California State University, Northridge

Planning and Approving International Travel/Study Courses

What is an International Travel/Study Abroad Course?

Any CSUN course (credit or noncredit – state-funded, self-support funded, grant funded, or any other funding) that involves some or all of the enrolled students traveling to an international location must be planned and approved by following all of the processes outlined below. This is required even if the student or students in question have options other than international travel for meeting course requirements and even if the students in questions are paying for their own international travel. CSUN credit or noncredit courses that involve travel to an international site for some or all students are international Travel/Study courses and can never be categorized as field trip courses, service learning courses, or the like.

CSUN International Travel/Study Courses Must be CSUN’s Own

CSUN international travel/study courses must be developed and offered by CSUN only. CSUN policy prohibits the use of third party providers of academic content to develop or offer any CSUN travel/study course. The CSUN academic department and college in which the course in question will reside (the academic home of the course – credit or noncredit) must be responsible for developing the academic content of the CSUN travel/study course. The CSUN academic department and college in which the course in question will reside must have full academic oversight responsibility for program content, instructional quality and instructor assignments, and the assessment of student performance.

The goal is to avoid simply lending CSUN’s name and academic endorsement to a program that is created and offered by another provider. CSUN can not allow its name to be used or its academic credit to be offered for any course that is not truly a CSUN designed and academically controlled international travel/study course.
Developing an International Travel/Study Course Proposal

If a department believes a proposed travel/study abroad program has strong potential, the department assigns a faculty member to develop a proposal for the travel/study abroad course. The proposal activity should occur at least nine (9) months before the proposed start date of the course. The proposal must include the following considerations and requirements (see ATTACHMENT A for a summary of the distinctions of travel/study courses offered in the Summer Session or as noncredit self-support):

1. **Destination Travel Advisories.** Before planning any international travel/study abroad course, the faculty member planning the course shall collaborate with the Department Chair to determine if the planned travel destination is on the CSU or Federal list of locations to which travel is prohibited. No travel/study abroad course will be approved if the planned destination is on the prohibited list. Further, some locations may not be prohibited but may be listed as “high risk.” International travel/study courses that include a high risk destination may require additional approvals, longer review times, and higher levels of insurance in keeping with CSU international travel risk requirements. Early conversations with CSUN’s Office of Insurance and Risk Management are required for anyone considering a travel/study abroad program that involves a destination listed as “high risk”. Several resources to assist in identifying which countries/destinations are considered high risk can be found on the US State Department Travel Warning List ([http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov)) and the CSUN Insurance and Risk Management website ([http://www-admn.csun.edu/risk/](http://www-admn.csun.edu/risk/)).

2. **Syllabus.** A detailed syllabus for the course, including learning goals and the role travel/study abroad will play in achieving those learning goals, is required. **NOTE: All international travel/study courses must have at least one meeting in a classroom setting before the travel takes place to cover travel orientation as required by CSU policy and to ensure that students have an opportunity to complete the appropriate forms in the packet.**

3. **Course Materials.** A list of proposed course materials (may be part of the syllabus) including required books, is required

4. **Participants.** The intended participants (i.e., students in a particular major, students at a particular level, students who have completed particular preparatory courses, or the like) is required

5. **Enrollment.** Proposed minimum and maximum enrollments (must be 15 students or greater) is required

6. **Instructors.** Information on the proposed instructor(s) is required. The proposal should include a title and bio for any full-time CSUN faculty member and curriculum vitae (CV) for any proposed instructor who isn’t a full-time CSUN faculty member. If the enrollment group is 20 or less, one instructor is considered appropriate; if the enrollment group is over 20, it may be appropriate to budget for a Teaching Assistant
7. **Travel Itinerary.** The proposed travel itinerary in detail, including the travel agency the department intends to use to make the travel arrangements, is required. The itinerary shall include proposed dates, the address of proposed accommodations at each site/stop during the trip, sites to be visited, and modes of ground transportation. **NOTE:** Developing the proposed itinerary may require a preliminary conversation with a University-approved travel service. Under no circumstance, shall any contract be signed or commitment be made until the proposal has all needed approvals as outlined below. Contact the University’s Accounts Payable office for a list of recommended travel service organizations by visiting their website (http://www-admn.csun.edu/travel/docs/travel-agency.pdf).

8. **Budget.** A preliminary budget that is all-encompassing of the travel/study abroad costs and includes a calculation of all student fees over and above the course fees (use the budget form attached) is required. This would include costs for air travel, accommodations, all required course materials and textbooks, estimated daily costs for meals and other incidentals, ground transportation, admission to museums, and the like. Expenses must comply with CSU and CSUN travel policies (i.e., travel must be economy class, accommodations should be reasonably priced, daily per diem for instructor at university standard daily rates or below, and the like). **NOTE:** The final budget is only possible when travel bookings have been paid and confirmed by students.

Since Summer Session and travel/study abroad courses have many non-standard features and are not part of requirements for a degree, the University is generally not obligated to provide disabilities services or translation services in support of these programs. Those preparing a proposal may wish to confer with Disability Resources and Educational Services (DRES) at CSUN for the latest policies. Any costs for such services incurred by the travel study course cannot be built into the budget or be included in course fees. The sponsoring department would have to reimburse those providing the services from the department, college trust or foundation account funds (state funds cannot be used to provide support for self-supported courses). The proposal should include the results of the discussion with DRES so that those reviewing the proposal will have a clear understanding of their obligations and limits.

9. **Student Travel.** Students will be expected to book and pay for their own travel in keeping with the arrangements made with the travel service six weeks before the planned start of travel. This will prevent students making non-refundable travel arrangements, which will help the University ensure that the minimum enrollment levels are met.

10. **Insurance and Risk Management.** Consult the University’s Insurance and Risk Management office for additional information (http://www-admn.csun.edu/risk/).
Obtaining Approvals

To obtain the Chair’s approval, the course proposed should be important to the department and its students, should make a significant contribution to the educational agenda of the department, and, in that light, should be worth the extra work a travel/study abroad course places on the department and/or its faculty.

1. University’s Insurance and Risk Management. The chair shall send the proposed travel/study abroad proposal to the University’s Insurance and Risk Management office for review (http://www-admn.csun.edu/risk/). The Office of Insurance and Risk Management will provide information about the proper type of insurance required and the respective cost (the cost of which should be added to the travel study budget). Insurance and Risk Management will also be able to identify any other risk issues or contractual concerns associated with the proposed travel study. The report/recommendations from Insurance and Risk Management shall be added to the proposal.

2. Department Chair: Following the review by the University’s Insurance and Risk Management office, the Department Chair will then have the opportunity to do a formal review of the proposal. If the Department Chair does not approve the proposed program, the proposal can go no further. If the Department Chair does approve the proposed program, written approval from the Department Chair shall be added to the proposal.

3. Dean: Once the proposal has written approval by the Department Chair, the proposal shall then be passed on to the Dean of the college in which the international travel/study abroad course will be offered for review. The Dean will look for the value and relevance of the program and weigh it against other obligations of the department and the college. If the Dean does not approve the proposed program, the proposal can go no further. If, however, the Dean does approve the program, written approval shall be added to the proposal.

4. If Applicable, Department, College, University Curriculum Committee: If the proposed travel/study abroad course requires the creation of a new course in the department, the proposal shall also include the customary written approval of the department, college, and University curriculum committees. Documentation of those approvals shall be added to the proposal.

5. Provost / Dean of Tseng College: Following all required approvals outlined above, the proposal shall be sent to the Provost if it is a course to be offered in the Fall or Spring Semester or to the Dean of the Tseng College if it is an international travel/study course to be offered self-support (credit courses in Summer Session, Winter Term, or noncredit in any term). At this level, the proposals will be reviewed for their appropriateness in terms of CSUN funding and international programs policies. Following approvals from either the Provost or the Dean of
the Tseng College, the department can make firm travel arrangements and lock in costs. If the international travel/study course is to be offered self-support, the department will also be required to complete a form to approve the establishment of the proposed course as a self-support offering.

To ensure consistent records for all CSUN international travel/study abroad courses, a full copy of the final approved state and self-supported course proposal with budget and all supporting documents shall be sent to the Deputy Dean of the Tseng College. The full documents will be scanned and records maintained digitally.

**Implementation of an Approved International Travel/Study Abroad Course**

**Final Budget**

The department is responsible for developing a final budget for the course and sending it to the Dean of the sponsoring academic college if it is a state-funded course to be offered in the Fall or Spring Semesters.

If the course is to be offered is using self-support funding (including programs with grant funding covering part of the self-support costs), the final budget shall also be sent to the Dean of the Tseng College at least six (6) months before the program is to be offered.). For a self-support international travel/study course, whereby the final budget varies more than a 10% variance in any category or overall from the preliminary budget, the Tseng College and the department will need to review the proposed program plan again in light of changed financial information. The program cannot be priced or marketed until the department provides a final budget.

The final budget shall include:

1. Instructor compensation, inclusive of salary and benefits. For Summer Sessions, reference the approved CSU Special Session Salary code 2357, for Winter term reference the approved CSUN Special Session Salary code 2322, and for noncredit, compensation varies and is planned as part of the budgeting and pricing for the program (contact the Deputy Dean of the Tseng College to start discussions about noncredit international travel study courses).

2. Final costs of economy class airfares for the instructor. **NOTE:** The cost of obtaining a visa for travel is not a reimbursable expense according to University travel policy and, therefore, should not be included in the budget or in reimbursement claims.

3. Final costs of lodging accommodations and ground transportation for the instructor.

4. Final costs of all reimbursable travel expenses for the instructor, such as per diem, mileage, etc. (see University travel policy).
5. Final costs of Foreign Trip Insurance (coordinated with University’s Insurance and Risk Management office).

6. Final costs of other ancillary fees associated with the trip, such as museum admission fees, etc. **NOTE:** Only pre-approved ground transportation, admissions, or other costs directly related to the educational purpose of the course, as identified in the final budgets, are reimbursable. Any ground transportation, admissions, or other expenses added after the course fee has been set are not reimbursable.

7. For self-support international travel/study courses, an additional 11% to 15% in administrative overhead charges is required for CSU and CSUN services depending on the year in question and the level of CSUN service charges and CSU pro rata charges (which change from year to year). This is in addition to the direct costs for services associated with the course in question. This amount will be added to the final budget by the Tseng College before this extra cost is added to the basic course fees for a self-support offering. **NOTE:** The CSU charges an overhead percentage on self-support programs based on gross revenue. The percentage of this charge varies year to year. In addition, a self-support travel/study course must reimburse the General Fund for services provided by state supported units and staff. Said services include the review of materials by the University’s Insurance and Risk Management, Purchasing and Contract Administration, payroll processing, and the like.

**Travel**

1. The Department must complete an Approval of Travel Request for all instructor travel as required by the University travel policy ([http://www-admn.csun.edu/travel/](http://www-admn.csun.edu/travel/)). Without it, the instructor will be traveling without University support and insurance coverage and will not be able to claim reimbursement or be protected in the event of a negative occurrence.

2. All travelers are expected to pre-pay for travel expenses and then fill out a claim for reimbursement of the approved expenses once the travel is complete. The completed reimbursement claim must be accompanied by all required receipts and expense verifications. For state-funded international travel/study abroad courses offered in the Fall or Spring Semesters, the completed reimbursement claim shall be sent to the MAR of the sponsoring college. The MAR, in collaboration with the Dean and the Department Chair, will process the reimbursement and forward the claim to the University’s Accounts Payable office for payment. For self-supported international travel/study abroad courses offered in the Summer Session, reimbursement requests and documentation shall be sent to the Office of the Dean of the Tseng College. Once received, the Tseng College will forward the approved reimbursement claim (if it is in keeping with the budget) within four (4) working days to the University’s Accounts Payable office for payment.

**Enrollment**

This document is the official CSUN procedure statement for all matters related to International Travel/Study Abroad Course at CSUN. Approved, and implemented by CSUN, July 2013. The oversight and regular yearly review and update of these policies and procedures are the responsibility of CSUN Academic Affairs through the Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provosts with the day-to-day oversight and implementation delegated to the CSUN Senior International Officer. These policies and procedures are distributed to the CSUN campus community each year in August.
1. For state-funded international travel/study abroad courses offered in the Fall and Spring Semesters, the Department and the Dean of the college sponsoring the program will establish a minimum and maximum enrollment.

2. For self-support international travel/study abroad courses offered in the Summer Session, the Tseng College will review the proposed minimum enrollment and confirm the fee for the course based on the completed form and final budget. The Tseng College will provide formal notice to the department if any changes need to be made to the budget. NOTE: In the self-support Summer Session or Winter Term, no travel/study abroad program can be offered with less than 15 students.

Class Orientation

All travel/study abroad programs must have at least one (1) meeting in a classroom setting before travel begins. At that first meeting, the instructor will distribute a pre-trip meeting and registration packet to all students, allow time for students to complete the forms in the packet, and then collect the completed packets. The packet shall include:

1. Air Travel Informed Consent Form
2. Academic Field Trip Participant List
3. Student Air Travel Voluntary Participation Notice
4. Academic Field Trip Waiver of Liability & Hold Harmless Agreement

Records Retention

As per CSU and CSUN record keeping requirements, the instructor must submit a copy of all completed forms to the office of the Deputy Dean of the Tseng College as the designee of the University Senior International Officer. In addition to the above forms, the instructor will submit the following for each student: student's name, contact information, program, emergency contact information, insurance information, date of birth, student ID number and major. This material will be scanned and records maintained digitally. The instructor shall retain the originals of these forms and documents for a period of five years.
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ATTACHMENT A

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Self-Support International Travel/Study Courses: Credit and Noncredit

Features of International Travel/Study Courses offered in Self-Support (CSUN credit courses in Summers Session or Winter Term and noncredit travel/study courses in any term)

- Funding formulas for self-support credit travel/study courses offered in the Summer Session or Winter Term are not designed to provide additional administrative support for individual courses beyond that normally provided for a standard on-campus course. If a department wishes to undertake a travel study program, the planning work (including travel insurance, instructional arrangements, and the like) and management of the course before and during the travel are the responsibility of the department offering the course.

- International travel/study credit courses offered in the Summer Session may be eligible for financial aid if the student in question is a CSUN matriculated student in a state-funded degree program.

- Instructor compensation is in keeping with the approved CSU Special Session Salary code 2357 for Summer Session and 2322 for Winter Term. For payroll purposes, information on the status of the proposed instructor(s) shall be included with the bio and/or CV (i.e., full professor, associate professor, assistant professor, instructor, etc.). Full-time faculty is subject to policies governing extra service compensation for Fall/Spring semester (i.e., the 125% overload limit rule). If a faculty member plans to lead a trip in summer and wishes to be paid extra service, he or she must avoid any other extra service assignments during the Spring Semester to avoid exceeding 125% of load in a single term. Compensation for noncredit courses is not governed by bargained salary schedules and is planned as part of the overall program budget for the offering in question.

- For international travel/study courses to be offered self-support credit or noncredit, the Tseng College will develop a program description based on the proposal material provided. This will be used to announce the course in standard publications for the term in question. Any other marketing to departmental or other CSUN students is the responsibility of the sponsoring department. All such announcements shall be based on the description of the program with costs and registration information as it appears in the official publications for Summer Session, as well as, a detailed estimation of all the costs to the student over and above the course fees.

- The Tseng College will provide all the support services including handling registration for the program.

- The Tseng College will set a registration deadline at least two (2) months before the planned travel. The deadline allows time for the course to reach the minimum enrollment required (15 or greater) before students book travel six (6) weeks in advance of the start date. Students will
be able to register, online. If the course is cancelled, students will be notified and they will be refunded for any travel or registration payments made. If the course reaches the minimum enrollment, students will be notified that they can begin to make travel arrangements. Late registrants can be accepted if the course is at or above the minimum levels by the registration deadline date. NOTE: The registration deadline will also be the deadline for refunds based on unacceptable enrollment levels.

- A self-support travel/study course can have restricted admission if that is a part of the academic plan and approved proposal for the course. In such cases, students will be notified via published and web materials to contact the instructor for a permission number before registering.

- The Tseng College may survey program participants to determine their satisfaction with the program content and travel arrangements. This information will be relevant if the department plans to repeat the same or a similar self-support travel/study course.