

# Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of this *Guide*. In the 11 years since the publication of the last edition, much has changed in education abroad in general and in the short-term program landscape in particular. Internationalization efforts are sweeping U.S. higher education and institutions overseas, with study abroad as an essential component. For most universities, education abroad is now indispensable to academic offerings and a recognized feature for attracting applicants. As U.S. institutions internationalize, short-term study abroad programs provide both faculty and students with international experiences and offer ways to reach students unable or unwilling to study abroad for longer terms. The most recent *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* ([www.iie.org/opendoors](http://www.iie.org/opendoors)) notes that programs of eight weeks or fewer now enroll more than 60 percent of all study abroad participants. Whether short-term programs are less than ideal seems no longer relevant, as a short program is likely the only study abroad experience many, and maybe most, students will have during their university years. It seems imperative, then, to provide students with high-quality, academically rigorous, culturally rich programs that fit within this time frame.

The education abroad (EA) field has continued to professionalize and progress over the past decade, and the design and operation of short-term programs has professionalized along with it. Education abroad staff and providers have become partners with each other, and with faculty, in developing and managing programs. Together, we discuss learning outcomes, require program proposals, enlist providers in organizing immersion experiences, assess risks, train and orient both faculty and students, and do much more that may have been given scant time and attention in the past. All of these developments result in stronger short-term programs with more academic integrity, safety for students, on-the-ground support for faculty, integration with the home curriculum, and intercultural learning opportunities, to name a few improvements.

The foundations of the short-term environment have been built, and we can now approach such programming from a more advanced perspective. And yet, many aspects of the short-term landscape are new and open for discussion as various models are developed,

experimented with, discarded, and tried again. Collaboration between faculty and EA staff continues to evolve as issues of academic quality, intercultural competence, and risk management come to the forefront. Centralized and decentralized models of short-term administration are both currently at work at our institutions. The reader may thus notice a shift in our approach to short-term program development and administration in this new edition of the *Guide*, as we delve into the complexities of short-term programming that is ever more embedded in curriculum and administrative processes. The chapters in this edition are still designed to help faculty, nonfaculty program leaders, and EA staff understand the myriad components necessary to develop and operate short-term programs, but some of the very basic “how-to” lists supplied in earlier editions (step-by-step instructions and checklists) have been intentionally omitted, and others have been added to chapter appendices. Much of that type of information can now be found online from institutions that are already advanced in offering short-term programs.

## **Defining Short-Term**

Traditionally, short-term programs have been characterized by students traveling as a group led by a faculty (or staff) member from the home institution, with that leader usually teaching at least one course. Programs may be based at one location, either partnered with a host institution or operating independently, or they may move around. As we will see, however, there are many variations on this model and new permutations are constantly in development.

The definition of “short term” has changed and widened in scope over the years. Beginning in 2011, the *Open Doors* report expanded its definition from “summer,” “January term,” and “eight weeks or less” to now include categories for programs of less than two weeks, and those lasting from two to eight weeks. (See <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/US-Study-Abroad/Duration-of-Study-Abroad/2008-14>). *Open Doors* also distinguishes between programs held in the summer (a traditional time for short term) from those taking place at other times of year, recognizing the growth of embedded (mid-semester) programs and those immediately preceding or following a regular academic term. There is no one-size-fits-all approach to the time or length for short-term programs. For purposes of this edition, we define such programs loosely as those that are shorter than a standard semester or quarter.

## **Distinguishing Short-Term**

There are many existing resources to support EA professionals in their overall work, including guides and tools to prepare students to travel, assess learning, track applications, manage risk, address health and safety, etc. This *Guide* does not purport to recreate or replace these. And, while this *Guide* is broad in scope, it is not a general “how-to” manual for education abroad. Instead, the focus is primarily on the challenges particular to short-term programs. While these will vary significantly from campus to campus, they will likely include at least some of the following elements.

## ***Time***

As the name implies, short-term programs are short—certainly shorter than a full term, and maybe as short as one week. This means that time is a precious resource. There is less time for a student or a group to recover from jet lag, a medical emergency, a conduct issue, a weather-related flight delay, or the cancellation of a scheduled visit. While advance planning and contingency options are always important in education abroad, *time* takes on more significance for short-term programs.

## ***Leadership***

While the leadership structure of short-term programs varies, the traditional model comprises a teaching faculty member traveling with a group of students; this model places a high level of responsibility on an individual who is probably not accustomed to working with students in a nonacademic setting. While abroad, program leaders may be faced with situations typically managed on campus by entire offices of specially trained staff: mental health crises, roommate disputes, and accounting for day-to-day expenditures of hundreds or thousands of dollars, for example. This reality requires significant support and training for program leaders—particularly so if the faculty director is the sole instructor, group leader, and manager of the program.

## ***Participants***

While the demographic profile of short-term program participants will differ among institutions, these programs will often attract some students who would be less inclined to apply to a longer program. One can consider why a shorter program might be particularly appealing to certain populations, such as to:

- *nontraditional students* with job and/or family responsibilities that prevent a longer time away;
- *students with restrictive curricula* who find it difficult to fulfill graduation requirements on semester programs (for example, engineering, nursing, or elementary education majors);
- *students with little travel experience*, or whose families have not traveled internationally, for whom it is reassuring to travel with a known faculty member from the home institution;
- *athletes* with practice and game schedules that prevent long absences from campus;
- *working students* who cannot forego lost income for a full semester; and
- *graduate students* who may have semester duties such as teaching or research assistantships, or who must devote long break periods to dissertation writing.

This diversity of participants will necessarily influence how short-term programs are conceived, developed, and managed.

## ***Logistics and Support***

Although some short-term programs remain in one location, others move around, sometimes quite frequently. It is not unusual for a four-week program to include six or more locations, none of which may involve a local host institution or partner organization. This means that the program leader must often manage without the infrastructure that typically exists on longer programs. Depending on how well established the program is, the provider support available, and the leader's familiarity with the site, the program may have few local resources to rely upon for assistance. These are especially important considerations in cases of emergency or crisis and speak to the importance of selecting quality providers and ensuring robust training for program leaders.

In sum, this volume provides practical resources for developing and administering successful programs abroad within the context of short term.

## **Other Terminology**

Since NAFSA's publication of the 2nd edition of the *Guide* (2009), our colleagues at the Forum on Education Abroad have published its glossary (see <https://forumea.org/resources/glossary/>), which includes many of the terms used here. However, given that the chapters were authored by contributors from a wide variety of backgrounds and institutions, we have opted for flexibility rather than uniformity in terminology.

The terms *faculty leader* and *faculty director* can be considered interchangeable for the purposes of this volume. Some chapters will refer instead (or also) to *program leaders*, which subsumes faculty and also includes staff who might take on this role at some institutions. The terms *program* and *experience* may be used interchangeably as well. Likewise, *study abroad* and *education abroad* may be used to denote the same types of programs, though the former is typically a subset of the latter and includes only credit-bearing programs. Finally, it should be noted that much of the content that was developed for overseas programs is also relevant to managing domestic travel study (sometimes referred to as *study away*) programs, which take place in the United States, even if the latter are not mentioned specifically.

## **How to Use This Guide—What's New**

This guide is designed primarily for staff and faculty working in higher education in the United States (or with such institutions) who are responsible for developing, leading, or managing short-term education abroad programs. In addition, it may also be useful for those in upper administration trying to gain a better understanding of the nuts and bolts of undertaking short-term programs. Others involved with educational travel, such as alumni or secondary school programs, or community service experiences, will find much of the content relevant, apart perhaps from Part I: *Working Within Higher Education*.

We have maintained the Guide's basic structure from the past edition, working "from the outside in," so to speak—from the theoretical and strategic to the more detailed and pragmatic. The new chapter reviewing the literature on short-term program rationale

and assessment recognizes the scholarship that has emerged in this area over the past decade, while laying a foundation for better understanding the short-term landscape. Since short-term programs are often now an integral piece of a college or university's internationalization plan, the place of short-term programs within such goals should be considered before embarking on program development. Thus, Part I discusses short-term in the larger higher education context, as well as how to build the campus collaborations and infrastructure necessary to undergird such programs and ensure their success.

Part II: *Principles of Academic Course Design* focuses on the central academic component of short-term programs: syllabus development with an eye to intercultural competencies, the integration of host site resources into course content, and strategies for assessing participant learning. Part III: *Program Development* turns to more practical aspects of planning, including marketing programs and making logistical and financial arrangements. Finally, Part IV: *Preparing Faculty and Students* focuses on predeparture application and orientation processes, leader training, and health, safety, and risk management concerns.

New subjects and approaches warrant new chapters. We have substantially revised the chapters on course design, cross-cultural competence, assessment, alternative program models, and the application/acceptance process (chapters 5, 6, 7, 8, and 13, respectively). As the relationships among providers, faculty leaders, and institutions have matured, we now include a separate chapter on working with providers, in addition to one devoted to making logistical arrangements (chapters 9 and 10, respectively). In addition, the *reflections* section has been expanded significantly to include essays from a college president, a seasoned education abroad professional, a host university abroad, a faculty leader, and a student.

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