



Developing a Maryland Program Abroad Proposal

Creating a new program takes time and dedication. The full process to propose, develop, and complete a new program abroad typically takes at least a year. There are many steps to create a program abroad: idea formulation; approval from the host department(s); creating a program plan, proposal and budget; review by EA and the Risk Management Committee; program promotion; implementation (logistics, contracts, staff hiring, etc.); student selection; orientation; departure; on-site management and evaluation. Education Abroad (EA) staff will guide you through each step of the process, making it as smooth and clear as possible. This process has been developed to meet UMD academic standards and to make the experience safe and enriching for students and faculty.

Before proposing a new program, consider the following:

- **Rationale:** Will the program support, enhance, and complement UMD's academic mission? What are the learning objectives you and your department hope to achieve?
- **Viability:** Will this program compete with or enhance existing UMD study abroad program offerings? Will the program appeal to a wide student audience? Is the curriculum flexible enough to allow future iterations by other faculty members or in different locations?
- **Frequency:** How often will this program run (i.e. annually, every other year)? Is the program sequenced within specific degree programs?
- **Program timing/length:** When is the best time for the program to take place (winter break, spring break, summer)? What is the ideal length of time to meet the academic objectives (i.e. credit hours) for the program (one week, six weeks, etc.)?
- **Program Safety:** Is the location of your program safe and appropriate for a student learning program? Are there activities within the itinerary that pose safety or accessibility concerns for students?

Considering submitting a proposal?

Program proposals must be submitted and led by UMD faculty, staff and/or PhD students in good standing. Qualified program leaders often have prior travel experience in the program's location and are able to justify how the location relates to their academic expertise. Support and written endorsement from the sponsoring academic unit is also required.

Please keep in mind we welcome proposals for new programs that support one or more of the following outcomes and goals:

- Expand the UMD study abroad program portfolio to underrepresented regions including Africa, Eastern Europe, and South and Southeast Asia
- Provide opportunities for students typically underrepresented in study abroad
- Further integrate study abroad experiences into departmental curricula through pre- and post-programming
- Promote experiential learning, project-based learning, civic engagement, entrepreneurship, research, field work, service learning and innovation
- Facilitate cross-disciplinary interaction and collaboration
- Fulfills a [General Education](#) learning outcome (i.e. Scholarship in Practice)
- Strives to meet one or more of the [UN Sustainable Development Goals](#)

Ready to Propose an Idea for a Program?

Once you are ready to discuss your program idea, please complete the [New Program Idea Intake Form](#). A member of the Education Abroad Short-term team will follow up with you. Please note, all programs proposed in the Intake Form will not automatically be invited to submit a full proposal. Furthermore, all full proposals will not be accepted or approved as an official program.



Program Planning Considerations

- **Academic Course:** A study abroad course should be of equivalent academic rigor to one offered on campus and support the curriculum in your department. Adequate contact hours must be built into the program design for the number of credits being offered (see [University Course Policies and Practices](#)). In addition, you should assign an appropriate amount of reading material to support the course learning objectives and encourage students to be accountable for their work.
- **Course Number and Listing:** Courses that fulfill one or more [General Education](#) learning outcomes (e.g., Understanding Plural Societies, Scholarship in Practice, etc.) will interest students and allow you to draw from a larger pool of applicants. To submit your study abroad course for General Education review, you should follow the existing process within your department. **Cross-listed courses** can also expand the applicant pool. EA can assist you with making contacts in other departments or campus units to cross-list your course. Your department scheduler should identify the appropriate course number, and EA will handle the course scheduling and registration.
- **Audience:** You should design a course that targets a specific population and yet is broad enough to appeal to a larger group. Most short-term programs have a minimum enrollment of 10 students but can accommodate more (we generally recommend 20-25 as the maximum enrollment). Is your course designed primarily for undergraduate students, graduate students, or a mix of both? Is the course open only to UMD students or also to applicants from other institutions?
- **Location:** Consider what location and cultural context is most appropriate to meet the learning objectives of the course. In addition, keep in mind factors such as potential health, safety, and security risks; weather; the current political situation; and local festivals or events that might coincide with the program dates. In general, significant time at a specific site to develop a greater understanding of “place” is prioritized over a “travel tour” structure, but dual-site programs can be attractive for certain academic objectives.
- **Program Cost and Length:** Consider the length of time required to meet all academic and cultural objectives while accounting for logistical considerations such as travel time to and within-country. Programs operating in the same country, during the same cycle with similar durations should have comparable costs. Consider which scholarships are accessible to students for your program (i.e. departmental scholarships or the Gilman scholarship for programs of 21+ days in one country, etc.).

Looking Ahead

Once your program has been approved by Education Abroad and the sponsoring Academic Department, you will meet with EA staff to discuss your budget, program logistics, staffing, recruitment, risk management, participant selection, and pre-departure orientation. These are additional program considerations to note:

- **Partnerships:** Creating a study abroad program requires collaboration and coordination with a variety of partners. Who are the stakeholders both on-campus (departments, staff, etc.) and in-country (host universities, program providers, etc.) needed to make your program a success? EA will assist you with securing new partnerships.
- **Plan your budget:** OIA works with program leaders to create and manage budgets for all programs abroad. Accurate budgeting and affordability is critical to program success, and a program can be cancelled due to insufficient enrollment and/or a budget deficit. What are ways you can accurately forecast costs while keeping the budget financially accessible to as many students as possible?
- **Know your role with recruitment:** EA provides all program leaders promotional materials and advice on a comprehensive recruitment approach, giving all programs equal attention in our marketing channels. Our most successful programs are those with program leaders who are active in marketing and recruiting. Thus, program leaders are encouraged to maximize contact with the target audience(s), by hosting information sessions and promoting the program to students directly and via departmental resources.