

CISAT Policy for Short-Term International Programs

Study abroad programs are recognized as uniquely valuable methods for “educating enlightened citizens to lead productive and meaningful lives,” and the College of Integrated Science and Technology encourages faculty members to develop them. This policy has been designed to support the endeavors of individual faculty members wishing to offer a course or courses outside of the United States. Faculty members intending to prepare formal proposals should be alert to notices or messages from the Office of International Programs at least a full year prior to the anticipated travel dates and should consult the OIP website for the most up-to-date planning assistance.

Responsibility for the academic review and approval of courses offered during study abroad programs rests with the Division of Academic Affairs and this policy guides that process for the approval of academic credit in the disciplines of the College of Integrated Science and Technology. The OIP staff members work with faculty and staff in the non-academic aspects of program design including housing and transportation, budget development, program promotion, and safety, liability and communication issues. In addition, the OIP manages the application process for short-term study abroad programs.

OIP Program Design with CISAT Academic Review and Approval

Step one in the process is obtaining preliminary approval from the academic unit head. Courses carrying credit for CISAT programs should favorably relate to the department's total course offerings and faculty intending to teach abroad should compare that intended commitment to others that may be areas of priority for their department. These early conversations are important preparation for acquiring the formal signature of approval from the AUH on the “JMU Short-Term International Course Proposal, Academic Description” form, which must be completed in the fall semester prior to the intended summer program (check OIP website for specific deadlines).

Step two calls for a preliminary consultation with the Office of International Programs to explore feasibility and inquire about resources they are uniquely positioned to share. A program proposal might be academically sound, but unwise in light of other international programs underway or impossible to plan within current university or public agency guidelines. The OIP will address those concerns and offer consultation for the completion of the “OIP Logistical Worksheet” and the “Promotional Data Request Form” that must be completed by the start of September prior to the intended summer program (check OIP website for specific deadlines).

Step three is to comply with the “Planning Calendar for Short-Term International Programs” that is issued by OIP, in which the months of September, October and November require careful attention to program development, academic approvals, budget considerations, program publicity and a range of specific questions which must be answered to minimize risks and assure safety and success for all involved.

To obtain all required signatures indicating that the “JMU Short-Term International Course Proposal, Academic Description” form has the appropriate approvals is the responsibility of the faculty member/ program director (PD). These signatures include: the academic unit head; the dean of the college; the dean of General Education Program for GENE credit; and the dean of the College of Graduate and Professional Programs when graduate credit is to be offered. Each course offered requires a separate form and appropriate signatures.

The signature of the CISAT Dean may only be obtained once the proposal has the recommendation of the Undergraduate CISAT C&I Committee Chair or the CISAT Graduate Council Chair, or both if applicable. A proposal might be attractive and affordable, but require adjustments to clarify academic quality and credit issues. These will be addressed as follows:

- Early September: the Dean's Office will circulate to academic unit heads an inventory of active study abroad program proposals known to OIP as originating in CISAT or as needing approval for CISAT cross-listing.
- Academic unit heads will consult with the departmental C&I committee to confirm their endorsement of the proposal. Their endorsement should reflect but need not be limited to their review of the following information:
 1. Full identification (course number, title, description, credits, any pre-requisites) of each course that is to be taught abroad.
 2. Identification of the instructor, or instructional team, describing the expertise and relevant experiences that qualify the individual(s) for this specific instructional role.
 3. Where each course will be taught, including information about location and condition of classroom and/or laboratory facilities.
 4. The dates of the course offerings.
 5. A rationale for teaching each course in this particular location, with reference to the learning resources that exist and will be used there.
 6. A syllabus for each course which details the proposed course topics and activities
 7. A report on the number of hours allocated to class instruction and/or to other structured academic activities to assure that departmental standards are met. The Commonwealth of Virginia mandates a minimum of 38 hours of instruction for the awarding of 3 credits and the plans must equal or exceed that, depending on departmental requirements.
 8. An explanation for how each course will be evaluated in order to comply with the expectations of the academic department.
- Academic unit heads notify the Undergraduate CISAT C&I Committee Chair or the CISAT Graduate Council Chair, or both if applicable, of the outcome of the department level review.
- The Undergraduate CISAT C&I Committee Chair or the CISAT Graduate Council Chair, or both if applicable, prepare a revised inventory of upcoming CISAT study abroad program proposals to present to the Dean with their recommendations for action. Consultation with the members of the Undergraduate CISAT C&I Committee or the CISAT Graduate Council would be anticipated in cases where decisions appear unclear.
- The revised inventory, reflecting final recommendations to the Dean, will be completed by October 1 or as quickly as possible thereafter. The PD may then obtain the Dean's signature to finalize the "JMU Short-Term International Course Proposal, Academic Description."

Repetition of study abroad courses:

Courses that will repeat an offering already approved in a prior year require annual review, even if at the departmental level it is expedited by acceptance of duplicate documentation for items 1-3 and 5-8 above. The very nature of international education suggests that actual in situ experiences and unfolding world events will generate modifications from one course offering to the next. The evaluative reports that fulfill item #8 above should inform course modifications over time and even as rapidly as year to year. Thus, plans to repeat a course will require the same attention to review and approval as do plans to initiate a course. In this way, the CISAT record will always show the most current version and rationale for courses offered abroad for CISAT credit.

Cross-listing of study abroad courses:

Cross-listed courses should be submitted to all corresponding department heads. For cross-listings that involve departments beyond CISAT, the PD will need to also inquire about and conform to the protocol observed in the other academic unit. For cross-listings initiated by a PD outside of CISAT, courses proposed for CISAT credit will require the same approval process as courses which originate in CISAT (refer to top bullet above).

Exceptions:

Please note that this policy may be customized for cases involving individuals who reside in foreign countries and occasionally teach a course in a JMU short term international program. Individual consultation with the appropriate C&I Chair will guide the process in such cases.

Policy approved in May 2010 by the CISAT Leadership Council