

Accompanying Guests on Study Abroad Programs

Policy 510.4

1 Introduction

The primary role of a faculty study abroad leader is to act as professor and program director during the time they are abroad with students. Faculty leaders must be prepared to respond to student needs and emergencies at all hours while traveling. The University also understands that employees who serve as leaders or co-leaders on study abroad programs are away from home for an extended period of time and for this reason, the University may permit employees to bring immediate family members to join them on their study abroad programs in accordance with this policy.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all faculty and staff who participate in faculty-led study abroad programs on behalf of Appalachian State University.

3 Definitions

3.1 Accompanying Guests

Any individual permitted to travel with an employee during a faculty-led study abroad program that is University Sponsored Travel including, spouses, domestic partners, dependents (minors), and approved visitors.

3.2 Dependent

The employee's child or legal dependent who is under the age of eighteen (18) years old.

3.3 University-Sponsored International Travel

International travel which is (a) led by a University employee, (b) awarded academic credit, or (c) administered by, conducted under the direction of, or with financial support from, any University department, program, or office.

4 Policy Statements

4.1 Guidelines for Family and Visitors on Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

4.1.1 The presence of an Accompanying Guest on a study abroad program could result in a divided commitment for the leader or co-leader of the program; therefore, prior approval is required for any employee who wishes to have an Accompanying Guest participate in the study abroad travel. Approval shall be sought in advance, in accordance with section 4.5 of this policy.

4.1.2 Appalachian reserves the right in its sole discretion to approve or deny requests by a leader or co-leader to bring an Accompanying Guest on any University Sponsored Travel. These decisions may be based on any of the following factors: the specific nature of the program, the current geopolitical climate of the locations or regions of travel, the current public health climate in the locations or regions of travel, and past program needs or concerns.

4.1.3 A Spouse/Domestic Partner may accompany an employee, upon prior University approval, for the duration of a faculty-led program abroad or a portion of the program as long as it does not interfere with the employee's duties to the program and the participating students.

4.1.4 Dependents may accompany an employee, upon prior University approval, for the duration of the faculty-led program abroad as long as it does not interfere with the employee's duties to the program or the participating students.

4.1.4.1 If a Dependent is under the age of thirteen (13) years of age, a full-time caregiver must accompany the dependent that is not the leader or co-leader of the faculty-led program. Participating students and other employees involved in the program are prohibited from serving as a caregiver for the Dependent.

4.1.4.2 Dependents who are between the ages of thirteen (13) and eighteen (18) may accompany a leader or co-leader without a separate caregiver.

4.1.5 Accompanying Guests are not considered participants of the program unless they are enrolled as students at Appalachian and pay all applicable fees for participation in the program. Similarly, Accompanying Participants are not acting as representatives of Appalachian and cannot serve any role relating to supervision or management of the program or the participating students.

4.1.6 While Accompanying Guests are not program participants, they are expected to abide by University policies and host country policies and laws. They must understand that their behavior shall not detract from the program and the experience of participating students.

4.1.7 In the event an Accompanying Guest violates law, policy or other regulations or detracts from a program, the employee will not be permitted to bring an Accompanying Guest on future programs.

4.1.8 On programs utilizing third party travel vendors, Accompanying Guests may be prohibited. Please consult with the Office of International Education and Development (OIED) prior to making a request for an Accompanying Guest if a third-party travel vendor is involved.

4.1.9 During the program, Accompanying Guests may not be permitted to attend any portion of the program that is not otherwise open to the public or held in a location that is not open to the public. Alternative arrangements shall be made by the employee for Accompanying Guests as necessary during these activities.

4.1.10 Accompanying Guests will not be permitted to travel on any program that is determined to be Travel to Destinations of Elevated Risk. (See Appalachian State University Policy 510.2, Travel to Destinations of Elevated Risk).

4.2 Financial Consideration/Insurance

4.2.1 Employees are personally responsible for all expenses related to travel and program activities for their Accompanying Guests and any necessary caretakers. This includes but is not limited to lodging, airfare, transportation, meals, tickets, registration fees, and any other charges for program activities.

4.2.2 The University shall not reimburse the employee for any such expense and cannot pay in advance for any expenses for Accompanying Guests out of student program fees or by comingling private funds into student program fee accounts. The employee must separately make all travel arrangements and pay all related fees for their Accompanying Guest.

4.2.3 All Accompanying Guests must be covered by appropriate health insurance and international travel insurance. The expenses for such coverage and any medical needs while traveling shall be paid by the employee. The University will not pay for or reimburse for these expenses.

4.3 Liability/Waiver Required

4.3.1 All Accompanying Guests or the employee (in the event the Accompanying Guest is a minor), shall be required to complete and sign an Accompanying Guest Agreement and Waiver Form prior to travel. Refusal to sign the required form shall result in revocation of any University approval for the Accompanying Guest to travel with the program.

4.3.2 The University shall not be responsible for any injury, damage, medical expense, claims, legal or criminal matters, or other expenses associated with the Accompanying Guest before, during or after the program.

4.4 Travel Logistics

4.4.1 All program accommodations are made in furtherance of the academic program and are designed to meet the educational needs of the participating students. Program accommodations may not be designed to meet the needs of Accompanying Guests and if accommodations are needed, it is the sole responsibility of the employee to find suitable accommodations.

4.4.2 Employees requesting to travel with an Accompanying Guest shall ensure that the Accompanying Guest has all necessary passports, visas, vaccinations, and any other requirements for international travel or entrance into any host country.

4.4.3 All employees wishing to travel with an Accompanying Guest shall include a plan for all travel logistics to OIED at the time approval is requested.

4.5 Prior Approval

4.5.1 All employees wishing to travel with an Accompanying Guest shall make a request in writing to OIED at least thirty (30) days before travel that includes the following information:

- a. Accompanying Guest's name, date of birth, contact information, emergency contact information, and relationship to the employee;

- b. A travel itinerary and logistics plan for the Accompanying Guest;
- c. Purpose for inclusion of the Accompanying Guests in the travel;
- d. Arrangements made for caregiving if the Accompanying Guest is a minor;
- e. Consent from the Accompanying Guest (unless they are a minor) for a criminal background check to be provided in accordance with University's policy and process for criminal background checks.

4.5.2 All requests shall be shared with the Department Chair and/or Dean.

4.5.3 Approval or denial of the request to travel with an Accompanying Guest shall be provided to the employee by OIED as soon as practicable after all information is received.

4.6 Criminal Background Check

4.6.1 With the exception of Accompanying Guests who are minors, all Accompanying Guests shall be subject to a criminal background check prior to receiving approval to travel.

4.6.2 OIED will work with Human Resources to ensure that appropriate criminal background checks are completed for any Accompanying Guest. All criminal background checks shall be in accordance with applicable University policies.

5 Administrative Unit Contact

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

Office of International Programs
<https://international.appstate.edu>
828-262-2046

6 History

Approved: 7/1/2024