

VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE  
Lexington, Virginia

GENERAL ORDER)  
NUMBER 73)

12 June 2013

**INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL POLICY**

**1. PURPOSE**

VMI supports international travel as a valid, desired, and increasingly important part of undergraduate education and faculty development. Additionally, the Institute recognizes that such programs may take a variety of forms, including educational travel with cadets and professional travel. All international travel operated, sponsored, or approved by VMI is expected to maintain standards of proper accountability and risk management.

This policy outlines the procedure for registering VMI sponsored international travel. Historically, international travel, both by VMI personnel and cadets, has been a decentralized process. With the implementation of new travel abroad software (Terra Dotta), by the Office of International Programs, this policy addresses the centralization and standardization of the registration process, as well as the delegation for accountability and risk management.

**2. AUTHORITY**

The Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors is authorized to establish policy for the Institute. In cases where the board has not exercised that authority, it is delegated to the Superintendent.

**3. DEFINITIONS**

- a. Direct Enrollment: Enrollment in courses directly alongside local students.
- b. Direct Exchange: Partnerships with foreign institutions that allow cadets to enroll in classes as a visiting student while still paying standard tuition to VMI.
- c. Professional Travel: Travel by VMI personnel for professional development, to include conferences and/or research.
- d. Program Director: The individual contractually responsible for conducting a credit bearing program.
- e. Sponsored Travel: Programs that are conducted by Institute Member(s) and supported – fully or in part – by the Institute. This may include financial support, administrative support, leadership, organization, marketing, or advising.
- f. Third Party Programs: Independent organizations that facilitate or administer study abroad programs.
- g. Trip Leader: VMI personnel designated to lead non-credit bearing travel.
- h. Senior Administrator: Senior VMI leadership to include the Deputy Superintendent for Academics, Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Administration, Commandant, Athletic Director, Director of Information Technology, and the Chief of Staff.

**4. APPLICABILITY**

This policy shall apply to all VMI personnel.

5. **ADMINISTRATION OF THE POLICY**

The Director of International Programs is assigned as the Superintendent's designee, responsible for the administration of this policy.

6. **POLICY**

All VMI sponsored international travel must be registered through the Office of International Programs and is subject to procedures based on the type of travel. This includes travel using VMI or VMI Foundation funds for any portion of travel expenses, fees or costs as well as programs where VMI personnel organize, lead, or advise cadet participants regarding said travel.

**VMI does not permit students, faculty, or staff to travel to or through countries on the US Department of State Travel Warning List when on VMI sponsored international travel. No exceptions to this policy will be made.**

7. **PROCEDURES**

a. **Program Proposals and Approval Process**

- i. Proposal Submission (12-9 months prior to departure): The proposal form for all VMI led programs abroad can be found on the OIP website (see Attachment 1). A proposal form must be completed and approved by the appropriate senior administrator. Proposals are reviewed and approved, rejected, or approved with modifications required. Once approval is received, the proposal, along with supporting documents, must be submitted to the Director of International Programs. VMI led programs that are repeated must be presented for recertification every three years.
- ii. Program Director/Leader Eligibility: VMI personnel, with approval of their department head and respective senior administrator, may propose international educational travel. Personnel should communicate their experience with the destination and how travel to that destination will contribute to the program, as well as its limitations.
- iii. Approval Criteria: Proposals will be reviewed to ensure they address:
  1. Health and safety of participants abroad
  2. Feasibility, to include location, program content, length of program, time of year, cost, and support of senior administration and department heads.
- iv. Families Accompanying Program Leaders: Families may accompany a program leader with the understanding that any additional expenses must be paid separately. It should also be understood that the director's role is demanding and is not likely to allow much free time for private social or recreational activities. An adult who is fully responsible for child care must accompany any children under 18 years of age.
- v. Travel Authorization: In addition to the procedures outlined in this General Order for the OIP, travelers are responsible for completing a travel authorization in accordance with the procedures outlined by the

Comptroller's Office. All international travel supported with VMI funds requires that a travel authorization be signed in advance by the Superintendent or his designee, the Deputy Superintendent for Finance and Administration.

**b. VMI Led Credit Bearing Programs**

- i. Budget and Itinerary Planning (9-6 months prior to departure): Program Directors will work with the Director of International Programs to develop a budget for the program. Any contracts associated with the program must conform to the Virginia Commonwealth statutes and purchasing requirements.
- ii. Marketing and Recruiting Students (6 months prior to departure): Faculty led programs abroad may not be advertised or publicized to students before they have been approved. While OIP will assist Program Directors in designing a marketing plan, Program Directors will assume the primary role of marketing the program.
- iii. Application: All applications will be submitted electronically using Terra Dotta software.
  1. VMI Study Abroad Program Agreement and Release: Any student taking part in a VMI sponsored program abroad must sign the VMI Study Abroad Program Agreement and Release, as well as the VMI Study Abroad Code of Conduct. Both can be found in the student's application portal.
  2. Emergency Information Form: All participating cadets and VMI personnel must complete an Emergency Information Form through Terra Dotta.
- iv. Pre-departure (~1 month prior to departure): OIP will conduct pre-departure briefings covering practical information for daily life, legal, safety and security issues, health information, emergency contacts, and academics for all international travel involving cadets. In addition to the briefing provided by the OIP, additional orientations covering logistics and thematic content specific to each program will be conducted by the Program Director. Topics covered should include (as applicable):
  1. Cultural differences
  2. Packing tips
  3. Travel arrangements
  4. Safety concerns
  5. Maintaining contact between leader(s) and participants at all times
  6. How to address health problems
  7. Using HTH health insurance
  8. Accommodations abroad
  9. Meals abroad

10. Academic obligations
  11. Personal budgeting
  12. Use of cash, credit/debit cards, and ATMs
  13. Expectations for student conduct
  14. Embassy/Consular services
  15. Backup plan for travel delays
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- v. Program Directors will file the final itinerary and will communicate any changes to the International Programs Coordinator, prior to departure. The template is available on the OIP website.
  - vi. Registration in the Smart Traveller Enrollment Program: The Program Director is responsible for registering the travels of each participant on the U.S. Dept. of State's Smart Traveller Enrollment Program ([http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration\\_4789.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html)).
  - vii. Registration in Terra Dotta: Program Directors and any teaching faculty accompanying cadets on programs abroad must create an account in Terra Dotta including their travel information. OIP will provide access to review applications for their programs through the Program Director's Terra Dotta account.
  - viii. Risk Management Training: The OIP will provide risk management training for faculty or academic staff with Program Director duties abroad. This training is mandatory for all new program leaders and refresher training is required every three years.
  - ix. On-site Orientation: All Program Directors must provide an on-site orientation for all participants, including emergency and communications procedures. This must occur within the first 48 hours in country.
  - x. On-site Administration: Program Directors are expected to provide students oversight throughout the program in matters such as monitoring students during excursions, advising students on cultural and academic issues, obtaining medical, legal or passport assistance, as necessary, and acting as a liaison with local housing providers. They must inform OIP of any specific health, security, or cadet behavior incidents by submitting an incident report which is available on the OIP website.
- Program Directors must arrange escorted travel for students to and from designated airports upon initial arrival and final departure. In the event escorted travel is not possible, due to extenuating circumstances, detailed travel instructions must be provided to the cadets prior to travel.
- xi. Program Completion
    1. Civilizations and Cultures Credit (C&C): Upon successful completion of credit bearing courses abroad, OIP will submit students' names to the Civilizations and Cultures Committee for placement credit.

2. Assessment: Program Directors will be asked to assist OIP in gathering data regarding assessment of Faculty Led programs. This can include OIP surveys and individual learning outcomes.
- c. **Study Abroad through Third Party Programs, Direct Exchange, and Direct Enrollment**: All cadets studying abroad through approved third party programs or directly enrolling in foreign institutions must apply through the OIP. Approvals to study abroad for a semester must be received from the cadet's Faculty Advisor, Department Head, Commandant's Staff, Financial Aid, ROTC, NCAA Coach (if applicable), and the OIP.
- i. Cadet Applications: All applications will be submitted electronically using Terra Dotta software.
    1. VMI Study Abroad Program Agreement and Release: Any cadet taking part in a VMI sponsored program abroad must sign the VMI Study Abroad Program Agreement and Release, as well as the VMI Study Abroad Code of Conduct. Both can be found in the student's application portal.
    2. Emergency Information Form: All participating cadets and VMI personnel must complete an Emergency Information Form through Terra Dotta.
  - ii. Pre-departure: OIP will conduct pre-departure briefings covering practical information for daily life, legal, safety and security issues, health information, emergency contacts, and academics for all international travel involving cadets.
  - iii. On-site Orientation: Third Party providers and International Student Support Offices will provide on-site orientation to VMI Cadets.
  - iv. On-site Administration: Third Party providers and International Student Support Offices will provide on-site administration of Third Party and Direct Enrollment programs.
  - v. Program Completion
    1. Civilizations and Cultures Credit (C&C): Upon successful completion of credit bearing courses abroad, OIP will submit students' names to the Civilizations and Cultures Committee for placement credit.
    2. Assessment: OIP will assess Third Party Providers and Direct Enrollment programs.
- d. **Non-Credit Bearing Travel With Cadets**  
All international travel through VMI clubs, NCAA teams, ROTC, Chaplain, Band, or any other VMI office must receive prior approval by their respective VMI Senior Administrator. Trips may not be advertised or publicized to cadets prior to approval.
- i. Cadet Applications: All applications will be submitted electronically using Terra Dotta software.

1. VMI Study Abroad Program Agreement and Release: Any cadet taking part in a VMI sponsored program abroad must sign the VMI Study Abroad Program Agreement and Release, as well as the VMI Study Abroad Code of Conduct. Both can be found in the student's application portal.
  2. Emergency Information Form: All participating cadets and VMI personnel must complete an Emergency Information Form through Terra Dotta.
- ii. Pre-departure (~1 month prior to departure): OIP will conduct pre-departure briefings covering practical information for daily life, legal, safety and security issues, health information, emergency contacts, and academics for all international travel involving cadets. In addition to the briefing provided by the OIP, additional orientations covering logistics and thematic content specific to each program will be conducted by the Trip Leader. Topics covered should include (as applicable):
1. Cultural differences
  2. Packing tips
  3. Travel arrangements
  4. Safety concerns
  5. Maintaining contact between leader(s) and participants at all times
  6. How to address health problems
  7. Using HTH health insurance
  8. Accommodations abroad
  9. Meals abroad
  10. Personal budgeting
  11. Use of cash, credit/debit cards, and ATMs
  12. Expectations for student conduct
  13. Embassy/Consular services
  14. Backup plan for travel delays
- iii. The Trip Leader will file the final itinerary and will communicate any changes to the International Programs Coordinator, prior to departure. The itinerary template is available on the OIP website.
- iv. Registration in the Smart Traveller Enrollment Program: The Trip Leader is responsible for registering the travels of each participant on the U.S. Dept. of State's Smart Traveller Enrollment Program ([http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration\\_4789.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html)).
- v. Registration in Terra Dotta: Trip Leaders on programs abroad must create an account in Terra Dotta including their travel information. OIP will provide access to review applications for their programs through the Trip Leader's Terra Dotta account.

- vi. **Risk Management Training:** The OIP will provide risk management training to VMI personnel with Trip Leader duties abroad. This training is mandatory for all new Trip Leaders and refresher training is required every three years.
  - vii. **On-site Orientation:** All Trip Leaders must provide an on-site orientation for all participants, including emergency and communications procedures. This must occur within the first 48 hours in country.
  - viii. **On-site Administration:** Trip Leaders are expected to provide cadets oversight throughout the trip in matters such as monitoring students during excursions, advising students on cultural issues, obtaining medical, legal or passport assistance, as necessary, and acting as a liaison with local housing providers. They must inform their respective VMI Senior Administration of any specific health, security, or cadet behavior incidents through normal reporting channels. VMI OIP will assist with any specific international considerations.  
Trip Leaders must arrange escorted travel for cadets to and from designated airports upon initial arrival and final departure. In the event escorted travel is not possible, due to extenuating circumstances, detailed travel instructions must be provided to the cadets prior to travel.
  - ix. **Civilizations and Cultures Credit (C&C):** Leaders of non-academic programs abroad must coordinate with the chairman of the Civilization and Cultures Committee to determine if the travel qualifies for C&C credit.
8. **PROFESSIONAL TRAVEL ABROAD WITHOUT CADETS:** All personnel participating in VMI sponsored international travel, without cadets, must register their travel through the Office of International Programs to include emergency contact information. This will be done electronically through the Office of International Programs website at [www.vmi.edu/internationaltravel](http://www.vmi.edu/internationaltravel).
9. **HEALTH INSURANCE:** All cadets going abroad, other than through Third Party Programs, which provide their own coverage, are required to purchase health insurance coverage from a vendor selected by VMI. VMI currently maintains a group policy with HTH Worldwide Insurance (HTH), a company that has been chosen for its comprehensive international travel insurance. Insurance claim forms and instructions are available at [www.hthstudents.com](http://www.hthstudents.com). OIP recommends that VMI personnel going on such trips purchase this additional insurance since the international coverage of the health insurance carried by Institute employees may be somewhat limited. The cost of such insurance is considered a personal expense and shall be borne by the traveler.
10. **MISCONDUCT:** All VMI cadets engaging in foreign educational programs referenced in this General Order must conduct themselves in an appropriate manner at all times. Cadets are reminded that the provisions of the Blue Book pertaining to misconduct do apply while they are engaging in foreign study programs. Those cadets who do not

adhere to proper standards of conduct or who fail to follow the rules outlined in the foreign travel programs are subject to those penalties, which can include suspension or dismissal from the Institute.

FOR THE SUPERINTENDENT:

Jeffrey H. Curtis  
Colonel, USAF (Ret)  
Chief of Staff

OPR: International Programs

DIST: E

Attachment – Forms





VMI Office of International Programs

**PROPOSAL FOR VMI LED PROGRAM ABROAD**

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Name:

Program Summary:.

Program Goals & Objectives: *Please explain your educational and cross-cultural objectives for the program*

Program Country:

Program City:

Program Start Date:

Program End Date:

Proposed Itinerary:

Number of Participants: *What is the minimum number of students required to make this program viable? What is the maximum number of students this program can accommodate?*

Funding source and estimated cost for each traveller

Housing: *Describe housing for program participants*



VMI Office of International Programs

**PROPOSAL FOR VMI LED PROGRAM ABROAD**

Meals: *Describe meal arrangements for program participants. If meals will be at the students' expense, what is the average cost of meals?*

Excursions: *List dates, locations, and objectives of any excursions included in this program that take place away from the main program site. If none, write "N/A".*

Transportation method: *What methods of transportation do you plan to use for traveling from place to place within the country that are part of this experience?*

Transportation: *Include names of transportation companies to be used in reaching or traveling from the program site, information on their safety records, and their insurance coverage. For scheduled transportation (air, train, etc.), list the flight numbers, etc.*

Travel Service Providers: *Describe relationships with on-site travel service providers and provide their contact information (name, land line phone, mobile phone, fax, e-mail, and postal address).*

Local university service: *What, if any, services will be provided by a program or university abroad?*



VMI Office of International Programs

**PROPOSAL FOR VMI LED PROGRAM ABROAD**

Student preparation: *What will students be required to do to prepare for the program abroad?*

**PROGRAM CONTENT**

Language of Instruction:

What are the advantages of offering this program at each specific location?

What student does the program target and how does the program meet their curricular requirements?

Credit through other means: *Do students have the option of earning academic credit for this trip through independent study, research, or internships?*

Academic Approval: *If the program is for academic credit and is not part of an existing course, has the course abroad been approved by the relevant academic department? If yes, provide name of approver and date approved. If no, explain your plans for obtaining approval.*

In-class instruction abroad: *Will participants in this program have instruction in a traditional classroom setting?*

Program research: *Will this program include academic research abroad? If yes, list research topic and research leader.*



## VMI Office of International Programs

### **PROPOSAL FOR VMI LED PROGRAM ABROAD**

Program volunteering: *Will this program include volunteering abroad? If yes, provide names of volunteer projects/organizations and names of volunteer leaders.*

Evaluation abroad: *How will students' participation and learning be assessed during the program?*

#### **PROGRAM LEADER**

Name of program leader:

Name of person completing the proposal form.

What is the program leader's nation(s) of citizenship: *Please list this information as it appears on your passport. If you are a dual citizen, please list both countries of citizenship as stated on your passports.*

Title/Department of program leader:

Program leader experience: *Describe experience of faculty leader(s) in this country or on this type of excursion.*

Language skills of program leader and co-leader: *Are your skills in the primary language(s) of your destination country(ies) adequate for routine communications? For emergency situations?*

Mitigating circumstances: *If the leader of the trip abroad does not have extensive experience and/or knowledge of the country(ies) to be visited, what plan do you have to overcome these deficiencies?*



## VMI Office of International Programs

### **PROPOSAL FOR VMI LED PROGRAM ABROAD**

Co-leaders: *In addition to the primary leader, please provide the names of VMI faculty and staff accompanying students abroad.*

Will non-VMI faculty be providing instruction? If so, please list their names and title.

Faculty Vitae: *Please attach the vitae of any faculty who will be teaching on the program as well as their syllabi (as required by SACS requirements).*

#### **HEALTH, SAFETY, & IMMIGRATION**

Will any students less than 18 years of age be taking part in the program? If so, please list their names:

Will any international student take part? If so, please list their names and inform Col. Miller in OIP as soon as possible.

Immigration Documents: *Will any program leaders/participants need visas to take part in the program?*

Safety Concerns: *What is the potential for political instability, civil unrest, natural disasters or other reasons for concern at program site/excursion? Are there any travel alerts or warnings from the US Dept. of State concerning this country(ies)?*



VMI Office of International Programs

**PROPOSAL FOR VMI LED PROGRAM ABROAD**

Health & Safety Preparation: *Describe provisions made for the health and safety of participants. Which health care facility(ies) will you turn to if someone on your program needs medical attention? List multiple facilities if you will be in multiple locations.*

APPROVAL SIGNATURES

Program leader:	Date:
Department head:	Date:
OIP Director:	Date:
Senior Administrator:	Date: