

COLLEGE OF THE LIBERAL ARTS
EMBEDDED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

SUMMARY

The College of the Liberal Arts is committed to educating and graduating global citizens. To that end, the College encourages and supports faculty interested in developing new global experiences that fit well with the current academic objectives of the College and with the overall University portfolio of global opportunities.

This guide provides basic advice on the process for developing an embedded course. The Office of Global Programs, Directorate of Education Abroad, provides extensive information on their site on [how to propose an embedded program](#), which is referenced throughout this document.

EMBEDDED COURSES

EMBEDDED COURSE DEFINITION

Penn State undergraduate courses taught on campus or online that include an international, credit-bearing travel component are referred to as “**embedded courses**” because the international travel program is embedded into the content of a course. The embedded travel program tends to last 7 - 14 days, which often takes place during a semester break or early summer.

Embedded courses are distinct from faculty-led “freestanding” programs. In an embedded course, the majority of the academic content is taught either on campus or online during the semester – whereas in a freestanding program, all of the academic content is taught entirely abroad. Additionally, freestanding programs usually occur during the summer and typically last 2 - 8 weeks.

ACADEMIC & PROGRAM POLICIES

Embedded courses may be developed using a variety of academic and travel program structures. All embedded courses, though, must adhere to certain University-level and College-level policies in regards to the academic structure, timing of travel, use of approved program providers, and requirements for program leaders and student participants. The information below outlines important policies to consider when developing an embedded course.

Academic Structure

- **Embedded Courses-** Embedded travel programs are associated with one or more academic courses. Faculty may develop an embedded travel program for a course that already exists or it may involve the development of a brand new course or special topics course. In either case, it is essential that the faculty member communicate with the leadership of his or her academic department, college and campus concerning the process for course approval.
- **Course Associations-** Embedded travel programs may be associated with cross-listed courses, independent studies, and/or multiple courses across various disciplines in order to maximize potential student participants. Appropriate course associations will be based upon the academic goals of the embedded travel program. Faculty are expected to communicate with the course

scheduler in their department regarding the course(s) and any specific course controls, class notes, or other details that should be listed in LionPATH.

- **Optional vs. Required Travel-** Embedded courses can be academically structured in different ways. The embedded travel program can be mandatory for all students enrolled in the course or it can be optional. If the travel component is optional, the faculty leader may attach a 0.5 or 1-credit course, along with additional academic submissions, to provide the opportunity to earn additional credit. The additional credit for the course typically would have an X97 or X99 designation.

Timing of Travel

- **Appropriate Timing-** The most common timeframe for an embedded travel program is a spring semester course with travel during spring break, though programs with travel during fall break (Thanksgiving), winter break, or summer term are acceptable as well. Please note the special considerations regarding timing and academic credits below.
- **Required Academic Credits-** In accordance with University and Education Abroad policy, each student participating in an embedded program must be registered for a minimum of 0.5 credits during the official academic semester in which the travel component occurs. This means that if a faculty member teaches a course in the spring and leads the embedded travel component during early May, then because the travel is officially occurring during the summer semester, an additional course set for a minimum of 0.5 credits must be established for the travel component in May. This is also the case if a course is taught in the fall semester and the travel occurs over winter break, because the travel is technically occurring during the spring semester. Faculty leaders should take this into consideration that program structured in this way will add an additional tuition cost for students.

Use of Approved Program Providers

- **Required Program Providers-** Working with a third-party travel program provider is mandatory as it ensures a more streamlined budget process, as well as addressing risk management concerns. It also allows faculty to focus on the academic components of the travel and moves the logistical details to the selected provider.
- **Provider Contracts-** Contracts and agreements with program providers or other outside agencies must be reviewed by the Risk Management Office before signatures are completed. Similarly, contracts with partner universities for services such as housing and transportation must be articulated through a Risk Management-approved contract.

Program Leaders Requirements

- **Minimum Number of Program Leaders-** In accordance with the policies of Education Abroad, as well as Risk Management guidance, the College of the Liberal Arts requires that two responsible Penn State employees must be present throughout the duration of the program.
- **Eligible Program Leaders-** Program leaders are typically faculty members, though graduate students, TAs, or University staff members are acceptable leaders as well. Faculty leaders from the College of the Liberal Arts are welcome to collaborate with co-leaders from other departments and colleges to promote interdisciplinary embedded programs.

Student Participant Requirements

- **Minimum Number of Student Participants-** In order to maximize the academic benefits and cost effectiveness of embedded programs, the College of the Liberal Arts requires that a minimum of 10 students participate in the travel component of an embedded program.
- **Eligible Student Participants-** Any student traveling with an embedded course must be registered for at least one of the associated courses to which the travel is tied. This means that students who are not currently enrolled in the course, including students who have taken the course in previous semesters, may not participate in the embedded travel component. Students from any academic college or discipline may participate in a Liberal Arts embedded program.

PROPOSAL PROCESS

Faculty members are strongly encouraged to **plan at least a year in advance for an embedded course** to allow adequate time for identifying program providers, finalizing contracts, University approvals, course promotion, and student scheduling. The basic process for developing and proposing an embedded course is:

1. **Submit Interest Form-** Complete the [Embedded Course Interest Form](#) to express initial interest in leading a course. After submitting the embedded course interest survey, you will have the opportunity to meet with the Global Experiences Coordinator from the Liberal Arts Career Enrichment Network, Chelsea Keen, to discuss ideas or address questions.
2. **Receive Departmental Approval-** Share your plan with your department head and undergraduate studies officer to obtain department support of your proposed plan and to determine if any department-based resources are available to cover instructor travel costs or to provide grant awards to support participating students.
3. **Provide Program Goals & Details-** Submit a brief, written description of the embedded travel component, including dates, rationale for the selected location, additional academic requirements, and a tentative schedule of activities. This can be submitted after your meeting with the Global Experiences Coordinator and will be used to connect faculty with short-term travel providers to generate a proposal for the course travel logistics.
4. **Submit Proposal to Education Abroad-** Once you have met with the Global Experiences Coordinator, identified a provider, and solidified your travel itinerary, you will complete and submit an official embedded program proposal on the [Education Abroad website](#). Education Abroad is responsible for reviewing all program proposals for institutional risk and requires faculty leading embedded programs to submit specific program details to their office. Details for the pre-decision phase and post-decision phase of the proposal process are outlined on the Education Abroad site. If you have specific questions regarding the information to be provided to Education Abroad, please contact Education Abroad at embeddedprograms@psu.edu.

PROGRAM LEADER FUNDING SUPPORT

Liberal Arts Embedded Program Leader Funding

- **LA Embedded Program Leader Travel Support Funds-** The Career Enrichment Network will provide Liberal Arts Embedded Program Leader Travel Support Funds for a select number of Liberal Arts embedded program leaders each year on a rolling basis. The travel support funds will be used to help defray the travel and/or program expenses of the program leaders, resulting

in a lower per-student cost for the embedded program. Program leaders may receive up to a maximum of \$2,000 in travel support funds. The \$2,000 in travel support funding is not salary or extra compensation for the program leaders.

- **LA Embedded Program Leader Research/Professional Development Funds-** Additionally, the Career Enrichment Network recognizes the time and energy that embedded program leaders devote to the development and execution of embedded programs. In order to support and encourage these efforts, the Career Enrichment Network will provide Liberal Arts Embedded Program Leaders Research/Professional Development Funds of \$1,000 per leader to be used for research and/or professional development. The \$1,000 in research/professional development funds is not salary or extra compensation for the program leaders.
- **Funding Eligibility-** In order for a Liberal Arts embedded program leader to be eligible to receive travel support funds and research/professional development funds, their embedded program must adhere to all of the academic and program policies outlined above, including having a minimum of two program leaders and 10 student participants.
- **Funding Disbursement-** The Career Enrichment Network will distribute travel support funds and research/professional development funds by transferring the funds to the program leader's academic department. Prior to transferring the funds, the Global Experiences Coordinator will communicate with the department's administrative coordinator to share information about the funds and their intended use. The program leader will be responsible for following their department's procedures and requirements for reconciling or receiving reimbursement for all travel-related and research/professional development-related purchases.

Global Programs Faculty Travel Grants

- **Global Programs Faculty Travel Grants-** The University Office of Global Programs maintains a fund to support faculty travel for a short-term stay (1-4 weeks) for up to a maximum of \$3,000 per project. The Global Programs Faculty Travel Grant supports faculty travel for the following purposes: 1) to lead students on a faculty-led international experience 2) to plan and set up a faculty-led international experience or 3) to develop collaborative relationships that will be used in future residential or distance courses that will have significant interaction with international faculty and students at the partner institution. The deadlines for these funds are September 15 for travel during the spring semester or later, and February 15 for travel during the summer, fall semester, winter break, or later. Applications and eligibility requirements can be found on the [Global Programs website](#).

STUDENT FUNDING SUPPORT

- **PA Commonwealth Scholarship-** Students participating in embedded programs should be strongly encouraged to apply for the [Pennsylvania Commonwealth Education Abroad Scholarship](#) through Global Programs. This is a \$1,000 scholarship available for undergraduate students participating on faculty-led embedded programs. This is a need-based competitive application process; funding is not guaranteed for all students.
- **Liberal Arts Enrichment Funds-** Liberal Arts majors also are encouraged to apply for [Liberal Arts Enrichment Funds](#). The College of the Liberal Arts will provide a \$750 enrichment funds award to undergraduate Liberal Arts majors participating in a Liberal Arts embedded program. Some exceptions to this amount may be made in cases where embedded course travel is also being combined with a more traditional study abroad experience in the same location. Please note: Liberal Arts enrichment funding is available only to current undergraduate students with at least one major in the College of the Liberal Arts at University Park or World Campus. Students

must complete the enrichment funding application to receive this funding. Students who have minors in the College of the Liberal Arts are not eligible for this funding.

PROGRAM COORDINATION & ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

Embedded programs are a priority area for the College, but we also recognize they require a high level of commitment and extra effort on the part of the proposing faculty member, department and the Liberal Arts Global Experiences Coordinator. Below, the responsibilities and expectations are outlined for the faculty, academic department, and Global Experiences Coordinator.

Faculty Responsibilities

- Seek department approval and support for your embedded course idea prior to initiating the proposal process.
- Collaborate with the Global Experiences Coordinator to identify appropriate travel providers and develop a firm itinerary and program budget.
- Identify a second Penn State faculty/staff/ or TA course leader for the program.
- Promote the program to interested students.
- Submit the program proposal and seek financial support through Education Abroad.
- Participate in required emergency preparedness training through Education Abroad.
- Provide orientation to participating students, including responding to practical travel questions related to flights, arrivals, passports and visas, etc.
- Prepare to spend considerable time with the student group during travel, including troubleshooting any health and safety issues.
- Distribute the Embedded Program Fee Form (provided by the Global Experiences Coordinator) to students to provide details about the program fee and receive authorization for the fees to be added to the students' bursar accounts.

Academic Department Responsibilities

- Manage the travel support funds and research/professional development funds distribution process for program leaders; the Global Experiences Coordinator will communicate with the department to share information about these funds and their intended use prior to transferring the funds to the appropriate academic department.
- Offer funding for program leaders and student participants if available. Departments are encouraged to write a budget line item requesting funds for this purpose.
- Share any unforeseen program-related expenses with the Career Enrichment Network that may arise due to situations such as flight cancellations, delays, or weather-related travel issues.
- Assist with program promotion.

Global Experiences Coordinator Responsibilities

- Answer questions about the program proposal process and serve as a liaison with Education Abroad.
- Connect program leaders with others who successfully have led embedded courses in past semesters and can share best practices for program development.
- Connect faculty with short-term program providers.
- Assist with promoting the course to Liberal Arts majors via social media outlets, academic advisers, Study Abroad Fair, etc.

- Handle the administrative and financial processes involved in obtaining University approvals for program contracts and fees, transferring funding for program leaders, and charging students' bursar accounts for program fees.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Who handles the finances related to paying the program provider and collecting students' fees?

A: The Global Experiences Coordinator will charge the program fees directly to students' bursar accounts and will use these fees to pay the invoice from the program provider. This process involves obtaining quotes and/or contracts from the program provider and documentation of the fee, which must be approved by the Budget Office and the Bursar's Office. These transactions can vary depending on the provider policies, so please ask the Global Experiences Coordinator for clarification for your specific situation.

Please note that program fees often do not include airfare, meals and other costs that are not specifically included in the program contract, so students will be responsible for paying out-of-pocket for these costs. Program leaders should be prepared to communicate to students how much they should expect to pay out-of-pocket before they commit to the program. If the academic department covers student costs outside of the program fee expenses (i.e., transportation to/from the domestic airport), then those costs/reimbursements need to be handled on a department basis.

Q: Does the Career Enrichment Network provide financial support to embedded program leaders?

A: The Career Enrichment Network will recognize embedded program leaders' efforts by providing up to \$2,000 in travel support funding and \$1,000 in research/professional development funding for each Liberal Arts program leader. These funds are not salary or additional compensation; the funds will be transferred to the appropriate department for their intended future use. See details above.

Q: Does teaching an embedded course count toward my course load?

A: Please discuss compensation and/or course release with your department. Ultimately, this is a decision that will be made at the department level.

Q: What sort of training is available to prepare faculty for dealing with emergencies while abroad?

A: The Education Abroad Office requires all faculty leading embedded courses to attend a [Emergency Preparedness Workshop](#) prior to departure. These workshops are offered a few times each year so watch for announcements regarding upcoming sessions. Additional workshops about curriculum integration and managing student behavior abroad are also offered periodically.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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