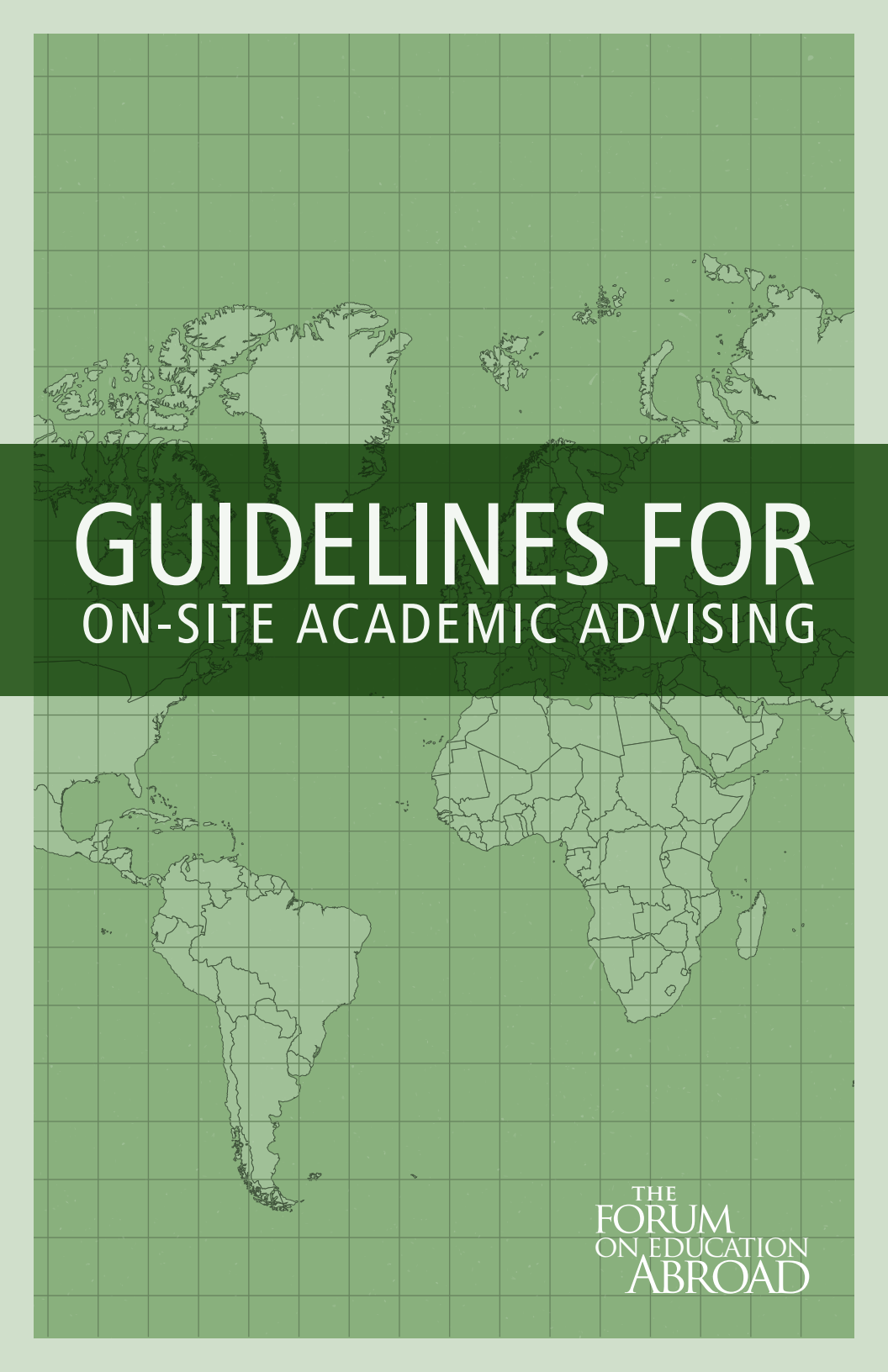




GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

THE
FORUM
ON EDUCATION
ABROAD

ABOUT THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

The Forum on Education Abroad is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, membership association recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad. The Forum's institutional members include U.S. colleges and universities, overseas institutions, consortia, agencies, provider organizations and foundations.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Forum on Education Abroad serves as the collective voice of U.S. post-secondary education abroad. To benefit students, The Forum develops and disseminates comprehensive standards of good practice, resources and training, advocates for education abroad and its value, and engages the field in critical dialogue.

GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

A companion to the Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad

INTRODUCTION

On-site academic advising in education abroad plays a critical role in helping students make their education abroad experience as purposeful and meaningful as possible. Effective advising helps students develop a plan to integrate education abroad into their individual degree planning, coordinate courses abroad with coursework at their home institution, and prepare for differences in academic cultures. Done well, it encourages students to take advantage of the full range of opportunities available to them.

On-site academic advising differs substantively from academic advising that a student receives on their home campus. It covers a shorter, though intense, period of time. It helps orient the education abroad student to a new academic culture, which can differ significantly from the student's home campus. It also focuses on helping students select coursework and make daily choices that maximize the unique learning opportunities at their host institution or organization and to study different topics or to approach them in different ways than they are approached at the home institution. On-site advisors are often advising students pursuing degrees in a wide array of disciplines who come from many different home institutions throughout the U.S., if not from around the world, each with their own unique set of credit transfer and degree requirements.

For this reason, it is of paramount importance that students take personal responsibility for staying informed about their own opportunities and limitations in terms of the courses they can pursue abroad. The education abroad professionals who provide students with on-site academic advising¹ can help with this by reminding students to be in touch with their home institution education abroad and academic advisors regularly throughout the course selection process, and by encouraging students to be flexible with regards to class schedules and teaching and learning styles. Where feasible, communication between education abroad advisors at the home institution and academic advisors at the host institution or program can help to support consistency throughout the process, to point students to the most appropriate individuals or resources when they need assistance, and to begin to prepare students for advising and course selection before they leave their home campus.

These Guidelines apply to on-site academic advising for education abroad. They are intended for use by professionals on-site as well as at sending institutions and organizations in order to guide conversations between partners and support consistency. The *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* apply to all aspects of education abroad. Use them together to develop a comprehensive approach to academic advising for education abroad participants.

¹ See Key Terms, "On-Site Advisors" for more information.

STANDARDS

The *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* were established in 2004 by The Forum on Education Abroad, recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad. They are higher education's benchmark for education abroad program excellence and accountability.

KEY TERMS

home institution: college or university where a student is pursuing their degree of study

host institution: the institution that the education abroad student attends while abroad (if any)

on-site: the location of the education abroad experience

on-site advisor: the staff member at the location of the education abroad experience who is primarily responsible for providing students with academic advising support; may be an employee of the host institution, home institution, or program provider organization²

education abroad advising: also called study abroad advising, or pre-departure advising; led by an advisor who specializes in education abroad; the advisor explains to students the general education abroad process, helps students understand the program choices available to them, and often does outreach work to identify prospective participants³

academic advising: “academic advising, based in the teaching and learning mission of higher education, is a series of intentional interactions with a curriculum, a pedagogy, and a set of student learning outcomes... [it] synthesizes and contextualizes students’ educational experiences within the frameworks of their aspirations, abilities, and lives to extend learning beyond campus boundaries and timeframes”⁴

2 This is often not the official job title assigned to the person carrying out this work, nor is it their sole responsibility to a program. Varying from site to site, on-site advising can be the responsibility of professionals carrying the title of on-site coordinator, program or center director, faculty member, among others.

3 Adapted from The Forum's *Glossary* definition of “Education Abroad Advisor,” <http://www.forumea.org/resources/glossary>.

4 NACADA: The Global Community for Academic Advising. (2006). NACADA concept of academic advising. Retrieved from: <https://www.nacada.ksu.edu/Resources/Pillars/Concept.aspx>.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING FOR EDUCATION ABROAD

Students and advisors have a shared obligation to ‘get it right’ during the course selection process, but the student’s academic plan is ultimately the responsibility of the student. Effective on-site academic advising supports students in making informed choices that will advance learning and personal development during the education abroad experience. It works best when students arrive on-site well-informed of their home institution’s academic requirements and personal learning goals. The following best practices can help achieve these goals.

- a. Provide proactive, accurate, and coherent advising.
- b. Encourage strong lines of communication between the student and their on-site advisor and home institution.
- c. Offer opportunities for one-on-one meetings between student and on-site advisor.
- d. Present on-site program goals and objectives while discussing the student’s individual goals and objectives.
 - Help students keep these realistic and tied to the experience and resources available to them.
- e. Familiarize students with the host academic approach, expectations, and standards, e.g. classroom dynamics, academic expectations, workloads, student-teacher interactions, assessment procedures (e.g., written exams, oral exams, presentations), grading scales and procedures, etc.
 - Assist the students in understanding differences between the on-site academic culture and that of the home campus and educational norms.
- f. Clearly explain the calendar and logistics for administrative procedures, including:
 - course registration, especially when course listings for a term are finalized and available to students,
 - drop-add periods,
 - absence and extension request policies and definition of extenuating circumstances.

- g. Make students aware of the available curricular and co-curricular (e.g., internships, service-learning, community engagement) opportunities and their connection to program and student goals and objectives.
- h. Encourage students to take advantage of opportunities not available to them on their home campus.
- i. Consider individual academic, personal, and professional goals when helping students to select courses.
- j. Where possible, provide a list of pre-approved courses that students can transfer back to their home institutions for credit and what will count towards specific degree requirements.
- k. Be prepared to assist students to access available academic accommodations where appropriate.
 - Reach out to students who've disclosed learning differences on arrival to discuss their preferred approach to knowledge sharing and realistic access to accommodations.

GUIDELINES FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING FOR EDUCATION ABROAD

Use the following guidelines, along with the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*, when developing advising protocols, advising students on-site, or hiring and training staff who will engage in advising activities.

1. MISSION AND GOALS FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Establish that the primary goals for on-site academic advising are:
 - ▶ to assist students to become members of their host institution or organization's educational community,
 - ▶ to encourage students to think critically about their roles and responsibilities as students at the host institution/organization,
 - ▶ and to provide students with relevant and accurate information to help them make informed decisions about their academic experience.
- Structure advising procedures and resources on-site to guide students to academic choices consistent with the goals and learning objectives of the education abroad program.

2. STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IN ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Help students choose appropriate learning opportunities considering their long-term educational goals and short-term learning objectives in the host country.
- Assist students in identifying appropriate educational opportunities not available to them at their home campus.
- Assist students in identifying courses and educational opportunities that will maintain continuity between their program of study abroad and their program of study on the home campus.
- Regularly evaluate course offerings in terms of their applicability to academic degree programs and student learning goals using appropriate methods, e.g., student evaluations, exit interviews, feedback from course faculty, information gathered from site visits or classroom observations.

3. ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Maintain clear and transparent on-site and/or host institution policies related to:
 - ▶ Definition of full-time enrollment;
 - ▶ Language requirements;
 - ▶ Prerequisite coursework;
 - ▶ Exam policies, including policies for postponing or “resitting” for an exam, if possible;
 - ▶ Attendance and justification of absence or request for extension policies.
- Instruct students to work with their home institution academic advisor to understand the requirements to transfer academic credit, including:
 - ▶ Definition of full-time enrollment;
 - ▶ Grade requirements to transfer a course;
 - ▶ Requirements for transferring the course to a specific major or for language credit or general education requirements;
 - ▶ Grading scales, course hours, assessment.
- Encourage choices that represent the best fit between the students’ abilities and academic backgrounds and the academic program and culture in the host country.
- When coursework will be pursued in a language other than that of the home institution, ensure sufficient ability in the target language and prepare students for the unique challenges this situation presents.

4. STUDENT SELECTION, PREPARATION, AND ADVISING ON-SITE

- Before students arrive on-site, direct them to the sources of information (websites, online databases, peer advisors, advising staff, faculty, meetings and handbooks, etc.) that will help them to plan for the experience abroad.
 - ▶ Provide clear instructions for the registration process and when and how courses will be selected.
- Include detailed information about the educational culture, relevant academic, co-curricular, and non-curricular concerns, and host policies and procedures in both pre-departure and on-site orientations.
- Make pre-requisite courses or other academic requirements known and available.
- Indicate any essential eligibility criteria for participation in particular educational opportunities or at particular sites.
- As early as possible, provide students with an academic calendar that includes:
 - ▶ program start and end dates;
 - ▶ course start and end dates;
 - ▶ registration periods;
 - ▶ last date to withdraw (if possible);
 - ▶ exam dates;
 - ▶ holiday breaks;
 - ▶ required field trips or excursions;
 - ▶ co-curricular learning events and activities.
- If a “shopping period” is permitted at the beginning of the term, encourage students to visit or attend a variety of courses during the drop-add period in order to make the most informed decision possible.

5. STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES RELATED TO ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Advise students about the code(s) of conduct of the host institution/ organization, consequences for violations, and adjudication processes that apply to them.
- Remind students of their responsibility to comply with the code(s) of conduct established for them by their home institution while they are abroad.
- Alert students to program and host institution policies relating to academic integrity, civility, attendance policies, absences from class, etc., and the consequences for failing to comply with these.
- Make it clear to students that academic expectations will not be adjusted because they are foreign students.

6. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Provide accurate and timely information regarding institutional and program requirements, and institutional policies and procedures that impact students, including:
 - ▶ registration procedures,
 - ▶ pass/fail policies,
 - ▶ withdrawal policies.
- Regularly review materials—electronic, print, or other—about education abroad policies, procedures, etc., to ensure accuracy and timeliness.
- Ensure that information, policies, and procedures provided before departure are consistent with policies and practices on-site.
- Establish clear and transparent policies regarding the minimum and maximum number of courses or credits students are expected to take.
 - ▶ Home and host universities may have a different minimum or maximum numbers of course/credits expected of students. In these cases, encourage students to be in regular contact with their home university's advisor (academic and/or education abroad) to understand their requirements, especially as they may relate to the student's financial aid or scholarships.
 - ▶ Establish a communication protocol for notifying students and/or home institutions in a timely manner if minimum enrollment expectations are not being met.

7. ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM RESOURCES FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Ensure that on-site advisors are knowledgeable about the host program/institution's requirements, policies, and procedures for education abroad/visiting students, and can communicate these to students.
- Similarly, to the extent possible, facilitate familiarity between on-site advisors and their counterparts on the home campus to facilitate communication in the event that questions arise.
- Make the course approval and credit transfer procedures of the home institutions of students available to on-site advisors to support their work with students.
- Strive for advisor-to-student ratios that enable advisors to give students individualized attention when needed.
- Ensure that advising appointments are available to students regularly throughout the education abroad experience.

8. HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY, AND RISK MANAGEMENT FOR ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Ensure that on-site advisors understand U.S. laws and reporting requirements that directly impact education abroad.
- Train on-site advisors on safety and security protocols and policies; prepare them to respond promptly and appropriately to any critical incidents or issues that may arise.
- Ensure advisor understanding of and compliance with laws and regulations relating to privacy and confidentiality in both the home and host countries and at the host institution/organization. Endeavor to meet both the letter and spirit of both countries' laws as best possible.
- Ensure that students know the steps to be taken in an emergency, i.e., who to contact first, where to go, etc.

9. ETHICS AND ON-SITE ACADEMIC ADVISING

- Adhere to the ethical standards of academic advising, of education abroad, and of the institution/organization.
- Advise with integrity and consistency.
- Assist all students in meeting their individual needs and goals without bias or judgment no matter their ability, age, cultural heritage, ethnicity, gender identity, nationality, political affiliation, race, religious affiliation, sex, sexual orientation, economic, marital, social, or veteran status.

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