



Georgia Institute of Technology®

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Date: February 13, 2019

To: Deans, School Chairs, and Vice Provosts

From: Rafael L. Bras, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Copy: J. Stein, K. Harrington, K. Wasch, G. Wolovick, L. Sharp, B. Flowers, J. Herazy, M. Tavares, A. Henry, L. Paulez, M. Hall, Associate Deans, College Business Officers, College Faculty Affairs Reps

Subject: **Implementation of Study Abroad Protocols**

Our faculty, staff, and students are engaged in a variety of study abroad activities all over the world. These study abroad programs are a critical component to Georgia Tech expanding its global footprint and ensuring that we graduate good global citizens. Georgia Tech takes this responsibility seriously, understanding that while enriching and valuable to both the student and faculty member, study abroad learning experiences are a high-risk and high-reward endeavor. Last fall, in the spirit of best serving our students, eliminating as much risk as possible, and creating a positive learning environment, I created and charged the Provost's Study Abroad Working Group to strengthen and enhance the way we vet, train, and onboard faculty, staff, and student assistants, who participate in these programs as employees.

The Working Group has developed protocols related to these engagements by our faculty, staff, and student employees. I urge you to read the attached protocols carefully and work with the Office of International Education to fully implement for your study abroad programs this summer. The new protocols include vetting, training, and onboarding procedures that require current background screens for all faculty and staff, attendance at an orientation, and attestations by the faculty and unit leaders that they have the same responsibility and accountability as if the courses were taught on the Atlanta campus

The protocols should be shared with your faculty and included in your school and college study abroad processes going forward. These recommendations have been reviewed and approved by Georgia Tech Legal and Georgia Tech Human Resources.

Georgia Tech encourages and values these activities. Your leadership and partnership to ensure high quality, safe, and enriching programs are appreciated. Please contact Lorie Paulez, director of Education Abroad at Lorie.Paulez@oie.gatech.edu with questions.

Resources

Protocols: <https://oie.gatech.edu/content/faculty-and-staff-protocols>

Background Screening Process: <https://hr.gatech.edu/hiring-process-background-screenings>

Background Investigation Policy: <https://policylibrary.gatech.edu/employment/pre-employment-screening>

Study Abroad, OIE: <https://oie.gatech.edu/sa/home>

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Study Abroad Faculty, Staff, and Student Assistant Vetting, Training, and Onboarding Protocols Fall 2018

Study Abroad Programs are a critical component to Georgia Tech expanding its global footprint and ensuring that we graduate good global citizens. Georgia Tech takes this responsibility seriously, understanding that while enriching and valuable to both the student and faculty member, study abroad learning experiences are a high-risk and high-reward endeavor. In the spirit of best serving our students, eliminating as much risk as possible, and creating a positive learning environment, the Provost's Study Abroad Working Group proposed strengthening and enhancing Georgia Tech's vetting, training, onboarding, and communicating protocols for the participating faculty, staff, and student assistants. These recommendations have been reviewed and approved by Georgia Tech Legal (Gary Wolovick) and Human Resources (Julie Joyce and Charvette Webb).

Provost's Study Abroad Working Group

Yves Berthelot, Vice Provost, International Initiatives

Bonnie Ferri, Vice Provost, Graduate Education

Lorie Paulez, Director, Study Abroad Programs

Colin Potts, Vice Provost, Undergraduate Education

Anna Stenport, Chair and Professor, School of Modern Languages

Leslie N. Sharp, Associate Vice Provost, Graduate Education and Faculty Development (chair)

Vetting:

- Require a Background Screening for all program faculty and staff, who are traveling with the students, through Georgia Tech Human Resources (GTHR), see: <https://ohr.gatech.edu/hiring-process-background-screenings>
 - Screen upon entry into program unless there is a valid one on file (less than one year old).
 - Screen every four years, unless there is a valid one on file.
 - Screen will include the "Standard Background Check."
 - If an employee will have a Purchasing Card, then a "Credit Check" will have to be done according to policies and procedures for being a P-Card holder.

OIE will consult with the Office of the Provost (either Associate Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution or a representative of VP-GEFD) about faculty who are involved in leading and teaching in study abroad programs to ensure the faculty are in good standing and are not under a disciplinary or performance-related investigation or sanction.

- Vet the student assistant serving on the program, including ensuring that the assistant is not currently enrolled in the courses offered and that there is a job description on file for the student assistant duties.
- OIE will consult with GTHR about staff who are traveling in study abroad programs to ensure that the staff are not under a disciplinary or performance-related sanction. Staff must have at least an overall rating of "Satisfactory" (or higher) on their most recent annual performance review and cannot be on an active Performance Improvement Plan. Likewise, staff who have received formal discipline (i.e., Written Warning, Final Warning, Suspension, or other formal

written discipline) within the year prior to requesting to participate in a program are ineligible for consideration.

- Strengthen Chair, Dean, and/or Supervisor Approvals of the program and the faculty who teach the courses to send a clear message of accountability and responsibility (see attached attestation). The appropriate chair and/or dean shall:
 - attest that the faculty member is in good standing and is under no disciplinary sanctions (see attached attestation);
 - agree that the courses being offered will be delivered by qualified faculty as defined by SACS-COC [Faculty Credentials](#);
 - agree to fulfill the course offering in the event that the faculty becomes incapacitated or leaves the program; and
 - understand their role as primary supervisors in any incidents.
- Solidify the school and college's support for programs and courses offered in their units through stronger and clearer communication of the expectations of all involved to the schools, colleges, and/or other units engaged in the study abroad program.
- For record keeping, the appropriate school, college, and/or unit, in coordination with OIE will submit an "other" package in GT-Tracs for Faculty who will be teaching off campus. The GT-Tracs package will include:
 - the letter of appointment, including clearly stated expectations, roles, and responsibilities of the employee;
 - current cv of the faculty member; and
 - background screening results, if a current one is not on file.
- Faculty Affairs will acknowledge the package, ensuring that the package has been routed through the home unit/school, college, and OIE.

Training

- Strengthen and enhance faculty, staff, and student assistant training.
- The Office of the Provost (either Associate Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution or a representative of VP-GEFD) should participate in the training.
- All faculty, staff, and student assistants are required to have the appropriate training each year before they can participate in a study abroad program.
- The training should emphasize that responsibilities and accountability as a faculty, staff, or student assistant abroad are at least the same as on the Atlanta campus, and that everyone must adhere to the policies, procedures, regulations that govern Georgia Tech. Failure to comply with policies, procedures, regulations, and/or other norms of professional conduct will be subject to disciplinary processes and actions.
- If the employee does not take the requisite training, he/she cannot participate.

Onboarding:

- All faculty and staff must comply with these vetting, training, and onboarding protocols in order to be cleared through the Office of International Education (OIE) and the Office of the Provost before participating in a study abroad program.
- Certify that the appropriate background screens have been completed and are current.
- Certify that all faculty, staff, and student assistants have taken the mandatory trainings, as appropriate.
- All faculty and staff must complete a Travel Authorization prior to leaving Atlanta.
- Faculty and staff attest to a statement that they are aware of and understand the responsibilities and risks that they are assuming, and that they have completed the vetting, training, and onboarding procedures.

Communicating:

- OIE will check in with the program director at the beginning of the program to confirm that everyone has arrived and that all activities are proceeding as scheduled.
- OIE will check in with faculty, staff and student assistant at the two-week point to ensure that everything is running smoothly.
- Faculty, staff, and student assistants must check their Georgia Tech emails on a daily basis and respond, accordingly. There must also be a telephone number on file that is reachable 24/7.
- OIE will check in with faculty, staff, and student assistants regularly (every other week) to encourage regular communication and open lines for reporting and resolving issues as they arise.
- If there are anticipated periods without connectivity, these should be documented in the proposal.
- In case of an incident or emergency, faculty, staff, and/or student assistants should use the emergency notification procedures to contact the Dean of Students and OIE immediately (The GT Police should be called at 404-894-2500 to enact the emergency response plan and phone tree.)
- OIE should inform the campus supervisor and the Office of the Provost (either Associate Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution or a representative of VP-GEFD) immediately if there is an incident involving faculty.
- Faculty, staff, and student assistants should contact the GT Police at 404-894-2500 to inform the Dean of Students and OIE if there is an incident or emergency involving a student. OIE and/or

the Dean of Students will notify the appropriate campus authorities as per the emergency response plan for student incidents.

- OIE should inform the campus supervisor, the Dean of Students, Office of the Provost (either Associate Vice Provost for Advocacy and Conflict Resolution or a representative of VP-GEFD), and the home school/college immediately if there is an incident involving a student and a faculty member.

Empowering Student Assistants

- All student assistants involved in Study Abroad Programs must take required employee trainings.
- If the program will utilize Student Assistants, a formal job description for the student assistants should be approved by OIE.
- The names of the Student Assistants should be given to OIE.
- Student Assistants cannot be enrolled in the program for credit.
- Expectations, roles, and responsibilities of the student assistants must be clearly communicated verbally and in writing to the student assistants prior to leaving Atlanta.
- Student Assistants should be empowered to act in the case of an emergency or incident, with the first action after calling the equivalent of 911, if needed, being contacting OIE and/or the Dean of students – both can be reached 24 hours a day through the GT Police 404-894-2500.

Driving with Students

- Faculty and staff should not be driving a vehicle with students, except in an emergency or in approved, special circumstances. Pre-approval must be obtained by the Study Abroad Committee or the Office of International Education should be informed immediately if a situation arises that necessitates a faculty or staff driver.
- Student Assistants should not drive a vehicle alone with other students in the vehicle.
- In the rare situation when a faculty or staff member is pre-approved by the Study Abroad Committee for driving a vehicle with students, the faculty or staff member shall:
 - Undergo an additional “Motor Vehicle Record” screen along with the standard screen.
 - Successfully complete the Georgia tech Defensive Driving course, offered through Environmental Health and Safety, or the equivalent. See: <https://ehs.gatech.edu/general/vehicles>
- If the study abroad program requires that a faculty or staff member be a driver, then this should be clearly outlined in the proposal and approved by the IUCC Study Abroad Committee.

