

Advising for Study Abroad
Guidelines from the Forum on Education Abroad (Advising Standards
Subcommittee)
Home Institution Perspective

Advising is essential in helping students prepare for, navigate, and process study abroad experiences. Advising for study abroad should be intrinsically linked to the institution's mission, values and learning goals as well as the student's academic and personal goals.

As study abroad becomes increasingly common, it is the institution's responsibility to help students make this experience as purposeful and meaningful as possible. Advising can help to guide students to better integration of study abroad into the home school curriculum, encouraging them to take initiative and responsibility for the planning and implementation of their experience abroad as well as to take advantage of the opportunities available to them.

I. Objectives of Advising for Study Abroad

Advising for study abroad:

- A. Helps students develop purposeful plans for study abroad.
- B. Upholds and is linked to the institutional mission, values and student development and learning goals as well as to professional standards.
- C. Is based on holistic student development and learning goals.

II. Responsibilities of Advising for Study Abroad

Study abroad advisors:

- A. Make students aware of and encourages them to utilize the curricular and co-curricular resources which will holistically enhance their personal learning and development.
- B. Direct students to various sources of information (websites, online databases, peer advisors, advising staff, faculty, meetings and handbooks, etc.) that will help them plan in a timely manner for the experience abroad.
- C. Help students make the best choices in planning for study abroad by assisting them in assessing their goals for the experience abroad as well as their skills and abilities, and in identifying opportunities and alternatives for the experience. The plan for study abroad should be comprehensive, taking into consideration academic, personal, social, economic and professional concerns.

- D. Recognize the needs and goals of the individual student as well as the various ways in which students learn.
- E. Collect information from students to know as much as possible about their plans and goals for study abroad in order to show them how they can fit the experience into their academic plans at the home institution.
- F. Review student course choices to ensure that students have chosen the appropriate learning opportunities to work towards educational and personal goals. Advisors evaluate and monitor student progress throughout the study abroad experience.
- G. Recognize that, although both students and advisors have shared responsibility, decisions about a student's plan remain the purview of the student.
- H. Encourage students to consult with their appropriate academic advisors.
- I. Encourage students to develop decision-making skills and self-direction.
- J. Seek out collaboration with faculty and other offices and colleagues across the campus.
- K. Provide accurate and timely information regarding institutional and program requirements, policies and procedures for study abroad.
- L. Implement an appropriate assessment plan to ascertain the effectiveness of advising as it pertains to institutional student learning and development goals.
- M. Help students manage their expectations about the study abroad experience.
- N. Advise students before, during and after the study abroad experience.
- O. Advise in a way that is intentional, accurate, and coherent.
- P. Are knowledgeable about different countries and cultures, or have access to and know how to find such information.
- Q. Are familiar as much as possible with the academic offerings of programs and institutions that most frequently enroll their students.
- R. Are knowledgeable about foreign higher education in general and about the differences that students may face while studying abroad. They encourage students to prepare for their experience and advise students on how best to do this through a preliminary orientation about adjusting to a different educational environment and set of expectations.

- S. Are informed of opportunities, research and standards in the field of study abroad, and able to communicate this to students.
- T. Are conversant in theories in student development and learning and able to communicate this to students appropriately.
- U. Are familiar with their institution's academic requirements and the requirements of students' major and concentration programs and able to assist students in making sure that their study abroad does not interfere with their time to graduation. This includes but is not limited to course requirements, registration and credit transfer policies, financial aid policies.
- V. Keep up-to-date on U.S. Department of State Travel Warnings and Center for Disease Control travel health notices.

III. Ethical and Legal Responsibilities

Study abroad advisors:

- A. Are knowledgeable of and adhere to ethical standards in the fields of academic advising and of education abroad as well as those of the institution.
- B. Are familiar with the laws and regulations of the institution as well as of federal, state and local governments with respect to confidentiality and ethical standards, or have access to that information.
- C. Accommodate all students, no matter what the ability; age; cultural heritage; disability; ethnicity; gender identity; nationality; political affiliation; race; religious affiliation; sex; sexual orientation; economic, marital, social, or veteran status; and any other bases included in local, state, or federal laws, per ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) regulations.
- D. Assure privacy of all information pertaining to students, per FERPA (Family Education Rights and Privacy Act) regulations.

IV. Organization and Management

- A. Advising staff are qualified to sufficiently attain the mission and goals of the institution in regard to advising and education abroad.
- B. Advising can be administered by faculty but also by trained staff or peer advisors.
- C. Professional staff have earned a degree in a relevant field or possess equivalent credentials and experience.

- D. The advising office operates under clear procedures and guidelines for selection, training, evaluation and supervision of advising staff.
- E. Advising appointments are made available regularly throughout the study abroad process. Alternative means of communication, such as e-mail, instant messaging, Twitter, etc., should also be made readily available to students.
- F. The dissemination of education abroad policies, procedures and other information – electronic, print or otherwise – is accurate, current and properly referenced.
- G. Advisors make conscious efforts to develop good working relationships with key support offices on campus, including the Financial Aid office, the Registrar's office, and the Health Services office to disseminate appropriate and current information in support of the students' preparation for and participation in study abroad.
- H. Offices are located in adequate, accessible and well-situated locations affording privacy to students during advising sessions and allowing them to fulfill their missions and goals.
- I. Shared work spaces allow for advisors to secure confidential files and records properly.
- J. Study abroad advising is guided by the same principles and control as for academic advising at the institution.
- K. Advising offices promote an atmosphere of support for faculty, staff, and students.

Resources

Peer Review, Winter 2008, Vol. 10, No. 1: http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-wi08/pr-wi08_index.cfm (accessed January 18, 2010)

Advising Standards and Values from the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) and the Council for the Advancement in Standards of Higher Education (CAS): <http://www.nacada.ksu.edu/resources/Standards.htm> (accessed January 18, 2010)

Toolbox Suggestions:

Major Advising Pages: <http://www.uwec.edu/cie/sac/ProsStudents/advising.htm>
<http://www.studyabroad.msu.edu/currintegration/>
<http://www.istc.umn.edu/academic/majors/index.html>

Health and Safety: <http://www.osac.gov/>

Websites: <http://www.middlebury.edu/academics/ump/sap/>