

### Guidance on Program Leader Selection

Taking students abroad for a study abroad experience comes with a level of responsibility that exceeds classroom education. It is important that faculty and staff are not only well equipped to teach the academic components of the associated course, but also have the qualifications and demeanor to effectively manage the unique settings and dynamics they will encounter.

It is the responsibility of the faculty or staff members' appropriate supervisor to determine their suitability for directing an education abroad program. This document provides guidance to those supervisors for which approval of Program Leaders is a responsibility. Not all Program Leaders will have, meet, or need all the suggested qualifications below nor is this an exhaustive list as each program is different.

If there are any questions or concerns before appointing a Program Leader, please contact International Travel Health and Safety (ITHS) at [intlsafety@du.edu](mailto:intlsafety@du.edu) to discuss further. While ITHS does track some preparation requirements of all Program Leaders, we do not vet or determine a Program Leader's qualifications for any given program or level of responsibility.

	Does the person requesting approval to be a Program Leader...	Why this is important.
<b>Experience</b>		
	have the qualifications to teach the subject matter of the associated course?	These are high-impact academic programs requiring subject matter expertise, teaching experience, and knowledge of related standards, techniques, and expectations.
	have personal experience in the destination(s) in which they will be responsible for student's academics, day-to-day life, and emergency situations?	Program Leaders must be comfortable with their surroundings (location and cultural nuances) to make decisions, and judgement calls in the interest of the group.
	speak the local language well enough to navigate the destination, effectively manage the day-to-day requirements of the itinerary, and represent the group during an emergency?	While English may be enough to get by for a tourist in many destinations, a Program Leader will have to navigate many situations on behalf of the group that may require a more sophisticated knowledge of the local language.
	have the credentials and experience to operate a motor vehicle in the destination(s) proposed should the program or an emergency require such?	Vehicle accidents are the number one cause of death to US travelers abroad. While DU approval for driving is required, additional criteria should be applied to doing so abroad, particularly when students are involved. Avoiding this all together is preferred, but ITHS can provide additional guidance if unavoidable.
<b>Behavioral</b>		
	have any history of inappropriate conduct with students?	The situation abroad will call for a more intimate than classroom environment (i.e., close sleeping, traveling, eating, entertaining

		circumstances) and poor choices in the past may be an indicator of potential challenges during the program.
	have a history of interpersonal conduct that might interfere with their responsibilities?	Program Leaders will represent DU among all vendors, students and colleagues throughout the process. Those same people may be integral to the successful operation of other programming at DU.
	make sound judgments under pressure and time constraints?	The ratio of incidents to days abroad on short-term programs is very high. Quick moving programs and tight itineraries require a skill for making quick decisions that account for the needs of a group of people with the constraints of delegated, but limited authority.
<b>Responsibility</b>		
	tend to turn paperwork, assignments, documentation, reports in on time?	From idea to return there are many documents, forms, reports, etc. that keep the process moving. Attention to detail and timely execution of such is imperative to a successful program.
	understand the limits of their authority to make decisions on DU's behalf?	Very few people at DU can sign contracts or enter into agreements on behalf of DU. Being selected as a Program Leader does not impart this authority.
	fully understand their reporting obligations for Title IX, Clery, and any other situation for which reporting is necessary?	Failure to report incidents in a timely manner can lead to the suffering of a student or colleague, a substantial fine to the university, or employee termination. There are certain non-negotiable obligations to report that differ from the classroom dynamic.
<b>Logistical</b>		
	have time to devote to the design, maintenance, and leading of the program amongst primary responsibilities?	Program development can take a year or longer and the time abroad should be solely focused on the success of the program and its participants.
	have any conflicts of interest related to the program and its proposed vendors?	Using vendors or services that present a conflict of interest may create an ethics violation.
	have any employment or family obligations that may inhibit their traveling as a Program Leader during the time frame proposed?	A lot of cross-institutional work, time, and money goes into program development and last-minute cancellations due to foreseeable conflicts are not acceptable.

	intend to run the program for several years?	Much time, money, and energy go into initial program development beyond just that of the Program Leader or their unit. Programs should be developed with longevity in mind.
	have a willingness to pass the program to another Program Leader in a few years so that a successful program may continue without them?	Program Leaders are one aspect among many of a successful program and none "own" a program. It would be fiscally responsible to develop a successful program that could be run by other staff as years go by.
	understand that they must be available 24/7 during the program?	The health and safety of program participants and the success of a program are inherent responsibilities of the Program Leader. No Program Leader is there just to teach and should expect to be the first point of contact at any time.
<b>Health</b>		
	have the health and fitness to meet the demands of the itinerary proposed?	Some program itineraries are more demanding than others and the Program Leader's fitness should be considered.
	know First Aid/CPR?	Program Leaders are often with participants or their first call for help. Being qualified to be a first responder promotes the overall success of a program.
	have certification in Mental Health First Aid?	Mental health issues among participants rise each year and the fast pace of these programs has prompted DU to require this free, 8-hour training of all Program Leaders.