

Guidelines for International Education

Volunteer State Community College

The guidelines herein establish the operational procedures for international activities and are reported annually to the TBR Office of Student Success.

Organizational Structure

The Dean of Social Science and Education oversees international education, including study abroad. Vol State's international education committee reviews and recommends policies and procedures, ensuring that the College maximizes its international education fee resources.

The Vice President of Academic Affairs appoints a faculty member to serve as a coordinator as outlined in the position description (Appendix A).

Financial Guidelines

Vol State assesses an international education fee to each student enrolled for credit. Collectively, the fees make up the international education budget. Subject to TBR policy 2:08:10:00, funds are used to support study abroad scholarships, globalization efforts for the campus, professional development of the faculty, and related administrative costs. An annual budget is developed by the Vol State international education committee and approved by the Dean of Social Science and Education, the Vice President of Academic Affairs, and the Vice President of Business and Finance.

The Vol State Business Office is responsible for establishing and managing financial policies and operational procedures specific to international education, subject to TBR policy.

The college maintains a financial reserve of \$20,000 for program emergencies. Expenditures cannot be made from the emergency fund without permission of the President or their designees. The College is under no obligation to provide financial assistance to any faculty, student, or staff member claiming an emergency and participating in an unapproved study abroad program.

Campus and Online Program Guidelines

The international education program at Vol State strives to provide students with opportunities that will enable them to foster and develop a global perspective. We encourage activities that will:

1. Engage students in thinking about the greater world
2. Help prepare students for global competition
3. Increase cultural understanding and awareness
4. Facilitate discourse surrounding global topics that students may not encounter in a traditional classroom

Examples include special projects, guest speakers, food for cultural events, presentations, etc. Vol State faculty and staff member may apply to Student Services for funding or to assist with event planning.

Study Abroad Program Guidelines

Introduction to Study Abroad

Vol State's international education program includes opportunities for students to participate in study abroad. Study abroad programs expose students to diverse people and cultures, increase their knowledge of those cultures, and broaden their worldviews. Student and faculty participation in study abroad brings greater global awareness to the campus community and enriches our learning environments. Study abroad programs are academically based, so students enroll in and complete academic courses during their travel experience.

There are two types of study abroad programs, both administered through the Tennessee Consortium for International Studies (TnCIS). Processes and procedures may vary between program types and have been developed to support compliance with the Tennessee Board of Regents (TBR) Policy 2:08:10:00: Development and Operation of Off Campus International Educational Programs and Policy 2.08.20.00: System Faculty & Academic Staff Abroad.

Partnership Programs – Vol State faculty-led study abroad programs administered as an institution specific partnership

Consortium Programs – TnCIS organized summer programs consisting of faculty and students from multiple institutions

Courses from all academic fields may be considered for study abroad. Participation in study abroad requires registration in Vol State coursework, whether for academic credit or continuing education credit. Courses for credit should align to student's program of study or meet general education requirements.

Program faculty develop course syllabi according to the academic standards of the college, their academic division, and TnCIS. Credit is offered for individual courses within study abroad programs with the full measure of demand and academic rigor, not merely for the purpose of travel or touring in a foreign location. Therefore, a strong emphasis on academic integrity throughout the study abroad experience is expected. The number of instructional hours required is equal to that for academic credit as defined in the Vol State faculty handbook: one semester hour of credit consists of a minimum of 750 minutes (12.5 hours) of classroom instruction.

Approved syllabi are maintained in the respective division office and by TnCIS as applicable.

Service learning may be included in approved courses and, if used, must be included in the course syllabus.

Grade appeals will follow existing procedures outlined in VSCC policy, see III:15:06 Grade Changes.

Faculty Applications for Vol State-TnCIS Partnership Programs

Only full-time Vol State faculty members may apply to teach abroad.

Steps to Develop a Vol State-TnCIS Partnership Program

1. Consult with the Dean of Social Science and Education, the Study Abroad Coordinator, and the Executive Director for TnCIS about your idea 18-months or more in advance.

2. Apply to the international education committee for funding and support by October 15th for potential programs in the following academic year (approximately 18 months in advance).
 - a. Only one program application is required at this step, even if multiple courses and faculty members are involved. Requirements include a written explanation why you have chosen the location, why it needs to be part of a partnership program, course modifications, and a recruitment plan.
 - b. Present your proposal to the International Committee at the November meeting.
 - c. The international education committee will review all requests based on available budget, program costs, timeframe, student impact, stability of the site, and learning objectives associated with the proposed program.
 - d. If approved, the program faculty will continue to the TnCIS application process.
3. Complete individual TnCIS partnership program applications by February 1 for *each* faculty member. Requirements include:
 - a. Signed Partnership Program Institutional Approval Form
 - b. Short form CV
 - c. Official Transcripts for SACSCOC verification purposes
 - d. A syllabus for each course using the TnCIS Syllabus Outline
4. Collaboratively plan the program and course details with the TnCIS administration and Vol State's Dean of Social Science & Education.
5. Recruit! All faculty are expected to actively participate in recruitment through class visits, media promotion, information sessions, and student interviews.
6. Complete all mandatory TnCIS faculty orientations and training requirements.

Faculty Benefits for Vol State-TnCIS Partnership Programs

Faculty members on 9/10-month contracts will be paid at their normal overload rate to teach Vol State study abroad classes in the regular semester if the additional teaching assignment puts them in overload status.

Faculty members on 9/10-month contracts will be paid regular overload rate (not 1/32 rate) if teaching in Vol State study abroad classes during the summer term.

Faculty members on 12-month contracts are not eligible for additional pay for teaching Vol State faculty-led study abroad classes.

Salaries and benefits of program faculty will be paid from applicable departmental funds unless there is an applicable restricted grant for the faculty salary and benefits.

Other faculty benefits (with prior travel authorization) include:

- Any required visitor's visa (cost reimbursement)
- Round trip international airline ticket out of Nashville, Tennessee
- Transportation/Lodging to and from the departure airport
- Airport parking
- Accommodations and meals based on the program budget
- All transportation and entry tickets on sponsored excursions
- Limited health insurance while abroad

Faculty are personally responsible for the following expenses:

- Passport
- Health insurance (beyond the limited insurance provided abroad)
- Transportation/Lodging to and from the faculty/student orientations
- Personal spending money

Any faculty or staff member who will be requesting reimbursement for travel related expenses must have an approved travel authorization on file with the VSCC Business Office prior to the date(s) of travel. An employee traveling with students on study abroad may be advanced 100% of the amount of the authorization.

The employee must complete a Travel Expense Report and submit it with all appropriate receipts within 30 days following their return to the United States. Reimbursements are subject to normal Vol State Business Office and TBR policies.

Risk Management Review

TnCIS is responsible for all aspects of a program's risk management.

TnCIS Consortium Model Programs

TnCIS study abroad programs provide life-changing academic experiences for faculty and students from across the state. Vol State faculty are strongly encouraged to apply to teach in a TnCIS program prior to proposing a VSCC faculty-led program in order to gain experience.

Faculty Applications for TnCIS Consortium Programs

Faculty members who desire to may apply to TnCIS for consideration and are encouraged to review their website thoroughly for details. The application will require, at a minimum, the following items:

1. Completed online application,
2. Signed Institutional Approval Form,
3. Short form CV,
4. Official Transcripts, and
5. A syllabus for each course using the TnCIS Syllabus Outline.

Faculty Benefits for TnCIS Consortium Programs

Faculty members on 9/10-month contracts will be paid through a dual services contract with TnCIS during summer if hired by TnCIS to teach in that program.

Faculty members on 12-month contracts who wish to teach through TnCIS in summer may do so with permission of their supervisor as part of their regular summer work at no additional pay or may take annual leave and/or leave without pay to accept TnCIS summer work as outside employment if approved through the outside employment and leave request processes.

Two to three VSCC TnCIS student scholarships are guaranteed for each Vol State faculty member approved to teach in a TnCIS program, depending on resources, number of faculty teaching, and student eligibility. If no

students apply or the faculty member's course/program is canceled, the remaining scholarships may be used for applications to other programs. Refer to tncis.org for a current listing of additional faculty benefits.

Student Applications for Study Abroad Programs

Vol State students are encouraged to review the TnCIS and Vol State websites for detailed information and to apply for study abroad participation. Scholarships are available to Vol State students who qualify through a competitive application process as outlined in the *Scholarship Application Eligibility and Process* below.

Application Information

A complete TnCIS consortium program student application consists of:

1. Completed online application at tncis.org
2. Nonrefundable \$100 application fee paid at [Vol State's Business Office](#)
3. Official transcript received by TnCIS from the [Vol State's Records & Registration Office](#)
4. Online TnCIS recommendation form completed by a Vol State professor

Deadlines for TnCIS consortium program applicants are posted on tncis.org.

TnCIS is responsible for the administration, collection, and storage of all required participant forms according to their operational guidelines and TBR policy.

Participation Eligibility

Unless otherwise stated on the TnCIS website, students eligible for TnCIS consortium programs:

- are currently enrolled or accepted Vol State,
- have a minimum 2.0 GPA indicated on an official transcript at the time of application and are in "good standing" – this includes academic and disciplinary matters,
- have completed a minimum of 12 college level credit hours (by the start of the program), and
- will be 18 years old by the start of the program.

Non-credit students are not eligible to participate in TnCIS consortium programs.

Vol State students who graduate in May are permitted to participate in study abroad programs the summer after their graduation. Recent graduates may be required to declare a new major to enroll.

Course Registration

Accepted participants must register for their academic courses prior to departure. Vol State students may only register for courses included in the VSCC catalog.

Scholarship Application Eligibility and Process

A limited number of scholarships are available each year to offset the program cost for eligible students.

Vol State students who apply to study abroad with TnCIS will automatically have their application evaluated for scholarship eligibility. To qualify for study abroad scholarships from the International Education fee, a student must:

- be currently enrolled at Vol State
- have completed a minimum of 12 college level credit hours by the start of the program
- have a minimum 2.5 GPA at the time of application and award date
- be in “good standing” at the time of application and award date – this includes academic and disciplinary matters
- be 18 years old by the start of the program
- have completed the program application by the posted deadline

Some programs may require higher standards and additional qualifications for eligibility. All exceptions to this policy will be clearly posted on the Vol State website for international education.

Study abroad scholarships will be based on available funds, number of applicants per program, and applicant eligibility. Additionally, students may be asked to participate in an interview with a member of the International Education Committee as part of the award process. Scholarships will be prioritized for first-time study abroad participants who have not previously received a study abroad scholarship and those who apply for classes or programs led by Vol State faculty.

A student may become disqualified from participation and lose their scholarship if they fail to secure a passport, complete all required documentation on time, satisfy payment deadlines, or meet all posted eligibility requirements.

Continuing Education participants and students in dual enrollment are not eligible for International Education fee-based scholarships from Vol State.

Tuition and Financial Aid

Due to the complexity of financial aid regulations, individual students are responsible for consulting with the Vol State office of Financial Aid regarding the impact of study abroad registration, costs, and/or scholarships awarded.

In addition to the study abroad program fee, all students enrolled in Vol State-TnCIS Partnership programs pay a minimum of tuition and applicable mandatory fees for their course.

Vol State will not collect tuition for students enrolled in TnCIS consortium-model programs. Regular tuition and any regular mandatory fees will be assessed and charged to an institutional scholarship expense account. However, TnCIS consortium-model participants will be assessed a TnCIS program fee.

Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals applying for study abroad program participation who have learning, psychological, physical and/or other disabilities may be eligible for accommodations that provide equal access to educational programs and activities. It is the student’s responsibility to include their request for services at the time of program application and to self-identify with the VSCC Access Center to receive accommodations and services in accordance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act (ADA/AA).

Potential issues related to accommodations requests must be settled after application and program selection and before departure. The college may restrict participation for those determined to be at

excessive medical risk. A realistic understanding of international and in-country accessibility limitations will be included in information sessions, orientations, and during in-country orientations.

For further information, please contact the Vol State Access Center at (615) 230-3472, or visit the office, which is in the Ramer Administration Building, room 143.

Student Recruitment

The Study Abroad Coordinator will organize student recruitment efforts such as email, social media campaigns, announcements, campus events, and information sessions. Past study abroad participants are asked to help recruit future participants at campus events, in video announcements, and in class meetings. Faculty who are planning to teach abroad are expected to contribute heavily to recruitment. Each faculty member must schedule and host an information session on their respective campus about the country they will be teaching in. Each faculty member will be responsible for scheduling a room, adding their session to the campus events calendar, and working with the study abroad coordinator to ensure that sessions are evenly spread out from mid-September until the end of January/first of February.

Orientation and Training

Orientation for students and training for faculty and staff may include, but is not limited to, health and safety management, existence of and assumption of risks, insurance requirements, potential causes for early program termination, paying for health care while abroad, student conduct and expectations, disciplinary procedures ranging from reporting to expulsion, the appeal process, travel tips, and cultural/regional information relevant to the program.

As the administrative partner, TnCIS will schedule and conduct all student and faculty orientation and training sessions. Student orientation is mandatory for all study abroad programs. Failure to attend will result in disqualification from the program. All students participating in study abroad programs are subject to the Vol State code of conduct and disciplinary procedures.

All study abroad participants are subject to the college student code of conduct and all other requirements established by the program. Vol State policy references:

- III:00:05 Student Conduct and Disciplinary Sanctions
- III:00:06 Student Complaint Procedures

Cause for Early Program Termination or Emergency Evacuation

A study abroad program may terminate if the director, in consultation with college administration and TnCIS, determines that it may be unsafe for the program to continue. Emergency evacuation procedures will be in place for each country. Coordination will be managed by the TnCIS office with applicable college personnel, the insurance carrier, the U.S. Embassy, and as necessary the U.S. State Department. Situations leading to program cancellation consideration and emergency evacuation can include, but are not limited to, broad civil unrest, declaration of martial law, armed conflict in the country, natural disaster, and public health emergency. Each program director and faculty member participating in a study abroad program will have a copy of the crisis communications plan with them while abroad.

Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Misconduct

Discrimination, harassment in any form, and sexual misconduct are prohibited as defined by Vol State policy and listed online at www.volstate.edu/policies. Behavior involving discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct should be reported to a VSCC representative immediately. Vol State strictly prohibits these offenses. Any allegation of sexual misconduct, harassment, or discrimination will be investigated and adjudicated according to VSCC policy addressed in the VSCC Student Handbook.

Any incident of discrimination, harassment, or sexual misconduct may be directly reported to the Vol State Title IX/EEO Coordinator:

Human Resources

Manager of Employee Relations & Equity

1480 Nashville Pike

Ramer Administration Building, Room 139

Gallatin, TN 37066

titleIXcoordinator@volstate.edu

(615) 230-3592 Office

The Title IX/EEO Coordinator will be available to receive incident reports 24 hours a day.

Call 615-230-3595 during non-business hours to be connected with the Title IX/EEO Coordinator.

Victims may alternatively report incidents to any supervisory employee of the College.

Research

No research is authorized on-site in any country for any program without Vol State IRB approval and adherence to HHS and NIH standards. Any research activity to be included in any program must be reflected in the course syllabus, requires IRB approval, must follow HHS and NIH standards, and must meet any required country protocols prior to initiation. Course requirements that include interviewing cooperating citizens, educators, public employees, and students in a class setting and involve guided dialog that is designed to explore the country and support cultural immersion with cooperating assistance are not considered research activities needing approval.

Travel Guests

Consistent with TBR policy, spouses or significant others may accompany the director or faculty during study abroad programs when traveling more than 30 consecutive days and with the written approval of the VPAA, the President, and the Executive Director of TnCIS. Vol State assumes no liability for the spouse or significant other approved for travel. All expenses are the sole responsibility of the individual. Neither Vol State funds nor student fees may be used to cover expenses related to the spouse/significant other's participation. There is no provision for inclusion of dependent or non-dependent children in the programs.

Students participating in study abroad are prohibited from traveling with a guest, spouse, or dependent.

Use of Technology Abroad

The International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) and the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) are two important U.S. State Department export control laws that affect the manufacturing, sales, and distribution of technology. The program director will work jointly with the information technology (IT) department, TnCIS, and TBR general council as required by ITAR to determine whether any device, component, or document related to study abroad programs requires a license or other government approval for export or import as defined in those regulations.

FERPA

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines established by the College must be followed for all international education programs, including study abroad. Information related to a student's educational record or personally identifiable information will only be released to those persons designated by the student in a signed, written permission form.

Media Inquiries

Information releases related to program status or any incident involving a Vol State student, staff, or faculty member during overseas operation and on return will be managed by Vol State Public Relations and Student Services offices with the approval of the VPAA and the President or their designees in accordance with Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Memorandum of Understanding

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) should be in place for each institution that has a substantive and continuing hosting or participating relationship with a college program. A contractual relationship in which funds are expended requires a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). Completed MOU and MOA documents must be vetted through TBR and approved by the VPAA and President or their designee. MOU and MOA documents are retained in the VSCC office of Social Science & Education and the office of Purchasing and Contracts. Copies are forwarded to the TBR Vice Chancellor's office and TnCIS.

Third Party Providers

The college makes no endorsement, makes no approval by silence, and assumes no liability for any student or faculty participation in any non-approved study abroad or other international program provided by any third-party (non-college) provider.

Faculty working in or reporting outside employment that includes work in a third-party international program or study abroad does not constitute college acceptance of responsibility or liability for safe operation of any program operated by a third party.

International Transfer Credit

[VSCC Policy III 15 09](#): Transfer and alternative sources of credit must be followed in considering any request for granting credit for non VSCC study abroad program.

Appendix A International Education Coordinator Job Description

Position Summary

The Study Abroad Coordinator at Volunteer State Community College works with the international education committee to ensure success in meeting the goal of providing all students with a global perspective and reports to the Dean of Social Science and Education.

Study Abroad Coordinator Duties and Responsibilities

1. Serve on the Vol State International Education committee as Ex Officio.
2. Serve on the High Impact Practices (HIPs) subcommittee of the Teaching & Learning Center (TLC).
3. Serve on the TnCIS Advisory Council and attend Spring and Fall meetings.
4. Represent Vol State as the TnCIS campus contact, which includes responsibility for student and faculty application management, fee reporting, grade reporting, and regular communication with applicants.
5. Coordinate and host student recruiting sessions to promote study abroad.
6. Advise prospective study abroad students and assist with applications, program and course selection, travel readiness, and other issues as needed.
7. Advise prospective study abroad faculty and assist with applications and syllabi development, budget items, and travel readiness as appropriate for the program.
8. Administer the Vol State study abroad scholarship application and evaluation processes.
9. Coordinate the annual approval of the study abroad course list with division deans and the records office. Ensure accurate HIP coding on study abroad courses.
10. Assist students with registration for study abroad courses.
11. Maintain the International Education web pages (volstate.edu/international) in collaboration with the campus IE coordinator.
12. Write and submit the annual International Education report for TBR.
13. Maintain a current, high level of knowledge in the field of study abroad.
14. Other duties as assigned.

Time Commitment

Account for approximately 5-6 hours per week during each fall and spring semester for a total of 90 hours per term. Weekly workload may vary due to factors such as heavy recruitment periods, conference dates, etc.

Compensation

Benefits include release time of one 3-credit course per fall and spring semester and a \$750 stipend for 30 hours of summer work.

Term and Appointment

The Vice President of Academic Affairs appoints a faculty member for a 3-year term based on his or her study abroad and administrative experience, demonstrated leadership at Vol State, and the recommendation of the international education committee.

Appendix B

Volunteer State Community College International Education Program Crisis Communications Plan

College Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs
Social Science & Education Office
Dr. Rhonda Gregory, Dean of Social Science & Education
Caudill 222F
Office 615-230-3787
Cell 6158-339-0647

Dr. Terri Day
Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs
Office 615-230-3557
Executive Assistant Adia Hanson 615-230-3773

Dr. Russ Deaton
Interim President
Office 615-230-3500

Campus Police 615-230-3595

A Crisis Communications plan is necessary for approved Volunteer State Community College (VSCC) International Education Study Abroad/Learning Abroad programs that are operating outside of the USA.

“A crisis is a sudden, generally unanticipated event that profoundly and negatively affects a study abroad participant(s) and has the potential to result in serious injury or death. Crises shall also include, but not be limited to, situations involving illness; assault, substance misuse/abuse; accident; natural disaster; taking of hostages; and the death of a student, staff member or a member of a participant’s immediate family.” (Source, Regent University).

Further, a crisis may also include, but not be limited to arrest of a program participant, detainment by foreign authorities, incidents that limit entry or departure for a foreign country, missing program participants, a need to vacate housing or transit coach, train, or car.

VSCC has created procedures with guidelines to be used by the on-site director and campus personnel to establish, maintain and as necessary re-establish contact between the college and the designated director in a foreign country during the program and especially during a crisis.

The following are types of crises or critical incidents that need communication between the college administration and the Program Director as soon as possible.

Emergency: a genuine or imminent risk to participants or a disturbance that has occurred.

Examples:

- Serious physical/emotional illness or accident
- Trauma or physical assault
- Missing student for unknown reasons
- Death of a student or other program member
- Political coup or civil unrest
- Natural Disaster
- Terrorism
- Incarceration
- Kidnapping
- Pandemic

Perceived emergency: No immediate significant risk, but perceived as threatening by a student, family, college officials or others.

Examples:

- Sensational media reporting of an overseas event
- Distortion of information provided by a participant
- Anxiety of family member or others with little or no international experience

Note: Perceived emergencies can affect students, family members, and staff as strongly as real emergencies. These need to be treated seriously and responses should be made in a timely manner.

To establish and maintain timely communication during a crisis situation, the following practices and procedures are in place at VSCC and are used to assist a clear flow of accurate information during a crisis situation.

The designated on-site director for each program working with VSCC administration will:

- Have a cell phone capable of international contact with key college personnel. The phone must be with the on-site Director at all times.
- Have emergency contact information for the U. S. Embassy, local police, and local EMS personnel in each foreign country visited.
- Maintain a copy of phone contact information and email information for the Coordinator, Dean, VPAA, and the President. If the Dean and Coordinator are out of the country, the VPAA or his designee will be the primary contact person at VSCC. A copy of all contact information must be held by a second person traveling as a back-up source of information. There is a 24/7 contact availability with on-campus administration and the Campus Police as a back-up plan to reach the college administration in an emergency.
- Maintain a copy of college forms completed by each student with emergency contact information, medical history, and surrogacy.
- With the assistance of the Social Science & Education office at VSCC, provide the US Embassy in all countries involved in a program with program dates, phone contact information, participant names and a full itinerary of the program.
- Maintain the emergency contact information for the travel insurance vendor.
- Maintain phone contact and address information for any host families, hotels, hostels, transit providers, and partner educational institutions.
- Create and maintain an incident report for each emergency.

- Assure that college communication related to any emergency or perceived emergency from or to family members of participants or to the public must be made through the Social Science & Education office with the knowledge and approval of the VPAA or his/her designee.

Updated September 2023