

Information Packet: Off-Campus Course Proposal Process

The following topics are addressed in this packet:

1. Selection Committee and Criteria
2. Credit Hour Guidelines
3. Cost Considerations
4. Creating a Green Program

1. Selection Committee and Criteria

Proposals will be initially reviewed by Center for Global Education and Experience (CGEE) staff to assess viability, marketability, operational risk, budget/cost, and the general quality of the learning experience. Only programs that are viable, marketable, safe and affordable will then be reviewed by the Academic Affairs Council (AAC) or the Graduate Academic Affairs Council (GAAC) to ensure academic integrity of all courses taught by the college. Ultimate decision on course academic rigor lies with AAC/GACC with recommendation from CGEE regarding viability and other factors not related to academic content.

The criteria used to recommend and approve off-campus courses include:

Number of programs

The number of approved off-campus programs will not exceed perceived capacity for Augsburg College student enrollment. Given the number of strong proposals received each year, a proposals' academic quality and experiential learning strengths are not the only deciding factors for approval. CGEE will communicate with those who propose courses regarding capacity if it is believed that their course will exceed capacity. This could include collaboration with another faculty-led proposal to combine experiences, or, moving the proposal to a future year/term.

Solid Academic Framework

In addition to meeting the requirements of the Augsburg Experience, programs should include the following:

1. An academic rigor equal to courses on campus that integrates reading, writing, speakers and direct experience into a deep learning experience;
2. Use of the location abroad as a "classroom" that utilizes the global context for direct discovery, integration and application of knowledge;
3. Facilitate the student group to create a learning community that enhances individual learning.

Intercultural Activities and Engagement with Host Community

Programs should include the following:

1. Opportunities for students to dialog with a range of viewpoints and voices in the host community(ies);
2. Scheduled cultural programming, such as attending local events or a dinner/homestay with a host family;
3. Assignments that engage students with community and local perspectives, such as interviewing locals, service learning projects, and other experiential learning opportunities;
4. Journaling for reflection on cultural self-awareness and critical thinking related to cultural difference;
5. Language acquisition by learning basic phrases, vocabulary building and listening skills;
6. Writing across cultures through creative writing, comparative analysis, descriptive field notes, research, etc.

Additional Miscellaneous Factors

Additional consideration will be given to programs that:

1. Fulfill graduation requirements beyond the Augsburg Experience (LAFs, Keystone, major/minor requirements, etc.)
2. Contribute to the best overall mix of geographic locations, academic disciplines, new and experienced faculty leaders, and student populations served (e.g. students of color, WEC students, etc.) in a given year.
3. Related to the immediately above bullet, programs that serve often underrepresented majors and students will be prioritized. Underrepresented, in this case, mean *underrepresented in study abroad*. These groups include, but are not solely limited to: students of color, first generation students, STEM majors, health sciences majors, and athletes.
4. Provide a good value, balancing cost with academic needs of students
5. Received strong student evaluations after past iterations of a program, if any
6. Consider environmental issues in program planning and/or course design

2. Credit Hour Guidelines

The Federal Credit Hour Definition (adapted):

A credit hour is an institutionally-established equivalency that reasonably approximates not less than: (1) one hour of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for a fifteen week semester; or (2) an equivalent amount of other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

Application of credit hour criteria to courses including an international travel experience:

1. Instruction and student work for the purposes of credit hour computation in international travel courses includes the following types of activities:
2. Course meetings before, during, and after the dates of travel
3. Time to read/view assigned texts
4. Lectures (from the course instructor, guest lecturers, faculty/staff/students at partner institutions, guides, local residents, etc.)

5. Discussion meetings (with course instructors, guest lecturers, faculty/staff/students at partner institutions, guides, local residents, peers, etc.)
6. Museum, clinic, business, government building or other site visits
7. Learning activities that engage students with the learning objectives of the course (i.e. home stay, organized cultural excursions, performances, etc.)
8. Service learning projects
9. Student presentations
10. Synthesis/processing/reflection time (may be used for writing, discussion, or production of creative work which may take many forms including but not limited to journals, formal papers, blogs, art, music, multi-media, etc.)

Given that the “course hour” is 50 minutes, a 4 credit course should require a total of 150 hours of combined direct instruction and associated student learning experiences to be equivalent to a 4 credit hour course over a 15 week semester.

CGEE’s suggestion is to consider creating faculty-led programs as hybrid courses, partially online, to allow for more flexibility for students during the spring semester (for winter/spring break) and during Summer session I (for summer break programs. Examples:

1. A 4 credit international course that involves 8 hours of active learning per day in an international context must be 19 days in length, less course meetings on campus or online before and after the dates of travel.
2. A 4 credit course with a 10 day embedded international learning experience that includes 8 hours of active learning per day must also include 70 hours of campus based or online course activities (24 hours of direct faculty instruction and 48 hours of other course related student work).

3. Cost Considerations

The list below can help faculty leaders design strong program proposals by allowing them to actively choose where to “invest” in higher cost program elements that will best support the learning outcomes, and where to choose lower cost elements (when possible and appropriate). CGEE encourages faculty to consider costs carefully and reference the list below when completing the proposal.

Location – flights: Some locations offer less expensive flights. If your program requires flying to multiple cities/countries, this raises the price. CGEE’s preference is to purchase group flights for a number of reasons, but these flights are often \$150-\$350 more per person than single flights found on websites like Travelocity, etc. It is, however, not recommended that groups use highly discounted airline tickets purchased through third party websites.

Location – on-site costs: Some on-site costs involve a choice (e.g, fancier hotels vs. hostels, coach bus vs. public transport). But other on-site costs are hard to change – food in Rome will cost more than in Phnom Penh.

Time of year: The cost and availability of both flights and on-site costs can go up or down in a particular location, depending on what is considered “high season” in that location.

Co-Teaching: Teaching a course with another faculty member from a different discipline can increase the target market and therefore the viability and marketability of a program. However, see next note on recommended number of faculty leaders.

Number of faculty leaders: All expenses for faculty leaders are paid, so two faculty leaders makes for a higher per student price than one. Generally speaking, two faculty will not make financial sense when the expected number of participants is fewer than 15. We understand that, for some programs with multiple, unique disciplines on offer, two faculty may be required for academic reasons. IN these cases, then, CGEE will critically look at whether enrollment over 15 can be expected OR if costs can be cut in other ways to accommodate two faculty. On the other hand, if you are proposing a program with just one faculty for more than 19 students at a location not “owned” by Augsburg (CGEE sites), we will arrange a staff member to assist as co-leader.

Number of students: The more students who participate in a program, the more they can share the fixed costs of a program (like faculty expenses, promotional materials, honoraria for speakers). If you are proposing a program with only one faculty member but would like to take more than 19 students, our office can help find a staff member who can assist as a co-leader.

Program length: A longer program incurs more on-site costs, but it also provides more value to a student. A longer program in Thailand (where the flight cost is high, but daily costs are low) allows for a reasonable price given the number of days in country. A longer program in the UK will incur disproportionately more in on-site costs, since food and accommodations there are more expensive.

Number of courses: Tuition is not added to courses in winter/spring break, but it is added for summer program courses. Because of the college’s commitment to global education and to incentivize an

internationalized curriculum, all students who participate in international off-campus faculty-led programs automatically receive a 70% discount on tuition, which is applied to the overall cost as a CGEE Global Scholarship.

Programming choices: Visits with local people/experts can be less expensive than concert tickets. Some museums have high entry fees while others are free, etc.

A few more notes on cost:

1. Faculty overload is being covered by Academic Affairs.
2. These programs are open only to enrolled students of Augsburg College, or, to non-degree seeking students from other institutions.. Community members, alumni, etc. are not allowed to participate; do not count on “rounding out” enrollment with such individuals.
3. CGEE operational costs also need to be factored into any program cost. These include, but are not limited to: promotional materials, orientation costs, international health insurance, flight fuel surcharges, international wire transfer fees, emergency/contingency funds.

4. Creating a Green Program

Traveling abroad has an undeniably negative impact on the environment in a number of ways, not the least of which is the emission of CO₂ as part of air travel. Since Augsburg College is committed to reducing the environmental impact of all of its operations, CGEE asks faculty to consider incorporating greening practices into study abroad programs. We believe this can be done in two main categories – program planning/logistics and course assignments that help raise students’ awareness of their individual carbon footprint and that of the group.

CGEE encourages faculty to consider environmental issues in program planning and/or course design and reference the list below when completing the Strengths Statement for the proposal. However, inclusion of green practices in a course design is not a factor in the course being offered or not. It is recognized that some locations, or curricula, do not lend themselves to this.

Program planning aspects:

1. Carbon Credits
2. Transportation on foot, by bicycle and/or by using public/mass transit
3. Eating locally produced foods (either from markets, food for local preparation, or at restaurants)
4. Home stays or green-building stays (hotels, etc. that meet have green features)

Course design aspects:

1. Environmental impact of travel as part of curriculum
2. Projects enacted back in Minneapolis that address climate change
3. Personal behavioral change in Minneapolis reflecting greater environmental sensitivity

The more these aspects are considered, the stronger the proposal on this particular criteria. Please contact Augsburg Abroad staff with questions or ideas for additional ways to “green” your study abroad program.

A very brief list of resources:

Guidelines for Sustainable Travel:

[NAFSA’s Sustainability in Study Abroad Page](#)

Sustainable Travel International: www.sustainabletravelinternational.org

Article: "[Sustainable Travel and Study Abroad](#)," by Astrid Jirka, Transitions Abroad

Article: "[A Necessary Partnership: Study Abroad and Sustainability in Higher Education](#)" by Andrea M.W. Dvorak, Lars D. Christiansen, Nancy L. Fischer, Joseph B. Underhill

Carbon Footprint Resources

[What is a carbon footprint?](#)

[CarbonNeutral Flight Emissions Calculator](#)

Carbon Offsetting

<http://www.myclimate.org/>

Atmosfair: <http://www.atmosfair.de/en/>