Statement Defining Participants in Miami University Study Abroad and Travel Programs

The purpose of this policy statement is to identify those individuals who are approved to participate in, and with, study abroad programs sponsored by Miami University.

Miami University defines a “study abroad program participant” as a student enrolled in a study abroad or away program or a workshop director fulfilling specific administrative responsibilities for the program. Miami does not permit individuals to be included in, or to accompany, study abroad workshops who are not considered “study abroad programs participants” except for the limited circumstance involving the spouse/partner and/or minor children of a workshop director.

Student Participants
Miami students must be registered for workshops or programs in order to participate. Individuals who are students at other higher education institutions become Miami students for the duration of the workshop by virtue of their limited admission, and registration. An individual who is not a student at an institution of higher education can participate in a Miami study abroad workshop by registering as a Miami student participant for the duration of the workshop under “Non-Degree Student Status.” Each student participant, including those applying for a study abroad workshop under “Non-Degree Student Status,” must meet all qualifications, prerequisites, and requirements for selection as a participant in a study abroad workshop.

At a workshop director’s discretion, Miami University may allow a student to audit a study abroad course. Requests to audit a study abroad course need to be made to the workshop director, and approved by the director of Study Abroad. A formal agreement between the student and the workshop director addressing the auditing student’s obligations during the workshop is required. All university policies that govern Miami course registration apply to credit workshops. All students auditing are required to pay full tuition and program fees.

Program Leaders
All workshop personnel, whether paid or volunteer, should be indicated on the workshop proposal. Individuals who serve any function in a study abroad workshop must have a clearly defined and documented role. Individuals outside the institution, including those retired from Miami or employed at another institution, must have their role defined and documented by the workshop director, and approved by the unit or department and division.

The expenses of workshop directors and other personnel may be included in the workshop budget, if such inclusion has been reviewed and approved by the director of Study Abroad, and found in compliance with Miami University purchasing and payment policies, and if the workshop enrollment is sufficient.

Spouses/Partners and Minor Children of Workshop Directors
Program directors’ spouses/partners and/or minor children are strongly discouraged from accompanying short term study abroad programs. Miami University study abroad programs are academic in nature and accompanying families lead to an appearance of a vacation or travel tour, and lack of academic rigor, or diminishing the immersion experience leading to appropriate global and cultural learning outcomes. Further, when families accompany programs, there is an increased level of support needed in risk management and crisis response at the program and university level. Faculty and staff are encouraged to consider companions traveling to the location before the program begins, or after the program ends and conducting personal travel during the pre- or post-program period.
Program directors anticipating that spouses/partners and/or minor children will accompany a study abroad workshop should carefully review the following aspects of the workshop for suitability to accommodate families: the length of the workshop, the age of the minor children, the location of the workshop, the nature of the workshop, the extent of activity involved during the workshop, the availability of accommodation for the spouse/partner and/or for minor children, and the impact of the presence of the spouse/partner and/or minor children on the program and the enrolled students.

Workshop directors’ spouses/partners and/or minor children may not be included in the study abroad workshop activities. The program director or faculty member is responsible for the payment of all expenses for the spouse and/or minor children, as well as ensuring safety of the traveling companions. These expenses cannot be incorporated into the program budget, and they cannot be part of any reimbursement request or invoice that is submitted to Miami. Any non-refundable expenses for cancellation of arrangements made on behalf of spouses and/or minor children of program director will be the sole responsibility of the director or spouse/partner. Faculty leaders are responsible for obtaining passports and visas for dependents at their own expense. Minor children will reside with parents during the program, not with student participants, and all expenses are covered by the faculty member.

Workshop program arrangements are not made to accommodate the needs of spouse/partner or children. All accommodations are made with the understanding that it is an academic program designed to meet the academic, cultural, and professional requirement for students and faculty members. Spouses/partners and minor children cannot, in any way, impair the operation and administration of program activities associated with the study abroad workshop or otherwise infringe on other workshop participants. Spouses and minor children must complete the Study Abroad and Travel Workshop Companion Form prior to departure and submit to the Miami University Study Abroad Office.

After all of these considerations are deliberated, if the choice is made for a family member to accompany the faculty member, notification will be made to the Study Abroad office, and the program leader will complete the approval form to be routed for approval from the department chair, divisional dean, and the Assistant Provost/Director of Study Abroad.