

Proposed Policy #1

Policy for the Development and Operation of Off-Campus International Educational Programs for Tennessee Board of Regents System Students

The Tennessee Board of Regents System (TBR) supports off-campus international educational programs or courses as a valid and valuable part of undergraduate and graduate education. The TBR encourages all TBR institutions to engage in international opportunities that meet the legitimate academic needs of their students *and in cooperation with consortia both internal to the TBR system in which TBR institutions hold membership and those external to the system.*

The TBR recognizes that such programs or courses take a variety of forms in length and focus. All international education programs or courses operated, sponsored or approved for academic credit by any TBR institution are expected to maintain standards of quality in the delivery of instruction, support services, and administration which are consistent with educational excellence. In general, programs or courses operated or sponsored by or in combination with any TBR institution abroad shall be:

- 1) within the scope of the mission of the institution;
- 2) integrated into the undergraduate and/or graduate curricula of the sponsoring institution;
- 3) feasible and sustainable;
- 4) subject to regular, periodic evaluation and assessment according to the institution's normal review procedures for academic programs; and
- 5) in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws and regulations.

In addition, programs or courses operated or sponsored by any TBR institution abroad shall adhere to the specific policies listed below. All institutions *and TBR sponsored consortia* must develop structures for international education programs or courses to be approved by the home institution. Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement related to international studies requires approval of the institutional Chief Academic Officer, President or the President's Designee. All approvals must be forwarded to the TBR Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs upon completion.

I. Types of Programs

- A. Institutions may sponsor and administer their own international programs and/or courses or participate in partnerships with international institutions or consortia to offer opportunities for global study to their students.
 1. Institutions must establish policies regarding enrolling TBR students and awarding credit in a timely fashion to these students for international education programs or courses.

2. Institutions must have in place a policy regarding the acceptance of international transfer credit. Only credit from institutions recognized by their country's ministry of education must be considered acceptable to transfer.
3. Institutions must have policies regarding the enrollment, awarding and transfer of credit for their students matriculating in another TBR or non-TBR affiliated institution *or consortia*. The institution must also have policies for non-TBR students matriculating in institutional courses *or* ✓ *TBR related consortia*
4. Non-institutional faculty must meet SACS standards.

II. Defining Roles

- A. Individuals who are approved to participate in, and travel with, international education programs sponsored by TBR institutions include enrolled students, program directors, group leaders, and other faculty or staff from the institution, except for the following:
 1. Individual institutions must establish policies as to the suitability of accompanying spouses and minor children of participants.

III. Safety and Welfare of Participants

- A. Institutions should not permit travel to countries or portions of countries where the U. S. Department of State currently advises against travel or tourism by Americans. Institutions may further restrict travel where, in their opinion, the U.S. Department of State or other credible authority has identified safety risks.
 1. Institutions must develop a policy for terminating an existing program if the situation arises where student and/or faculty are in danger. Program participants including faculty, staff, and students must be informed that any program may end in such an event.
- B. Institutions must develop new and/or employ existing policies for student conduct which clarify the grounds for which a participant can be disciplined for misconduct during the program or course. The sanction for misconduct may result in any reasonable option, up to and including expulsion.
- C. Institutions must establish written guidelines for orientation of students, faculty, program directors and group leaders in international programs or courses.
- D. Institutions must have emergency response plans in place for international programs to facilitate swift action by program directors or group leaders, faculty, student and consortia (if relevant) in the event of emergencies affecting multiple

participants, the entire program (natural or human disasters such as earthquakes, flood, hurricane, fire, nuclear incident; political/civil unrest, terrorist activity or threat), assault (physical or sexual) or death, health or psychiatric emergencies, missing participants, arrest, and incapacitated program directors or group leaders. Emergency response plans must be filed at the home institutions and the TBR Office of Academic Affairs and periodically updated.

1. All program directors and group leaders must be trained on emergency and crisis management procedures by the institution *or the consortia* offering the international education program.
- E. Prior to travel for an international program or course, institutions must disclose to participants U.S. State Department Consular Information Sheets and Public Announcements or Travel Alerts and crime and safety reports from the Overseas Security Advisement Council as well as essential health and safety considerations, including the Center for Disease Control Travel Information Health Recommendations. During the overseas program or course offering, institutions should monitor and evaluate any new information and report to the Program Director, as appropriate.
- F. Institutions must establish policies and procedures to inform participants who enroll in international opportunities that it:
1. Cannot guarantee or assure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the international education environments.
 2. Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants.
 3. Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
 4. Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor for events that are not part of the program or that are beyond the control of the sponsor, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.
 5. Cannot assure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.
 6. Cannot assure that U.S. standards of hygiene, medical practice, food and product safety will apply in the host country.
- G. Institutions are responsible for informing participants about the coverage, availability, mandatory purchase of accident and health insurance and medical

evacuation and repatriation insurance prior to departure for any international education program either through the TBR insurance program or other insuring parties.

1. Institutions must provide information on available medical care in the host country; if available medical care is a cause for concern, participants must be informed.

H. Institutions must provide documentation of acceptance into international education programs to the student's financial aid office as requested and establish policies for payment schedules for tuition and program fees which take in consideration both the disbursement schedule of financial aid monies and the departure dates for international education programs.

III. Recruitment, Admission, Orientation, Participation, and Re-entry

- A. Institutions must have educational standards for all students whether from TBR institutions or from outside who elect to study in an international setting.
 1. Each institution will develop minimum GPA requirements, selection criteria, and enrollment status for students studying internationally either independently or in international education programs.
 2. Credit is offered for individual courses within international education programs with the full measure of demand and academic rigor, not merely for the purpose of travel or touring in a foreign location. Institutions must establish a comprehensive policy on the transfer of credit and transcript evaluation from international institutions.
 3. TBR System institutions, in consultation with faculty and departments, will grant appropriate academic credit for coursework successfully completed on educational programs abroad which they operate or sponsor. Each TBR institution will inform participants as completely and accurately as possible as to the process that it follows in awarding credit for international education and provide academic advising to facilitate integration of coursework abroad with a participant's major field and degree requirements.
 - a. Individual institutions must have policies as to the acceptability of academic courses completed in an international setting to the major field requirements.
 - b. Institutions must have grade appeal policies in place to assist students wishing to appeal an unsatisfactory grade or removal from an academic course taught in an international settings by non-TBR faculty.

4. All international study offerings including study-abroad programs awarding academic credit to students enrolled in TBR institutions *or consortia within or* ✓ *outside the TBR system* must comply with regional accreditation and/or TBR standards.
 - a. Institutions must ensure that global study opportunities regardless of the provider equate in contact hours with those expected of students matriculating at the home institution per TBR instructional hour policy
 5. Institutions must establish an equivalency for international study courses offered by the institution itself or through an international education program, ✓ *TBR sponsored or external* consortia, or international institution in order to offer credit at the home institution..
- B. To the extent required by federal law, TBR System institutions will provide reasonable access to programs abroad for students with disabilities.
- C. Institutional policies regarding student conduct apply to TBR students registered for credit regardless of their attendance at one of the campuses in Tennessee or while participating in international opportunities.
1. All participants, whether enrolled for credit or not, must attend a program pre-departure and on-site orientation, including emergency contact information and repatriation information including issues relevant to the culture, social and health conditions of the host country, in addition to information about registration, fee payment and reenrollment , as appropriate.
 2. All international education programs must brief program participants regarding student conduct expectations including but not limited to alcohol and drug use, visitation, prohibited locations, and abuse of laws and customs of the country to be visited.
 3. Removal from international programs shall be conducted per TBR Policy 3:02:00:01 *General Regulations on Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions* and host institution policies on student conduct, whichever is more conservative in keeping with Policy 3:02:01:00 *Due Process*.
restrictive
- D.. TBR institutions will assess both academic and logistical aspects of study abroad programs which they operate or sponsor.
- E.. Each institution will establish policies for media inquiries regarding any incident involving a TBR institution faculty, staff or student involved in any TBR endorsed international education experience. The media policy must require that administrators consult Chief Student Affairs Officers and/or legal counsel regarding the release of student information on student records in accordance with the *Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*.

V. Establishing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Memorandum of Agreement (MOA)

- A. Individual institutions *and TBR sponsored consortia* shall establish guidelines for the contracting with potential institutions abroad. Partner universities may be proposed by anyone in the institution but the decision to pursue a formal agreement with any institution abroad must be supported by the Chief Academic Officer, President of the institution, or the President's designee. Institutions must have an official, written agreement with institutions abroad *or consortia* prior to commencing an international studies program.

VI. Host Country Consideration

To promote the free exchange of ideas and knowledge, no restrictions shall be placed on the establishment or maintenance of programs in other countries based on the political, religious, racial, ethnic, or ideological characteristics of a host country or its government.

VII. Financial Management:

- A. Institutions must establish financial policies specific to international education programs using approved state accounts, with appropriate management and auditing procedures.
- B. A program shall provide upon request disclosure of any benefits provided to any employee of a TBR institution which are paid for or subsidized by participant fees or secured from any vendor that is providing services to students.
- C. Each institution shall maintain a reserve/contingency fund deemed adequate in response to the international activity level of the institutions in order to respond to emergencies and unforeseen problems of students, faculty, and staff engaged in TBR sponsored or supported international programs or courses. How much
- Send student
back
- D. As state-assisted public universities and community colleges, TBR institutions will exercise care in contracting relationships with for-profit institutions and agencies, to ensure that such arrangements are determined to be in the best interests of students. All contracts must conform to Tennessee State statutes and purchasing requirements, and TBR policies and guidelines. international
travel policy
- E. Individual institutions must have fiscal, risk management and educational standards for international education programs whether offered by the institution through consortia or other arrangement.

1. Institutions are responsible for determining if there are additional demands for international education programs in any specific location or for any specific field unmet by any TBR institution or affiliate program.
2. Institutions must consider affordability including start up costs, convenience and stability of a site when developing an international education program.
3. Each institution must establish and include in their general student information published policies which allow students to register for classes, earn credit, obtain financial aid, pay tuition and international education fees, and to obtain refund and or withdraw for all international education programs.
4. Institutional policies must be established including deadlines for the collection of tuition and fees from TBR students for international education and the transfer less the administrative fee to the TBR related consortium.
5. Institutions must make appropriate arrangements to use existing accounting and reporting procedures for all international travel for program directors or group leaders.

VIII. Evaluation

- A. Individual institutions shall establish an evaluation for individual courses and for all international education programs to determine the continued academic value and financial viability of each program.
 1. Course evaluation procedures and measures must be the same or equivalent to those of the home institution.
 2. At a minimum the program evaluation must include perceived strengths and weaknesses, the projected and actual costs of the program, both in terms of financial cost and in-kind costs contributed by the program director and program staff, program enhancements or improvements needed, strategies for improvement and lessons learned that can be a good tool for future Program Directors or Group Leaders. The evaluation should include student assessments, as appropriate, as well as a full evaluation completed by the Program Director or Group Leader.