and other drug abuse?
- iii. Are students with individual health concerns provided pre-departure and on-site guidance and assistance?
- iv. Does the organization have contacts with appropriate health-related agencies on site?

c. Liability: The organization maintains adequate insurance policies and conducts regular risk-management programs involving appropriate talents and personnel.

- i. Does the organization have appropriate insurance coverage to cover liability risks and require insurance coverage for students and traveling faculty/administration?
- ii. Are the appropriate offices and external agencies involved in a regular risk-management assessment program?

d. Emergency Communications: The organization and EdAP have adequate and clearly defined emergency communications plans.

- i. Does the organization have policies and procedures for when it will contact home institutions and/or parents/guardians/emergency contacts in emergency situations and with respect to student health and safety issues?
- ii. Are students informed about these policies and procedures and is this information available on the internet?

The Forum recognizes that approaches to degree requirements and class and examination requirements differ from country to country, appreciates the validity and worth of differing education models, and enthusiastically affirms the value for students of studying in universities in countries other than their own.

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ABOUT THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD



THE FORUM is a global institutional membership association whose exclusive purpose is to serve the field of education abroad. It was created by experts in the field specifically to meet the needs of the

profession. *The Forum* is a network of professionals engaged in a global dialogue about education abroad. *The Forum* is not just talk. It is action. It is participation. It is change. It is growth. It is policy. It is momentum. Its members worldwide are educational institutions, consortia, agencies, organizations, and individuals that provide, direct, manage or support education abroad opportunities. *The Forum* members represent more than 60 percent of the U.S. student population studying abroad. Its policies are guided and set by the Board of Directors whose only interest is to further the mission of *The Forum* to promote the greater good of the field of education abroad, without fear or favor of any one group or particular constituent. No other association provides the services and products provided by *The Forum*.

By offering opportunities for dynamic discourse and up-to-the-minute information sharing, *The Forum* promotes high quality and effective programming through:

Advocating **standards of good practice**,

Promoting the integration of education abroad into high-quality **curricular development** and **academic design**

Encouraging **outcomes assessment**,

Conducting research and **data collection**,

Engaging in advocacy of education abroad at all levels.

Participation in *The Forum* is appropriate for professionals at all levels of experience who are interested in contributing to the growth of knowledge and understanding about education abroad and its impact on learning and skills development. *The Forum* invites active participation by university and non-university-based education abroad administrators, advisors and faculty members from all disciplines and all nations in shaping and carrying out the purposes of the organization.

For more information about *The Forum*, visit our website: www.forumea.org or write: info@forumea.org.

THE FORUM AS A STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

THE FORUM has made a firm commitment to developing and promulgating standards of good practice in the field of education abroad, as reflected in this second edition of “Standards of Good Practice in Education Abroad.” To complement the Standards and to provide a framework for their eventual use and future development, *The Forum* sought and, in December 2004, received recognition from the Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad.

This status does not in itself produce standards of good practice—that is the work of the professionals in the field—rather it provides protection to *The Forum*, to academic institutions and to individual professionals in the field once we begin to apply standards in a quality review and self-improvement process.

As an SDO, it has been our responsibility to develop standards—and processes to apply them—that respect the following criteria:

Openness, defined as the opportunity for involvement by all parties known to be affected by the particular standards development activity,

Balance, which requires balancing interests so that standards development activities are not dominated by any single group of interested parties,

Transparency, which calls for readily available access to essential information regarding proposed and final standards,

Consensus, defined as the requirement that substantial agreement be reached on all material points after the consideration of all views and objections, and

Due Process, including the right to express a position, to have it considered, and to appeal an adverse decision.

These democratic and open principles are consistent with *The Forum's* commitment as expressed in the Justice Department's web-listed “Notification,” namely that “...*The Forum* is committed to presenting standards and methods for assessing performance that can be used by the smallest and simplest organizations interested in self-improvement, through to the largest and most complex organizations in the education abroad field.” The principles are also consistent with the open processes the Standards Committee continues to follow as it solicits help from across the education abroad community.

How does the SDO status benefit *The Forum* and the field? As many professionals know only too well, litigation is becoming increasingly common, and many institutions have found themselves in a difficult position after providing professional assessments. An SDO, unlike an individual or even a consortium of institutions, gains certain protections under the “Standards Development Organization Act of 2004.” Specifically, lawsuits against an SDO have their antitrust liability assessed under the “rule of reason”; SDO's have their liability limited to actual as opposed to treble damages; and limits are placed on legal fees that effectively protect against frivolous suits.

These are important protections that will allow *The Forum* to take a stance on behalf of the field that current entities could not. Perhaps even more important, the Act is also linked through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB A-119) to the requirement that:

“All federal agencies must use voluntary consensus standards in lieu of government-unique standards in their procurement and regulatory activities, except where inconsistent with law or otherwise impractical.” (OMB A-119, p.2.)

This is an important protection for education abroad because it greatly increases the field's capacity to self-regulate, and helps avoid the pursuit or imposition of specialized accreditation. This is an important protection against unwarranted and unwanted external review by federal or other agencies.

DR. GEOFFREY BANNISTER

President, *The Forum on Education Abroad*

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