

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 support the University's emphasis on global engagement.

This guide provides basic advice on the process for developing an embedded course. Penn State Global-Education Abroad provides extensive information on their site on [how to propose an embedded program](#), which is referenced throughout this document. Education Abroad has also created an [embedded programs resource website](#) with more specific guidelines.

The primary point of contact for Liberal Arts faculty interested in developing an embedded course will be the Liberal Arts Global Experiences Coordinator in the Career Enrichment Network, Brandon McCartney (bmm6341@psu.edu).

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, most of the academic content is taught either on campus or online during the semester – whereas in a freestanding program, all 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 must adhere to certain University-level and College-level policies regarding 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 is 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 new course or a 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 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.
- **Embedded Course Syllabi** - Faculty are expected to create a syllabus for their embedded course – whether it is for 1 or 3 credits – to outline the academic components of the embedded travel program and how students' grades will be assessed. The syllabus should also include information related to behavioral and safety guidelines for the program. A sample syllabus can be provided.

Timing of Travel and Academic Credits

- **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 into consideration that adding an additional 0.5 or 1-credit course during the summer semester will add an additional tuition cost for the students. Additional details about tuition are outlined in the “Embedded Travel Program Fees and Tuition Costs” section.

Use of Approved Program Providers

- **Required Program Providers** - Working with a third-party travel program provider is strongly encouraged 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 & Insurance Requirements** - All Penn State programs run in coordination with a third-party provider require an official contract signed by Penn State and the third-party provider. Contracts and agreements with program providers or other outside agencies must be reviewed by the University Procurement Office before signatures are completed. Similarly, contracts with partner universities for services such as housing and transportation must be articulated through a Procurement-approved contract. For a contract to be approved by Procurement, the provider must adhere to the University's standard of maintaining a minimum of

\$10M in general liability insurance. In addition, transportation providers must carry a minimum of \$1M in liability insurance. The Global Experiences Coordinator can provide recommendations for PSU-approved program providers. The contract approval process can take several weeks, so it is important to plan well in advance.

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 or graduate TAs 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. If a faculty member or graduate student is not available to serve as the second program leader, the Global Experiences Coordinator could potentially serve as the second program leader.

Student Participant Requirements

- **Minimum Number of Student Participants** - 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.

Embedded Travel Program Fees and Tuition Costs

- **Embedded Program Student Fees** - The student fee for the embedded program will be determined by the budget proposal provided by the program provider. The embedded program fee typically includes the cost of accommodation, educational activities, in-country transportation, guides, taxes, etc. Some meals may be included. Flights for the program may be included but are typically purchased separately. Faculty leaders are typically responsible for coordination of flights. Course tuition is not included. When promoting the program to students, it is important to clarify what is and is not included in the program fee and to provide an estimated cost for additional expenses – for example flights, meals, transportation to/from the domestic airport and course tuition are typically not included – so that students understand the estimated total cost of the program and what they will be expected to pay out-of-pocket.
- **Embedded Program Leader Fees** - The fees for the program leaders may be paid for using the LA Embedded Program Leader Travel Support Funds (see below) or departmental funds; the program leader fee may be slightly higher than the student fee if it includes a single accommodation. In certain circumstances, the program leader may request for the leaders' fees to be amortized among the students' fees, though this results in a higher fee per student.
- **Cost of Academic Credits** - Tuition costs for academic credits are **not** included in any embedded travel program fees. If additional credit is earned during the fall or spring semester, full-time students enrolled in 12 credits or more will not incur any additional tuition cost because it will be included in their full-time semester tuition. Part-time students, however, would incur additional tuition costs because they are paying per-credit. Additionally, any credits earned during the

summer semester – including an additional 0.5 or 1-credit for travel in May – will add an additional tuition cost for most students because they are typically not full-time students during the summer. Faculty leaders should keep this in mind when considering travel programs in May. Tuition costs are unique for each student and can be found on the [Penn State tuition website](#).

Embedded Travel Program Fee Billing

- **Embedded Program Fee Billing** - The Global Experiences Coordinator will pay the invoice to the provider for student and/or faculty leader fees in advance of the program out of the Career Enrichment Network budget. The GEC will bill students' bursar accounts for the program fee, plus a 2.5% contingency fee, which will reimburse the Career Enrichment Network budget. Students will provide authorization to be billed and will be responsible for paying the program fee by the designated due date. If the program leaders' fees are included in the invoice, the Career Enrichment Network will either deduct the fee amount from the program leaders' travel support funds (if they are a Liberal Arts leader) or will request reimbursement from the program leaders' department (if they are not a Liberal Arts leader).

Program Leader Family Travel Policy

- **Family Travel Policy Adherence** - Per University policy, education abroad program leaders are not permitted to bring spouses, children, or family members on Education Abroad programs. If a program leader would like to request an exception to this University policy, they must submit a request form to Education Abroad at least six weeks before program departure. This request form can be provided by the Global Experiences Coordinator. It is expected that program leaders adhere to Education Abroad's policies in order to receive Liberal Arts funding.

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, securing University approvals, promoting the course, and scheduling students. A detailed checklist and timeline can be provided. 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 form, the Liberal Arts Global Experiences Coordinator from the Career Enrichment Network, Brandon McCartney, will contact you to further discuss your idea and share information and policies related to proposing an embedded course. Proposals will be reviewed and accepted based on the overall quality and feasibility of the program, as well as the availability of funding that has been budgeted for Liberal Arts embedded programs.
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 program providers to generate a proposal for the course travel coordination.

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; it is intended to cover most, if not all, of the faculty leader's travel and in-country costs.
- **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. 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. Some program leaders may elect to use these funds to cover travel fees if there is no department financial support and their costs exceed the \$2,000 travel support funds.
- **Funding Eligibility** - 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 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. Faculty leaders do not need to apply for funding in advance. 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.

Penn State Global Faculty Travel Grants

- **Penn State Global Faculty Travel Grants** - Penn State Global 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

Penn State Global 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 application deadline is September 15 at 5:00 pm ET. Applications and eligibility requirements can be found on the [Penn State Global Website](#). Faculty leaders are encouraged to apply for these grants, as Liberal Arts faculty leaders have been successful in earning these awards in past years.

STUDENT FUNDING SUPPORT

- **Embedded Programs Scholarship** - Students participating in embedded programs should be strongly encouraged to apply for the [Embedded Programs Scholarship](#) through Penn State Global. This is a \$1,000 scholarship available for undergraduate students participating in 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 are strongly 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 who have minors in the College of the Liberal Arts are not eligible for this funding. Students must complete the enrichment funding application to receive this funding. Incomplete applications or applications without thoughtful responses will not receive funding, so students should be encouraged to take the necessary time to complete their applications fully.

TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION GUIDELINES

Embedded program leaders may coordinate their group's travel and airport transportation in a variety of manners based on the preferences of the leader. The Global Experiences Coordinator may provide guidance and suggestions for travel and transportation options, but it is the responsibility of the program leader to coordinate the logistics and communicate the plan to the students. All embedded program group travel and transportation must adhere to University Risk Management policies. Program leaders should wait to book all travel until after the program has at least 10 committed students. The information below outlines important guidelines and policies to consider when coordinating travel and transportation.

Flight Travel Guidelines

Program leaders may decide if their group will travel to their destination together or separately, and if the travel will be coordinated as a group or individually. The guidelines below outline the possible options, along with the benefits and drawbacks of each, that program leaders may choose. Program leaders are responsible for communicating the travel plan with their students.

- **Group Travel, Group Booking** – Program leaders may require the students to all take the same flights to/from their destination. Leaders can also utilize a travel agency to coordinate a group booking. The benefits of this option include travelling together, having the support of a travel agency to assist with any flight delays or changes, and having consistent flight

rates from the agency. The drawbacks include more administrative and logistical involvement from the program leader.

- **Travel Agency Options** – Penn State’s preferred travel agency is [Anthony Travel](#). Please be aware that Antony Travel will only accept one credit card for a group booking, which can complicate payments for group flights. Therefore, we recommend only using Anthony Travel if faculty leaders first purchase their own individual flights and then have students separately book and purchase the same flight tickets through the airline. Faculty leaders can use a different agency, though please be aware that [Penn State departments may require a cost comparison](#) if the flight is over \$1,000 to document that the fare is reasonable. One travel agency which does allow students to pay for group flights individually is [Student Universe](#).
- **Group Travel, Individual Booking** – Program leaders may require the students to all take the same flights to/from their destination, though they may ask the students to book and pay for the specific flights individually (without a travel agency). The benefits of this option include travelling together and less administrative time for the program leader. The drawbacks include that students may have different rates for the same flights, and it does not include the support of a travel agency in the event of a delay.
- **Individual Travel, Individual Booking** – Program leaders may also require students to coordinate their own flights, if they arrive/depart within a specific period at a specific airport. Benefits of this option include allowing students to learn skills related to traveling independently and less administrative time for the program leader. Additionally, depending on the timing of the program, this may be the only option if students are arriving/departing from different domestic airports (i.e., during winter or summer programs). The drawbacks include challenges related to students traveling independently and lack of support in the event of a delay.

Domestic Airport Transportation Guidelines

If the program leader decides to require a group flight, they may also decide if the group will travel to/from the domestic airport together or separately. The guidelines below outline the possible options, along with the benefits and drawbacks of each, that program leaders may choose. Program leaders are responsible for communicating the transportation plan with their students.

- **Group Transportation** – Program leaders may require students to participate in group travel to/from the domestic airport. **Program leaders must adhere to all University Procurement travel policies if traveling as a group.** It is the program leader’s responsibility to coordinate and book all group transportation, though the Global Experiences Coordinator can assist with processing student payments. Group transportation costs should be budgeted for when determining the embedded program fee in order to make students aware of the overall costs of participation.
 - **Charter Buses** – Program leaders may book charter buses that meet [Risk Management’s insurance requirements](#). Program leaders are responsible for requesting quotes, obtaining contract documents and requesting signatures from Procurement. Faculty and staff are not allowed to sign any contracts – they must submit the contract to Procurement for an authorized signature. The benefits of this option include the safety and ease of a charter bus. The drawbacks include the high cost for students and the administrative time of the program leader. Recommended [charter buses that have been pre-approved by Penn State Risk Management](#)

include Fullington, Long Motor Buses, and AJ Limo Coach. [Penn State Fleet also offers driver services](#) for buses.

- **Rental Cars** – Depending on the number of travelers and the amount of luggage, program leaders may book rental vans through Penn State’s partners - National and Enterprise. Per University policy, only faculty/staff may drive any car that is being used for University business – which would include coordinated group transportation. Thus, the group size would need to be small enough to fit in two rental vans that can be driven by the program leaders. The benefits of this option include the lower cost in comparison to a charter bus. The drawbacks include that this option will not work for larger groups.
- **Payment for Group Transportation** - The Global Experiences Coordinator may assist with processing student payments for group transportation that is budgeted for in advance. If the program leader decides to require group transportation, the GEC and program leader will determine a maximum per student cost to include with the embedded program fee, with the hope that the cost could be reduced based on the number of student commitments or options for sharing a bus. These costs must be budgeted for in advance because they require approval from the University Budget Office. The Career Enrichment Network would collect the payment through the students’ bursar accounts and would pay the invoice to the transportation provider. The Career Enrichment Network is not able to contribute any funding towards transportation. If the program leader’s department is willing to subsidize or cover the cost of transportation, that would be welcomed.
- **Individual Transportation** – Program leaders may also require students to coordinate their own transportation to/from the domestic airport. Students may pursue options including driving personal vehicles, arranging their own carpools, taxis/Uber, rental cars, etc. As this transportation is not being coordinated as group travel, it is not considered University business. The benefits of this option include allowing students to learn skills related to traveling independently and less administrative time for the program leader. The drawbacks include potentially increased cost and coordination for the students, depending on their mode of transportation.

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 or graduate student leader for the program.
- Promote and market 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.

- Decide if the program participants will travel as a group to/from the destination, and if so, coordinate logistics for group flights and airport transportation (guidelines provided above).
- 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 Authorization 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 course scheduling of the embedded course and enroll students in the appropriate additional credits, if applicable. The Global Experiences Coordinator will communicate with the department about student enrollments, as necessary.
- 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

- Consult with program leaders to provide guidance regarding the program proposal process and University policies and to serve as a liaison with Education Abroad.
- Connect faculty with third-party travel program providers.
- Connect program leaders with others who successfully have led embedded courses in past semesters and can share best practices for program development.
- 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. 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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