EXCHANGE PARTICIPATION POLICIES

The Texas State Study Abroad Office is committed to providing our students with the best possible experience. In order to do so, it is essential that you fully understand and accept the policies in place for your participation in this program. Once you are accepted to participate in your exchange program, more detailed information will be provided during the mandatory orientation meetings.

I acknowledge that the program may combine classroom study with out-of-classroom learning in the form of assignments, projects, and field trips. I have the opportunity to gain academic credit through participation in the program and agree to the following participation policies and procedures:

A. CONDITIONS FOR ENROLLMENT - I am aware of the participation approval policies and agree to the following:

1. PARTICIPATION APPROVAL - The Study Abroad Office will provide a written notification to the student when s/he has been approved to participate in the exchange program. Once the completed application materials and program fee have been received in the Study Abroad Office, the student is considered officially accepted in the program. Being approved by Texas State does not guarantee admission to the host institution.

2. PERSONAL CONDUCT - Texas State and its staff, agents or representatives have the authority to establish rules of conduct necessary for the operation of the program during the entire period of the program, including free time. Should an official representative of Texas State decide that a participant must be separated from the program because of violation of the stated rules, for disruptive behavior, behavior related to alcohol consumption, for use of illegal drugs, or for any conduct that might bring the program into disrepute or its participants into legal jeopardy, that decision will be final. The person dismissed from the program will remain responsible for all program fees and will not be entitled to any refund. The student should be aware that drug or alcohol-related accidents, under certain policies and terms, may not qualify for health insurance benefits. All students will have their student conduct record reviewed prior to the intended study abroad term. Although an application status may read “committed/accepted”. This status could be revoked at any time for conduct infractions that occur prior to departure.

3. MANDATORY ORIENTATIONS - A successful semester abroad is dependent upon adequate preparation. The exchange student will participate in a series of mandatory orientations during the semester prior to studying abroad. These orientations will address issues of academic, cultural, logistical, financial, and personal preparation, as well as health and safety. Failure to attend the required orientations will result in dismissal from the program. Any financial losses incurred by this dismissal, including program fees and travel expenses, are the student’s full responsibility.
B. DISCIPLINARY RECORD - I understand that having a disciplinary record does not automatically disqualify me from consideration for participation in a study abroad program. However, the Study Abroad Office may request additional information from me or the Dean of Students Office in determining whether or not to approve my participation. Further, I understand that participation approval may be revoked. Reasonable, good-faith efforts will be made to refund to the student any payments made directly to the university whenever an approval is revoked prior to departure. Refunds will not be issued for egregious conduct (ex., assaults, safety threats, or disruption of the Study Abroad Office activities).

C. BEHAVIORAL RESPONSIBILITIES - I am aware of the expected behavioral responsibilities while participating in the exchange program and agree to the following:

1. UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIORS - As a guest in a foreign country, there are certain behaviors which are considered unacceptable and could lead to possible disruption of the program. The exchange student must conduct himself/herself in an appropriate manner that does not infringe upon the customs and mores of the country in which the program is being conducted, nor upon the rights of other participants of the program. Behavioral responsibilities will be applicable during the program, both when in the company of other program participants, and when the student is physically separated from other program participants. In addition, the student must adhere to all policies outlined in the Texas State Code of Student Conduct found in the Student Handbook, “Hill Hints”. The Study Abroad Office may take the step to dismiss a student from the program, resulting in the loss of credit and payment. In addition, the Study Abroad Office may refer the incident to Student Justice in the Dean of Students Office, which may impose additional actions, up to suspension or expulsion from Texas State.

2. ILLEGAL DRUG USE - The use of illegal or unauthorized drugs during the entire period of the program, including free time, is strictly prohibited. U.S. citizens in a foreign country are subject to the laws of that country. The U.S. Embassy cannot obtain release from jail for a U.S. citizen and can only aid in obtaining legal assistance. Illegal activities place, not only the individual but the group and the program in jeopardy. The consequences of illegal or unauthorized drug use during the program include immediate expulsion from the program, loss of all course credit and full payment of the program fee.

3. ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION - Texas State understands that the consumption of alcoholic beverages by students of legal age is a personal choice. Participants of legal age in their host country who choose to consume alcohol agree through this form to do so responsibly. However, Texas State has a strict tolerance policy for alcohol abuse. The following are a few examples of incidents which could be a result of alcohol abuse, and therefore, are subject to disciplinary action and dismissal from a program:

- Behavior that could endanger either yourself or others
- Damage to property
- Missing or disrupting classes
- Complaints regarding inappropriate behavior
- Disturbances resulting in intervention by local authorities
Note: The student dismissed from a program may lose all course credits and full payment of the program fees.

D. ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES - I am aware of my academic responsibilities and agree to the following policies and procedures:

1. FULL-TIME STATUS - The student must maintain the full-time status while studying abroad and must be enrolled in the equivalent of a minimum of 12 credits in the Texas State system to fulfill the study abroad and financial aid requirements.

2. COURSE SELECTION - It is the student's responsibility to select courses offered at the host institution and submit the Transfer Credit Agreement (TCA) form to the Study Abroad Office. The student receives credits only for the courses approved through the TCA form. It is, therefore, the student's responsibility to complete a new TCA form and submit it to the Study Abroad Office each time that a coursework changes. It is important to discuss any new courses and obtain approvals from all appropriate offices at Texas State University. Since the number of transferred credits a student can apply to a degree at Texas State is limited and/or courses previously approved by TCA might not be available for the specific semester at a host institution, it is highly recommended that the student have a list of alternative courses approved prior to departure. Texas State cannot guarantee that the courses selected by the student will be available at the host institution. No refunds will be available for course schedule conflicts.

3. ACADEMIC ADVISING - It is the student's responsibility to discuss study abroad plans with his/her academic advisor to determine courses to be taken while abroad, as well as how the participation in the exchange program might impact his/her academic requirements and graduation plans.

4. COURSE REGISTRATION – The student must register for the International Student Exchange Program (ISEP) courses (placeholders) via Catsweb, following the instructions provided by the Study Abroad Office. It is the student’s responsibility to register for five (15 credit hours) placeholder courses by the specified deadline at Texas State. The host institution will provide guidance and assistance with course registration before or after the student's arrival at the designated host institution. It is the student’s responsibility to register on time for the approved courses. Failure to register will result in the cancellation of the program and not qualifying for financial aid.

5. CONFIRMATION OF ENROLLMENT FORM – The student participating in the exchange program must complete this form to confirm enrollment at the host institution within 10 days after the beginning of the study abroad term at the host institution.

6. CLASS ATTENDANCE - The student enrolled in the exchange program is required to attend all regularly scheduled classes and other academic activities at the host institution.
E. FINANCIAL AID & SCHOLARSHIPS - I am aware of financial aid policies and procedures and agree to the following:

1. NOTIFICATION OF FINANCIAL AID OFFICE - It is the student’s responsibility to meet with the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships to discuss study abroad plans and compliance requirements, as well as to finalize arrangements for disbursement of all financial aid and scholarship money. The Study Abroad Office does not loan money. It is the student's responsibility to ensure s/he has sufficient funds to meet all payment deadlines.

2. VERIFICATION OF ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT FORM – The student participating in the exchange program who receives federal financial aid must complete this form to verify academic engagement in at least one course in order to remain eligible for aid awarded during the semester. For more information, please review the “Withdrawing and Non-Attendance” page on the financial aid website for more information: http://www.finaid.txstate.edu/undergraduate/withdrawals.html

3. PROGRAM COMPLETION FORM – The student receiving financial aid at Texas State University must demonstrate completion of coursework abroad. Although a transcript will be required to transfer credits to Texas State, it is common that transcripts are not available by the time they are needed to comply with federal aid regulations. Thus, it is the student’s responsibility to submit the program completion form by the specified deadline. The student who fails to submit this form by the designated deadline will be in violation of federal aid regulations and will be required to repay all or a portion of their Title IV financial aid and may not be eligible for additional aid upon return.

F. LIVING ARRANGEMENTS - I acknowledge that, due the nature of the actual arrangements with the institutions and organizations abroad, the exchange student may not be free to make their own private living arrangements. I am aware that housing accommodations vary from one location to another and that students accepted for enrollment in the Texas State International Exchange Program must accept the housing provided by the program, whether it be a university dormitory, apartment, hotel, camp, or with a private family.

G. STUDENT PREPARATION – I understand that I assume full responsibility for preparing myself for a successful study abroad experience, and I agree to the following:

1. RESEARCH ON A PROGRAM AND COUNTRY – The study abroad student assumes full responsibility for ensuring that they have prepared himself/herself for a successful study abroad experience by researching about his/her program, and destination as well as reviewing all relevant information that might be beneficial for his/her cultural, academic and social adjustments while studying abroad.

2. VISAS AND PASSPORTS – It is the student’s responsibility to make sure that s/he has a valid passport and to obtain the proper visa type if needed. Most long-term study abroad programs require a student visa. It is the student’s responsibility to contact the embassy or general consulate of the country of his/her destination and to inquire about
specific visa requirements a few months before the program starting date. Without the proper documentation, a student may be refused to board at the initial departure airport, refused to board to connecting flights in route, or denied entry to the destination country. The student may then lose all money invested in the program and related expenses. Texas State is not responsible for actions taken by customs authorities and is not responsible if a student is denied entry to a country.

3. SUBMITTING REQUIRED DOCUMENTS - It is the student’s responsibility to submit all required forms to the Study Abroad Office, the Office of Financial Aid & Scholarship, the host institution and consulate/embassy (if needed). Texas State will not be responsible for any problems or complications due to late or incomplete applications. Late charges may apply.

4. MEETING DEADLINES – It is the student’s responsibility to meet all program deadlines, including payment deadlines, specified by Texas State and the host institution. A student who fails to meet a deadline may be withdrawn from the program.
Note: The student who has been withdrawn from the program but wishes to be readmitted in such program will be required to reapply by submitting the appropriate forms and fees.

5. PROPER COMMUNICATION - The student must keep in constant communication with the host institution and the Texas State Study Abroad Office to stay well informed regarding the program. The student is required to check his/her email messages on a daily basis throughout the process.

6. PRE-DEPARTURE INFORMATION – It is the student’s responsibility to review the pre-departure information posted on the Study Abroad Office website prior to departure of his/her study abroad programs.

H. INSURANCE POLICIES – I am aware of insurance policies and agree to the following:

1. HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE – Texas State student is required to purchase the international health insurance policy offered by Texas State for the official dates of the study abroad program. It is the student’s responsibility to determine if this coverage is adequate for his/her needs. Texas State has no obligation to provide any form of additional insurance, and it is the student’s responsibility to decide to purchase any additional coverage.

2. TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE - The study abroad program may be canceled due to events that are beyond the control of Texas State University. In such instances, the student will receive refunds in the largest amount possible. Thus, the student is advised to purchase trip cancellation/interruption insurance to cover such situations should they occur.

I. MEDICAL POLICIES - I acknowledge that there are certain risks inherent in travel, and I agree to the following:
1. MEDICAL RESPONSIBILITY - It is the student’s responsibility to consult with a medical doctor regarding medical concerns or needs s/he may have. Texas State cannot assume responsibility for the provision of medical services to its students or the payments thereof. Further, the University cannot be responsible for attending to any of student’s medical needs.

2. IMMUNIZATIONS - It is the student’s responsibility to consult his/her doctor regarding medical preparations for his/her destination and to obtain the necessary immunizations for travel abroad.

3. HOSPITALIZATION - Should a student be required to be hospitalized during the exchange program, the University cannot and does not assume legal responsibility for payment of such costs; rather, the student assumes all risks and responsibilities and therefore s/he is required to have adequate insurance to meet any and all needs for payment of hospital costs during the program.

J. EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS - I am aware that emergency situations may happen abroad and agree to the following:

1. HEALTH INFORMATION FORM - While participating in the exchange program, on rare occasions, an emergency may require medical care, hospitalization or surgery. It is the student’s responsibility to have fully described any physical or psychological problems s/he may have on the Health Information form prior to departure.

2. NOTIFICATION OF PARENTS OR NEXT OF KIN - By signing this form, the student authorizes Texas State to contact parents or next of kin, if necessary, unless denial notification is provided in writing to the Texas State Study Abroad Office.

3. CONSENT TO EMERGENCY MEDICAL TREATMENT - In the event of illness or injury, the student authorizes any official representative of Texas State to secure medical treatment on his/her behalf, including surgery and administration of an anesthetic, and accepts all financial responsibility for such treatment.

4. PROGRAM LOCATION CHANGE - Texas State University reserves the right to change a program’s location in the event of any situations arising at the study abroad site that is deemed to be unsafe. Such situations may, for example, include political unrest, disease, and natural disasters. The Texas State Study Abroad Office will make every effort to notify students in writing of such changes.

5. PROGRAM MODIFICATION/CANCELLATION - Texas State reserves the right to cancel the study abroad program, and to make academic alterations, deletions or modifications to the program as deemed necessary. The Texas State Study Abroad Office will make every effort to notify the student in writing of significant program alterations or cancellations within a reasonable time period.
K. STUDENT FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY – I acknowledge that I will be held financially accountable for any program fees due to a program changes, withdrawal or cancellation, and I agree to the following:

1. PROGRAM CHANGE – If a student decides to change a program after submitting the application, s/he will need to get a new approval from the Study Abroad Office, and additional fees may apply.

2. INVOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL – If a student involuntary withdraws from the study abroad program, return passage and all other expenses will be his/her sole and exclusive financial responsibility.

3. CANCELLATION - If cancellation occurs, the student will be held accountable for all program fees. Cancellation is effective from the date postmarked on the written notice, or the date stamped as received in the Study Abroad Office. The student will be liable for all portions of the program fee corresponding to non-recoverable costs. No refunds will be made in the event of dismissal from a program. All cancellations must be submitted in writing via email to the Texas State Study Abroad Office by completing the Status Change Request Form. Upon written request, all applicable refunds will be posted to the student's Texas account. No refunds from Texas State will be issued on-site at the program location. Tuition fees will be reimbursed following University policy. Please note: the $250 application fee is non-refundable.

L. SAFETY POLICIES – I am aware of the safety procedures prescribed by Texas State and agree to the following:

1. STEP PROGRAM - It is the student’s responsibility to check the website for the US Department of State Travel Advisories for up-to-date information on any travel restrictions for Americans abroad, as well as for general advice on international travel. The student must sign up for the Department of State Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at step.state.gov.

2. FOREIGN TRAVEL ASSISTANCE & INSURANCE – It is the student’s responsibility to become familiar with the International SOS program prior departure and to download the Assistance App to receive health alerts, security alerts, and other important safety information.

3. CONTACT INFORMATION – It is the student’s responsibility to provide the Study Abroad Office with updated contact information. Processes may be delayed if the information on file is incorrect.

M. STUDENT TRAVEL RESPONSIBILITIES – I am aware of the travel responsibilities during free time and agree to the following:

1. PERSONAL TRAVEL - Texas State programs are not traveling tours. While travel during free time can be educational in itself, the University does not grant academic
credit for travel. The programs are strictly academic in nature. Therefore, the student is responsible for making personal travel plans that will permit him/her to attend all regularly scheduled classes and academic activities.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES OUTSIDE THE PROGRAM DATES – The student who decides to travel independently, before or after the program official dates, will not be covered by the Texas State international health insurance policy for those additional dates and will take full personal and financial responsibility. Neither Texas State nor its staff, agents, or representatives are responsible for students at locations or dates outside of the official program.

N. TUITION REBATE - I am aware that the Texas State students who participate in study abroad programs may not be eligible to apply for the tuition rebate program.

O. UNPAID ACCOUNTS – The exchange student is responsible for settling all personal Texas State accounts, library fines, phone bills, damage payments/outstanding residence charges, and any other outstanding charges before leaving any overseas program, as well as at the host institution before departing from the program. I understand that any unpaid balances will delay academic credit/transcripts and may be subject to disciplinary actions at Texas State.

P. COLLABORATION IN RECRUITING EVENTS - The exchange student is expected to promote the host institution during the recruiting/marketing events organized by the Texas State Study Abroad Office and/or the International Affairs Office in general. Invitations to participate in the recruiting/marketing events will be sent to the student via Texas State email.

Q. PUBLICITY CONSENT- The student authorizes Texas State University to use his/her name and any images (such as photos or video), recordings, or any submitted testimonials for publicity purposes of the study abroad program in publications, the Texas State Study Abroad website, audio-visual presentations, and other related media. Any copyright protected work which Student deliberately submits or includes as part of a recording used by the Texas State University are either the Student's own property or work for which Student has permission to use. The student understands that Texas State Study Abroad Office may, without limitation, exercise all ownership rights including copyrights relating to images, recordings or testimonials.

R. PEER MENTORING – The exchange student is expected to become a peer mentor for prospective exchange students and should provide assistance via emails, face-to-face meetings or other social media channels.

S. EXIT INTERVIEWS - The exchange student is expected to visit the Study Abroad Office after his/her return to participate in an exit interview and to receive an Exchange Participation Certificate.

I understand and accept each of the above conditions.