TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER

Operating Policy and Procedure

HSC OP: 10.29, International Programs for Students

PURPOSE: The purpose of this HSC Operating Policy/Procedure (HSC OP) is to enable TTUHSC students to participate in TTUHSC international courses and programs by ensuring that those programs are:

1. Student-centered, part of a degree program;

2. In conformity with standards of safety and responsibility as established by recognized academic consortia (e.g., NAFSA: Association for International Educators, Consortium of Universities for Global Health), the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Administrative Code, and TTUHSC operating policies and procedures;

3. Operated by all TTUHSC academic units in a manner that meets approved operation and program standards;

4. In conformity with the laws, rules and regulations of the host country, the host institution, and TTUHSC; and

5. Of benefit to the host institution, community, and TTUHSC faculty and students.

REVIEW: This OP will be reviewed in February of every odd-numbered year (ONY) by the Senior Director of the Office of Global Health and the International Affairs Council, with recommendations for revisions forwarded to the Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs and the President.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

1. Definitions
   a. **Abroad**
      Travel to countries outside the United States
   b. **Advising**
      Guiding students in choices among program options (where and when to go) and assisting students in the completion of applications
   c. **Exit Survey**
      Surveying students who have completed their international program to obtain their evaluation of the program and their experience
   d. **Funding**
      Scholarships, grants, awards, and financial aid that are available to TTUHSC students to assist them in covering all or some of the expenses associated with their international programs
   e. **Orientation**
(1) Safety and security orientations dealing with both routine and emergency procedures for students abroad

(2) Program-specific orientations dealing with site-specific information including, but not limited to, information on expectations of faculty, organization of classes and programs, cultural adjustment, practical information on day-to-day living (e.g., how to obtain currency, call home, and health and safety issues that are site-specific)

(3) General orientations providing general information on travel abroad, health issues abroad and general cultural adjustment strategies

f. Visa Information

Providing information to students regarding where they can obtain the most up-to-date information for a country-specific visa; providing assistance when visa requirements include students taking the visa application with them when they travel abroad and/or picking up the passport with the visa in person

g. Recruiting

Encouraging students to participate in approved international programs

h. Screening

Evaluating and selecting applicants by schools and degree programs

i. Approved Sites

(1) Universities or institutes of higher education with which TTUHSC has a formal agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU);

(2) International organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), the United Nations (UN), etc. where the U.S. has representation;

(3) Teaching hospitals or health care organizations approved by the dean of the school and the Senior Director of the Office of Global Health, including one-time-sites of special pedagogic interest.

j. Program Administrator

The program administrator is the contact person at the host institution/organization or faculty member leading the program abroad

k. Acronyms

ART—Assessment and Response Team
OGH—Office of Global Health
SRVPAA—Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs
SDOGH—Senior Director of Office of Global Health
MOU—Memorandum of Understanding

Emergency response procedures are found in section 6 of this HSC OP and in Attachment B. The emergency contact telephone number is (806) 252-4173.

2. Types of Programs

a. Institutional Programs
Institutional programs are those required courses and/or electives that are part of a school's curriculum, and that are offered at an approved site. The course may be conducted by faculty of the institution abroad, previously identified and approved by TTUHSC for the purposes of leading the course and/or students.

b. Faculty-led Programs

Faculty-led programs are those established by faculty in their area(s) of expertise to teach TTUHSC students in an environment outside the United States. Faculty design the program in consultation with their school, recruit students for the program, accompany the students abroad, administer the program abroad, and are responsible for the educational content of the program.

c. Unofficial Travel Activities Involving TTUHSC Faculty

TTUHSC faculty who take or arrange for students to travel abroad for personal activities including, but not limited to, conferences, study, enrichment, service, or any other non-institutional purpose, shall contact OGH to obtain a “disclaimer and release” form to be signed by the faculty and students. Other than this Section 2.c., this OP is not applicable to unofficial travel activities and specifically excludes use of TTUHSC personnel, facilities, and resources in support of such activities.

3. Establishment of Programs

a. Inaugurating Agreements with Foreign Entities

(1) To promote institution-wide standardization, the OGH is available to offer guidance for the establishment of any new degree program, school-, or institution-wide agreements between TTUHSC and foreign institutions or organizations.

(2) All agreements between degree programs or schools having to do with international courses and exchanges in those degree programs and schools will be forwarded to OGH for routing through the TTUHSC contracting system.

(3) All institution-wide agreements will be forwarded to the president for signature following signed certification by OGH that the agreement incorporates required standard provisions.

(4) The signed original of all written agreements will be provided to OGH, which serves as the institution’s central repository for international programs for students.

b. Faculty-led International Program Proposals

Steps for faculty members interested in establishing a faculty-led international program, not necessarily in the following order, are:

(1) Meet with OGH to discuss the procedures and guidelines for establishing such programs.

Items to consider:

(a) Location of the international program site with reference to:

- Previously established TTUHSC programs at the site; and
- Sustainability of international programs at the site with respect to other programs;

(b) Safety/security issues;

(c) Justification and uniqueness of the proposed site;
(d) Confirmation that courses to be taught are in the TTUHSC inventory and are approved by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to be taught off campus.

(2) Discuss the proposal with the dean, addressing such issues as academic merit and use of faculty and other resources.

(3) Complete a program proposal (Attachment A) and meet with OGH to discuss procedures that need to be followed, as referenced in this OP.

c. Other Programs

Other programs such as Reciprocal Exchange Programs, TTUHSC Centers Abroad, Affiliated Programs, Joint Degree Programs, and/or Consortium Programs may be added to this OP in the future, as these programs become incorporated into TTUHSC’s international activities.

4. Prior to Departure

a. Institutional Programs

(1) Students participating in TTUHSC international programs are required to complete a pre-departure orientation through OGH. Students are solely responsible for making arrangements with OGH for the orientation.

(2) A pre-departure orientation will include the following:

(a) Completion of required emergency and liability forms;

(b) Standardized information regarding international health / MEDEVAC insurance, personal safety, security awareness, emergency preparedness, export controls, and practical issues related to travel, packing, and obtaining currency;

(c) Site specific information concerning required and recommended immunizations, suggested modes of in-country transportation, and cultural acclimation; and

(d) Funding information such as availability of scholarships and awards.

A follow-up consultation with OGH may be necessary to demonstrate proof of international health / MEDEVAC insurance and immunizations.

b. Faculty-led International Programs

(1) For faculty-led international programs, the faculty member will have primary responsibility for publicizing the program and recruiting participants.

(2) Faculty-led program administrators will be responsible for:

(a) Screening applicants to ensure that all requirements and pre-requisites are met (e.g., minimum GPA requirements, non-existence of academic or other probation);

(b) Providing students with site-specific information at program meetings before departure. Faculty are encouraged to conduct trip-specific orientations beyond what OGH provides;

(c) Providing OGH with a plan of evacuation should the site become unsafe for TTUHSC students. A decision to remove students from a site is made in conjunction with OGH and others, as provided under “Emergency Procedures.”

(3) For faculty-led international programs, the faculty should direct students to OGH for a pre-departure orientation, which will include:
(a) Completion of required emergency and liability forms;

(b) Standardized information on international health / MEDEVAC insurance, personal safety, security awareness, emergency preparedness, export controls, and practical issues related to travel, packing, and obtaining currency;

(c) Site specific information concerning required and recommended immunizations, suggested modes of in-country transportation, and cultural acclimation; and

(d) Funding information such as availability of scholarships and awards.

c. Funding for students participating in TTUHSC international programs will not be released until students have:

(1) Met all program-specific qualifications;

(2) Met with a program coordinator or advisor in their degree program to receive counseling and approval of courses to be taken in the international program;

(3) Completed and submitted all forms required by OGH; and

(4) Completed the OGH pre-departure orientation requirements.

d. International Travel by Students

(1) All students traveling abroad must abide by the guidelines set forth in TTUHSC OP 77.08, Student Travel Policy OP.

(2) **Students are not permitted to travel to a nation that is subject to a Travel Warning issued by the United States Department of State.** To determine if a country is the subject of such a travel advisory, students must contact OGH or the U.S. Department of State Office in Washington, DC at (202) 647-4000 or through the web at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html). In the event the Department of State issues a travel advisory for a country to which students will be traveling, OGH will contact those students immediately. **If the country has been placed on the Travel Warning list, students must cancel the trip.**

(3) It is the responsibility of students to meet with a program coordinator or advisor before the start of the international program to gain pre-approval for participation in the program abroad.

5. **Exit Survey**

Upon return from participation in an international program, students will be required to complete an “exit survey.” The following information will be covered in the exit survey:

a. An evaluation of the program to be completed by the students; and

b. A volunteer form to be completed by the students.

6. **Emergency Procedures**

a. The Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center Planned Response to Emergencies Abroad (Attachment B) will be used to guide response by the home institution to emergencies facing international programs.
b. Policy on Canceling Programs in Progress

(1) OGH monitors State Department advisories and other safety information. When a State Department warning is issued advising U.S. citizens not to travel to a specific location, the SDOGH and SRVPAA will convene a meeting of the Assessment and Response Team (ART) to determine and implement an appropriate response.

(2) If OGH receives information from a contact or program administrator at the site reporting that the international program site is dangerous for TTUHSC students, the SDOGH and SRVPAA will convene a meeting of the members of the ART to consider moving the program to an alternate site within the country or bringing the students home.

(3) If parents or other outside interested parties contact OGH and express concern regarding something they have heard from the international program participant, the SDOGH will contact the program administrator to ascertain the facts of the situation and then contact the parents or other interested party.

c. Suspension of a TTUHSC International Program due to Safety Concerns before Departure from the United States

(1) The decision to suspend a TTUHSC international program can have serious consequences, and it should be considered carefully in view of how the cancellation will affect other TTUHSC international programs.

(2) If a program does not have a sufficient number of participants to proceed, the decision of whether or not to suspend the program temporarily should be made by the appropriate dean.

(3) If a question regarding whether or not to temporarily suspend or cancel a TTUHSC international program concerns issues of safety or security of TTUHSC students, the SDOGH must be consulted. OGH closely monitors the most recent safety information available from the U.S. Department of State and other sources, including insurance providers for the program, and will be able to provide the most timely information if concerns arise. (A State Department warning or alert advising U.S. citizens to avoid travel to a specific locale is a valid reason to cancel a program.)

(a) If no such warning exists, counterparts at the site should be contacted to determine if there is a compelling reason to cancel the program, and such information may form the basis for a decision.

(b) If a faculty leader decides that he/she does not want to take the students abroad for personal reasons, the school has an obligation to the participants of the program to find an alternate leader or to make every effort to accommodate the students in a comparable program.

(c) If parents contact OGH to voice concerns about issues related to the trip, especially something they have heard from their son/daughter, the SDOGH will contact the program administrator to seek first-hand information. This information will enable the ART to make a decision as to whether the program should be suspended or delayed.

d. Members of ART

(1) Senior Director of the Office of Global Health
(2) Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs
(3) Dean(s) of the School(s)
(4) Faculty member(s) onsite, when possible