

**GENERAL POLICY**

All persons associated with any Mercer University faculty led program must fall within one of the following defined participant categories. The lead faculty member proposing the program is responsible for ensuring that every associated person follows adheres to the guidelines for the appropriate participant category. Faculty members who allow participation falling outside of these guidelines may lose the privilege of leading future programs abroad.

**Participant Categories and Guidelines**

**Faculty Leaders**

Every study abroad program must have two program leaders. Preferably, the primary lead on the program is a full-time faculty member of one of Mercer's 12 colleges or schools. Both program leaders, however, do not need to be faculty members. Secondary leaders may be Mercer University staff members or approved volunteer leaders. The primary faculty leader is typically the faculty member who works with the Mercer Abroad office to develop a program proposal and seeks the dean's approval for the program. [Proposal forms](#) may be found on our website: [www.mercerabroad.com](http://www.mercerabroad.com).

**Non-Faculty Program Leaders**

All secondary program leaders who are not either full-time faculty members or teaching a course abroad as an adjunct are expected to co-lead the program as an unpaid volunteer. All volunteer leaders must undergo an approval process. The process begins with the lead faculty member completing the *Study Abroad Volunteer Leader Proposal* form, which includes providing evidence that the volunteer has adequate related disciplinary and/or geographical knowledge. Once the primary faculty leader completes this form, both the primary and secondary leaders review and sign the form and submit it to the Mercer Abroad office. If the volunteer leader is not a Mercer employee, then the *Study Abroad Volunteer Leader Agreement* must also be completed and submitted to Mercer Abroad, who will then forward the agreement to Human Resources in order to initiate a background check.

**Student Leaders**

It is somewhat common practice for faculty to invite students who have participated in the program abroad in the past to participate again in a leadership role. This practice is supported as long as two conditions are met: 1) The cost of the student leader does not increase the cost of any participating students—this typically means that student leaders are required to pay all associated program fees, equal to those of the enrolled students. 2) Student leaders are enrolled in at least one one-hour course that provides academic credit for the leadership experience. CLA ISA 101 may be used for such purposes if no internship course, independent study course, or other leadership-type course is available within the college.

**Students**

All undergraduate, graduate, and professional degree-seeking students at Mercer University must be enrolled in the course(s) associated with the program. This includes students from other colleges and universities who want to take advantage of our programming. Students from other schools must apply for transient student status in order to participate. No exceptions are

available for this rule. The purpose of the rule is to ensure consistency in program advising and to ensure compliance with federal financial aid regulations.

### **Lifelong Learners**

If faculty leaders would like to invite non-students to participate in a faculty led study abroad program, particularly professionals in a field related to the academic field of study associated with the program, the guests must be enrolled in the Lifelong Learner Enrichment Abroad program. The fee for the program will vary from college to college and program to program. Participants will pay for the LLEA program via the E-Store and then pay associated program travel fees through mechanisms managed through the Mercer Abroad office. LLEA program participants will have access to the Canvas course(s) associated with the program and will be required to adhere to the same behavioral and procedural guidelines as the students enrolled in the course. Any LLEA program to be associated with a faculty led study abroad program must be proposed at the same time the program is proposed in order to allow for proper set-up and management of the program.

The participation of Lifelong Learners in any program shall neither displace any degree-seeking student from participation nor increase the program cost for any degree students.

Lifelong Learner participants shall not share accommodations with students. Should Lifelong Learners require individual housing, any additional costs for the deviation from student housing will be at the Lifelong Learner's personal expense.

### **Program Leader Spouses/Partners**

Any leader wishing to bring a spouse or partner along on a program must register the spouse as a Lifelong Learner, and the spouse/partner must pay all the associated fees. The participation of any spouse/partner shall not disallow any degree-seeking student from participation. Additionally, the cost of spousal/partner participation shall not increase the program costs for degree-seeking students.

Spouses/partners may share accommodations with the faculty leader. However, only the cost of single housing accommodations for the faculty member will be included in the program budget from which student participant costs are derived. Any additional costs for upgrading living space to accommodate for a spouse or partner must be covered as a personal expense for the program leader or spouse/partner.

Faculty leaders and their spouses or partners shall not share accommodations with students. Should spouses or partners require individual housing, any additional costs will be at the their personal expense.

### **Minor Children**

Traditional, short-term faculty led study abroad programs are typically not designed to accommodate young children. Faculty leaders who wish to bring minor children with them on a study abroad program must arrange for adult supervision of the children that does not involve the leadership team of the program.

## **Faculty Led Program Participation Policy**

Spouses, partners, or other trusted adults who will accompany faculty in order to supervise minor children must enroll in the program as a Lifelong Learner, especially if the adult supervisor and minor children will be accompanying the program for all events. Any participation expenses for minor children and their supervising adult must be paid at the expense of the parent of the children.

We strongly discourage Lifelong Learner program participants from bringing minor children along. However, if a Lifelong Learner intends to join the group periodically while vacationing with family in the same location, then the Lifelong Learner shall arrange for housing and transportation independently from the program. In this case, the Lifelong Learner will be exempt from those portions of the program fees. Also, in this case, the supervisor and children shall not be considered part of the program or covered by any crisis management insurance for the group. The Lifelong Learner will be required to complete a statement of understanding regarding his/her own participation and the presence of his/her family members as non-participants.

In all cases, the presence of minor children or other traveling companions must not disrupt the learning experience for the enrolled students. Additionally, at no time should any enrolled undergraduate, graduate, or professional student be asked or expected to assume responsibility for the wellbeing or safety of another person's child/children.