

Guide to Evaluating Potential Study Abroad Sites and Providers

(Based on Document by Tracy Harrington, VSU)

General Concerns

1. Transportation and accessibility: Are direct flights available from the US? If not, what are the most economical and convenient routes? How convenient is the site to the airport at which groups would arrive? How accessible is the site to destinations (a) within the city, (b) within the country and (c) within the region? How convenient and economical is ground transportation likely to be within the city and the region? How early and late do public transport systems operate? How central is the location within the country?
2. Name recognition and appeal: Is the city/site known to Georgia students and faculty? Are general associations with the site positive?
3. Security issues: How safe is the city, the site itself, and the region for American students and faculty? Are the campus and residences secure and is access limited to residents or their guests? Are there 24-hour security officers on site?
4. Health-related issues: How would emergency health care needs be met? Is there a dispensing clinic on site or nearby?
5. Dates: How flexible is the site regarding program beginning and ending dates? Are there dates when the site would NOT be available?
6. Are residences, academic buildings, and dining facilities accessible for persons with disabilities? Are field trip sites and public transport accessible for the disabled?

Residence and Eating Facilities

1. Are residences for students and faculty adjacent to or on the same site as teaching and dining facilities? If not, how convenient is travel to and from residences and teaching facilities?
2. Are student residence facilities single or double accommodations? How many people share bathroom facilities? Are bathroom facilities reasonably modern, by US standards?
3. What is the maximum number of students that can be housed?
4. Do student facilities have spaces for social gatherings, evening entertainment, etc? Is there a campus bar or pub; if so, what is its standard and what amenities (pool, music, television, etc.) does it offer?

5. Is the student facility in pleasant, safe surroundings? Are there outdoor gathering areas for students?
6. Are facilities likely to be comfortable in temperature extremes? Is a/c available? If not, are fans available or economical to purchase?
7. Do facilities include students from the host country or other countries or are American students likely to encounter only other Americans while in residence?
8. How convenient to residence halls are dining facilities? Are there 24-hour or late night resources for getting food or drink?
9. What is the quality of food and efficiency of service in dining facilities? Are menus negotiable; for example, can we choose continental or full, cooked breakfasts, hot meals or packed lunches?
10. How would faculty be housed? Are faculty residences convenient to but apart from student residences? How convenient are faculty residences to dining and teaching facilities? Can faculty spouses or partners be accommodated?
11. How accessible is public transport from residences for students and faculty? How long does it take to get from residences to (a) teaching facilities and (b) the city center?
12. Do residence halls have telephones that can be used for both outgoing and incoming calls? Are public telephones convenient?

Teaching, Computer, and Academic Support Facilities and Personnel

1. Describe classroom facilities. Are basic media, such as overhead projectors and slide projectors, available? Are blackout rooms available?
2. How many students can be accommodated in a single classroom? How many classrooms could be allocated to the program?
3. Are computer resources with word processing and internet capabilities available? How many computers would students have access to?
4. Are there library holdings of English language books and videos available for our students and faculty? How large are these holdings?
5. Is there a faculty office available or can one be arranged that can accommodate faculty for planning, faculty meetings, etc.? Can such an office include at least two computers with word processing and internet access for faculty members?

- Can a telephone be provided in the office for use in planning field trips and excursions?
6. How would photocopying needs be met?
 7. Can a small fridge as well as tea and coffee services be arranged in the faculty office?
 8. Is there a program assistant or other local person available to assist faculty with field trip planning, troubleshoot problems with facilities, and assist in times of emergency or crisis? Is a program assistant available to arrange airport transfers at arrival and departure?

Resources for Field Trips, Excursions, and Entertainment

1. How plentiful and varied are resources for academic field trips in history, literature, the arts and architecture, social sciences (anthropology, sociology, psychology), business, education, and natural sciences?
2. Are there sufficient significant field trip destinations within the city to for the day-long field trip visits over the course of the program?
3. Are field trip sites easy to reach, so that one-way transit time would be less than an hour and a half on public transport?
4. What sites are within easy distance of the city for longer, group excursions or weekend explorations? Can personnel on site assist in arranging group excursions (hiring buses, arranging group admission)?
5. At most museums, historical sites, etc., are English-language commentaries or printed materials available?
6. What resources are available for faculty and students for entertainment, beyond the academic or cultural resources? (Clubs, theatre, sporting facilities, cultural events, nightlife, etc.)

Budgetary Considerations

1. What would per-person costs be for a basic package (residence, meals, teaching rooms, academic support facilities and personnel)? How negotiable are these costs? What is the overhead/profit percentage charged for the package, per person?

2. Do room costs include linen and cleaning services? How frequently are rooms cleaned/linens changed?
3. Is the meal package flexible; i.e., does the service provider offer ONLY a fixed number of meals, or can we choose how many meals per day we want?
4. What travel passes (city, regional, country) are available, and how much do these cost? Are there special, reduced rates for students?
5. Can students and faculty take advantage of reduced-fare entrance fees for museums, theaters, and historical sites? Do these tend to have free admission or minimal fees, or are they relatively costly?
6. Is the general cost of living comparable to, say, London or New York, or is it lower? How much would you estimate students would need for extra expenses over the course of the program? What relatively cheap options are available for eating/drinking in the city and when travelling outside the city?
7. When travelling, are youth hostels or comparable facilities available for cheap accommodations?

Other

1. What unique advantages or disadvantages does the site have?