

## **Advising for Study Abroad**

### **Guidelines from the Forum on Education Abroad (Advising Standards Subcommittee)**

#### **Program Provider and On-Site Coordinator 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 mission, values and learning goals of both the host and home institution.

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 educational plans for the period in which they will be studying abroad.
- B. Assists students in developing and pursuing a program that will complement their academic experience at home.
- C. Upholds and is linked to the mission, values and development and learning goals of the organization and should take into consideration the missions of the home institutions.
- D. Is based on holistic student development and learning goals.

#### **II. Responsibilities of Advising During Study Abroad**

*Program advisors and on-site coordinators:*

- A. Make students aware of and encourage them to utilize the curricular and co-curricular resources that will enhance their personal learning and development during the experience abroad.
- B. Direct students to various sources of information and experiences that will help them make the most out of the experience abroad.

- C. Help students make the best choices during the study abroad experience by assisting students in assessing their goals for the experience abroad as well as their skills and abilities, and in identifying opportunities and alternatives throughout experience.
- D. Take into consideration academic, personal, social and professional considerations of each individual student.
- E. Work to encourage the best fit between students' abilities and academic background and the academic program in the host country.
- F. Assist students in navigating and understanding the academic approaches, expectations, and standards at the host universities and programs.
- G. Collect information from students to know as much as possible about their goals for study abroad, and how they can fit the experience into their plans at the home institution. Advise students to be in contact with their home institution advisor.
- H. Recognize the needs and goals of the individual student as well as the various ways in which students learn.
- I. Review student course choices to ensure that students have chosen the appropriate learning opportunities to work towards educational and personal goals. They should evaluate and monitor student progress throughout the study abroad experience.
- J. Recognize that, although both students and advisors have shared responsibility, decisions about a student's plan remain the purview of the student.
- K. Encourage students to consult with their appropriate on-campus academic advisors.
- L. Encourage students to develop decision-making skills and self-direction.
- M. Seek out collaboration across the organization, with faculty and other colleagues, as well as the students' home advisor as appropriate.
- N. Provide accurate and timely information regarding requirements program requirements, policies and procedures.
- O. Implement an appropriate assessment plan to ascertain the effectiveness of advising as it pertains to the organization's student learning and development goals.

- P. Help students manage their expectations about the study abroad experience, including orienting them about differences in educational systems, learning environment, evaluations, and expectations.
- Q. Advise in a way that is intentional, accurate, and coherent.
- R. Are knowledgeable about the study abroad field with respect to opportunities, research and standards and be able to communicate this to students.
- S. Are conversant in theories in student development and learning and be able to communicate this to students appropriately.
- T. Are knowledgeable about U.S. (or home country) university systems, including course structure and credit transfer, and are familiar with issues specific to the U.S. student.
- U. Are knowledgeable about their organization's requirements, policies and procedures in respect to education abroad and be able to communicate this to students. They should also be familiar with the policies of the host institutions of the students they serve.

### **III. Ethical and Legal Responsibilities**

#### *Program advisors and on-site coordinators:*

- 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 organization.
- B. Seek to obtain knowledge about laws and regulations of their organization as well as of home country legislation and relevant international law with respect to confidentiality and ethical standards, or have access to that information.
- C. Assist all students in meeting their individual needs and goals, 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.
- D. Assure privacy of all information pertaining to students (i.e. FERPA or ADA regulations in the United States).

### **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 is administered by faculty or trained staff or peer advisors.
- C. Professional staff hold a degree in a relevant field or possess equivalent credentials and experience.
- D. Advising 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 organizational academic policies, procedures and other information – electronic, print or otherwise – is accurate, current and properly referenced.
- G. Advisors make conscious efforts to reach out to all people and offices that are involved in the students’ academic, cultural, and personal education, and maintain relationships with constituencies to help disseminate information and to coordinate and collaborate on programs and services.
- 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. Advising offices should promote an atmosphere of support.

### **Resources**

*Peer Review*, Winter 2008, Vol. 10, No. 1: [http://www.aacu.org/peerreview/pr-wi08/pr-wi08\\_index.cfm](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/>