

POLICY ON STUDY ABROAD SITE VISITS BY GOUCHER EMPLOYEES

I. Background

Study abroad program sponsors frequently sponsor, arrange, and host visits to program locations in order to familiarize study abroad professionals in U.S. higher education institutions with their study abroad programs. As noted by the Forum on Education Abroad in its Code of Ethics for Education Abroad, “formal site visits for review of and familiarization with education abroad programs are essential for maintaining and improving program quality, and for providing accurate and essential information to students.” Such visits enable Goucher to gain knowledge of specific programs and procedures, and consider how new programs can be integrated into the Goucher curriculum and existing programs can be improved.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for Goucher employees that participate in such visits.

II. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all visits for review of and familiarization with any study abroad program that are conducted by Goucher employees, including staff members of the Office of International Studies (OIS), faculty members, and other Goucher employees requested to conduct such visits. Visits covered under the policy include (1) all visits to program sites in foreign countries of established and potential Goucher programs, and (2) participation in conferences and seminars conducted by program providers, whether conducted in the United States or abroad, which provide substantive information about the study abroad programs sponsored by such program providers.

III. Procedures

A. Communications regarding site visits

Communications regarding site visits must take place in advance and in writing, including email, between the program provider or sponsor and OIS. Such communications must address:

- The specific purpose and goals of the visit;
- The names and positions of the Goucher visitor(s) and resident program staff (e.g., OIS director, faculty member, resident director, etc.);
- The duration and schedule of the visit;
- The opportunity for unmediated contact between the visitor and students/faculty/administrators at the site;
- The cost-sharing between the program and the visitor, if any;
- Any expenses or honoraria paid for or provided to the visitor;
- Acknowledgement that the visit, hospitality, or payment of expenses or honoraria do not imply, require, or guarantee endorsement or approval of the program by Goucher College.

B. Site visit requirements

The parties must agree, in advance of the visit and in writing, that:

- A written evaluation will be completed for each site visit and conference attendance according to the criteria provided by OIS;
- The program sponsor will be offered an opportunity to review and respond to any written evaluation and its response will be maintained together with the written evaluation for as long as the program is approved by Goucher College;
- All written evaluations will remain confidential and will be used exclusively by Goucher employees involved in the development and approval of Goucher study abroad programs; exceptions to this requirement shall be made only if agreed upon in advance in writing between OIS and the program sponsor;
- Any negative comments about specific personnel should be made to the program operator or provider confidentially and separately from the written evaluation;
- The visitor should not abuse the hospitality of the local program and culturally appropriate behavior is expected at the program site. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in appropriate disciplinary action by the college.

C. Program materials

Program sponsors must agree to provide Goucher with or permit Goucher to review the following materials:

- Student program and course evaluations;
- Orientation materials;
- Syllabi and course materials;
- Faculty and staff backgrounds;
- Information on co-curricular and student life programs and resources;
- Health and safety information;
- Emergency plans;
- Director's program evaluations (unless confidential in nature).

D. Site visit activities

Appropriate activities on site visits include visits to classes, facilities, homestay locations, internship placements, co-curricular activities, and field study events.

E. Expenses and honoraria

Although Goucher provides significant funding for conducting site reviews and developing study abroad opportunities, from time to time program sponsors may provide funding to interested institutions for purposes of introducing study abroad programs to a wider audience of higher educational institutions. Goucher may accept the payment of certain travel expenses by program sponsors provided the following procedures are followed:

- Goucher employees do not solicit payment of travel expenses by the sponsor or study abroad institution and such funding is available to all solicited institutions on an equal basis (e.g., the sponsor institution agrees to fund one employee of each institution for a travel tour of site locations);
- The expenses to be reimbursed shall be agreed upon in writing in advance, and the agreement shall detail all costs to be covered, which may include only lodging, meals, local transportation, and gratuities;
- Goucher shall pay the airfare and visa expenses of its staff members on all site visits;
- The OIS Director and Provost shall approve in advance all expenses and honoraria provided by the program sponsor provided that if the OIS Director or Provost is the recipient of funding, Legal Counsel shall also approve the expenses and honoraria;
- All programs approved by Goucher for study abroad by Goucher students in which expenses or honoraria are provided by the program sponsor shall contain the following disclaimer on the website and all advertising materials:

Goucher conducted an on-site evaluation of this program that was funded, in part, by the program sponsor; the on-site visit was conducted in accordance with the Forum on Education Abroad's Code of Ethics for Education Abroad and, as required by the Code, Goucher's approval of the program was in no way conditioned on receipt of funding from the program sponsor.

- Goucher employees who wish to travel before or after the formal site visit shall do so at their own expense and shall not seek or accept payment or reimbursement of such expenses from the program sponsor.

IV. Questions

Questions about this policy should be addressed to the Director of the Office of International Studies or to Legal Counsel.

APPROVED
SEPTEMBER, 2008
OFFICE OF THE PROVOST