Financial Procedures for Faculty or Staff-led Education Abroad Programs

It is the goal of the Office of International Programs (OIP) - Educational Abroad (EA) to work as an academic support unit for CSU departments to facilitate the administration of education abroad programming. The EA unit can act as an administrator or liaison for departments in many capacities. The following information is intended to outline the financial protocols for faculty and/or staff interested in leading an education abroad program.

Pre-trip procedures

Setting the budget

Ideally, program budgets should be discussed and tentatively set approximately 12-18 months prior to a program’s start. Departments and faculty members should work closely with the Education Abroad team to develop an estimated budget, which includes tuition, accommodations, vendor services, faculty support, insurance and other program fees.

Tuition and departmental related fees:

- CSU sponsored programs, which receive CSU credit, must work with the EA unit for all course creation and fiscal management.
- Based on Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE) guidelines, CSU credits offered abroad must be approved by the University Curriculum Committee with a special “Travel Abroad” course designation and need to be registered through Online Plus/DCE.
- Online Plus/DCE disburses approximately 64% of tuition revenue from course registration to the EA accounts. This tuition revenue is intended primarily to pay for faculty teaching salaries and fringe benefits.
- After faculty members have been paid from Online Plus/DCE tuition distributions, any additional revenues can be reinvested in the form of program fee discounts (given equally to students), program development, or other departmentally approved support - with the intention to benefit the future success of the program.
- Without tuition revenue created by for-credit programs, only actual faculty/staff travel expenses can be compensated for administrative support time, but teaching salary cannot be compensated.
- Faculty teaching on programs should be permanent employees. Adjunct or special instructors or Graduate Teaching Assistants should not have primary responsibilities for leading programs. Honorariums can be paid by departments out of additional tuition revenue or in some cases can be contracted with job descriptions for the work completed.

Education Abroad Program fees:

- Program fees function much like regular course fees in that they are estimated on actual cost of supporting the non-tuition related expenses for the program. Because travel is an expense type that has public scrutiny
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as there can be a perception of personal benefit, travel expenses related to education abroad must be completed using the most economical means available.

- Program fees are intended to support the students on the program equally. Individual student discounts or sliding fee scale are not permitted.
- Education Abroad budgets are typically set at a 10 students to 1 faculty member ratio.
- Because estimates can vary greatly depending on enrollments, exchange rates and other factors, unused program fees in excess of 5% will be returned to students at the time of billing or after the program account is reconciled.
- To keep costs low for students, full per diem is not paid for education abroad programming, especially when the faculty member is receiving teaching salary from tuition revenue. Some per diem is acceptable for expenses incurred during program excursions and should be accounted for with actual itemized receipts.
- Budgets for Education Abroad Program fees should not be used to pay for activities or administration on the CSU main campus or at a distance from the students, who are paying the fees and should be receiving the direct benefits. This includes new program development, on campus staff salaries, or teaching salaries (which should be covered by CSU tuition structures).
- Program fees cannot pay for personal benefits such as more than a one bedroom accommodation to host faculty or staff families, travel compensation beyond the program activities, etc.
- Program fees should be managed out of CSU departmental accounts, which must adhere to the CSU Financial Rules and Procedures. Under no circumstances should faculty or staff members use personal accounts to collect and disburse student funds. This leaves an individual personally liable and can leave the person in a vulnerable situation should there be an audit. In the event that a non-credit program or travel is run independently from the EA unit, another CSU departmental unit should collect and distribute the funds based on CSU fiscal guidelines.

Contracting for Support Services:

- Service providers and vendors must be contracted through a competitive bid or have a strong sole source justification. Competitive price, safety and quality should be considered in selection process.
- Conflicts of interests with vendors or services should be avoided and disclosed early in the process. In the event that a vendor relationship appears to be inappropriate, a competitive bid should be reinitiated.

Purchasing Airfare

- After the application deadline and minimum enrollment is met, faculty or staff members should obtain a competitive airfare quote from a State Approved Travel Agent.
- If a ticket is purchased separately, a quote from State Approved Travel Agent must be included with travel paperwork to demonstrate a competitive price.
- The quoted prices should then be emailed to the EA liaison to compare budgeted estimates and to provide Travel Voucher number and account number for payment.
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- EA does not recommend purchasing group airfares because of early deposits and varying travel plans of most groups.
- Travel upgrades or personal flight deviations cannot be paid for using student monies collected through EA program fees. The cost difference for those additional services must be paid for with faculty or staff member’s personal funds.

Pre-trip paperwork

- Education Abroad will initiate the Pre-trip paperwork, which includes the Pre-Trip Authorization, Risk Management Registration, and DCE course creation paperwork.
- The paperwork will be sent to the respective faculty member for Department Head / Dean Signatures.

Travel advances

- To the greatest extent possible, the program fee should be paid in advance by Education Abroad, so that faculty members do not have to carry an excessive amount of money abroad or in their personal accounts.
- Travel Advances can be issued in excess of the standard $1500 limit to pay for program related fees, which cannot be paid in advance by wire transfer, credit card or check. It is the faculty member’s responsibility to provide itemized documentation for all expenses; otherwise, repayment of Advance may be required.
- Travel Advances may be obtained 10 days before the program start. Please notify EA if you will be leaving Fort Collins before the start of your program, so that a travel advance can be requested earlier. EA will email Travel Advance requests and will notify you when you can pick up your check from the CSU Travel Office (555 Howes – 3rd floor suite 314).
- All Travel advances will be in the form of a check and can be cashed at any First National Bank Office or deposited into personal accounts for the purpose of making smaller withdrawals.

Things to remember

- Obtain & submit ALL receipts related to program expenses. If individual tickets cannot be collected for group events, provide a sample ticket with a bank statement showing a total group payment.
- Obtain and submit itemized receipts for hotels, meals, ground transportation or other expenses.
- A receipt book is recommended for documenting cash-based transactions under $25, which are not easily obtainable (e.g. for taxis, etc.). A receipt book should not be used for more than 10% of expenses or for any expenses over $25.
- Alcohol may not be purchased with program fees and should not be purchased by faculty/staff for students at all.
- Using a travel card is highly encouraged for expenses incurred while abroad. This card must be applied for through the academic department and will help to keep program expenses separate from personal expenses.
- Bank statements are an alternative way to document actual expenses and current exchange rates.
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- EA program fees should be used for excursions or activities and should benefit all group members, and not be used for some program participants more than others.

Post-trip procedures

Reporting Program Expenses

- All expenses must fall within the CSU Financial Rules for Travel. They must also be documented with itemized receipts for all group and individual purchases related to the program expenses.
- Please contact your EA liaison if you have any questions regarding allowed expenses or financial documentation PRIOR TO PURCHASE otherwise repayment cannot be guaranteed.
- Please use a receipt log to number and document your receipts and expenses. Submit those to your OIP Education Abroad liaison within 2 weeks of the return date.
- EA will organize the receipts and prepare a post trip voucher for signatures.
- If receipts are submitted without indicating the exchange rate, then the rate will be is determined using OANDA, typically based on at least a weekly basis or possibly daily basis in periods of great economic flux.
- Faculty or staff will be contacted to schedule a time for questions and post-trip signatures. Expenses that exceed 15% of the original estimate will require the document to be rerouted for all signatures.
- Personal monies used to pay program fees are typically reimbursed by the Travel Office to faculty/staff within three to six weeks.

Additional CSU Resources

- [CSU Financial Rules and Procedures](#)
- [Quick Reference Guide to University Travel](#)
- [Pocket Travel Guide](#)