

**Procedure for Creating a MBU May Term or Summer Study Abroad**

**Step 1: Develop a proposal**

Proposals for a new May term and summer abroad course should submitted no later than **March 15** of the academic year prior to the year in which the course is to be offered. For new May term and summer abroad programs, advance preparation of 1-2 years may be necessary, especially if the site is listed on the State Department’s Travel Warning list.

The proposal form is available on the faculty/staff website here: [website link]

**Options:**

Design Your Own

The Spencer Center staff is available to help talk through decisions about program location, content and structure.

It is advisable to choose destinations based on the relevance of the particular country, region, culture or community to course content; it is also helpful if one or both faculty leaders have experience or expertise in the region. Be sure to address risk management and safety concerns for travelling to your intended destination. Check the State Department’s Travel Advisory List for warnings about travel before starting serious planning. Information regarding travel advisories can be found here: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

Use a Third Party Provider

Third-party study abroad providers (both for-profit and non-profit) offer pre-planned programs as well as customized programs for faculty-led short-term courses.

For faculty members who are interested in focusing their attention on the academic aspects of the program rather than travel plans, third-party providers will develop a proposal and price quote free-of-charge for a short term program abroad. One advantage of these providers is that typically the employees are site experts who can manage all logistics including flights, transportation, lodging, site visits, activities and more. Sometimes the providers send a program coordinator with the faculty-led program so that the faculty can dedicate more time to teaching. Be aware that costs will likely be higher with this model.

Many of these organizations will develop a course itinerary based on faculty interests and course topics, along with a price estimate. These materials should be submitted to the ALC along with the May term and Summer Abroad Course Proposal Form.

Some third party providers that MBU has worked with in the past:

International Studies Abroad (ISA): <http://cp.studiesabroad.com/build-your-program>

Academic Studies Abroad (ASA): <http://www.academicstudies.com/advisors/faculty-led-groups>

CIS Abroad: <http://www.cisabroad.com/customized-programs>

CAPA: <https://www.capa.org>

The Spencer Center Assistant Director has a working relationship with each of these organizations, and can connect you with our campus representative.

**Step 2: Submit proposal for review**

As stated above, all proposals are due **by March 15**. If completed earlier, proposals can be submitted prior to the deadline.

The Academic Leadership Committee (ALC) reviews May term and summer course proposals to determine the suitability of the course for meeting general education or other degree requirements, and to ensure a range of May term abroad courses featuring different geographic and disciplinary options.

In its review, the ALC will consider:

* + Integrity and coherence of course content, as well as “fit” with MBU academic offerings;
  + Appropriateness of the destination or host country;
  + Evidence of adequate preparation and ongoing communication with host institution or organization in the destination country

[Note: See May term and Summer Study Abroad Policies for other guidelines regarding courses.]

The program will either be approved, sent back for more information or changes, or denied.

Common requests for more information could include more information about the academic content of the course or the host organization/partner in country, more attention to risk management (health & safety) aspects of the program, or concerns about the cost.

**Step 3: Send Program Information to the Spencer Center**

Once the program proposal is approved, send the following Program Information to the Spencer Center by April 10 (globalengagement@MBU.edu) so that it can be placed on the Study Abroad website:

Course title and number Pre-requisites, if any

Instructors Estimated dates and duration

Destination(s) Brief (500 word) description of program

Estimated Cost Photo of site (colorful and appealing)

**Step 4: Begin Recruitment**

Faculty leaders should take advantage of all opportunities to recruit program participants, including class announcements, hosting a table at the September Civic and Global Engagement Fair, presentation at the first fall International Café, scheduling interest meetings, etc.

Keep in mind that the deadline for MBU study abroad scholarships is October 1, so begin recruitment as early as possible. Starting in the spring before students leave campus is advisable.

Please note the following considerations for specific student groups:

**Visas and Special Immigration Circumstances**

Students who are not US citizens may need to apply for a visa to enter the destination country. The Spencer Center staff can assist students in applying for visas if needed.

Students who are interested in studying abroad under DACA status or other special immigration considerations are strongly recommended to consult an immigration lawyer before leaving the country. Mary Baldwin University is not responsible for violations of students’ legal status.

**Underage Students**

MBU students under the age of 18 are routinely admitted into MBU May Term and Summer Abroad programs. The only differences in processing these students include the need to request additional input from the Executive Director of the Program for the Exceptionally Gifted during the Student Life check stage of the application process, and obtaining parental signatures on two forms:

1. Assumption of Risk, Release, and Indemnification for Participation in International Activity
2. Conditions of Participation in International Activity

An 18+ age restriction may be set for programs which are determined to have a higher degree of risk, indicated by the country of destination’s placement on the State Department’s Travel Warning List.

Some third party providers may not allow students under age 18 to participate on their programs.

It is recommended that individuals under the age of 18 not traveling with a parent or guardian carry a note from both parents or the guardian stating, "I acknowledge that my child is traveling out of the country with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He/She/They has/have my/our permission to do so."

* The US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) takes this a step further by suggesting that the note be notarized.
* See the following link for information: <https://help.cbp.gov/app/answers/detail/a_id/449/~/traveling-with-children---minors-under-18-years-of-age-traveling-to-another>

**Students with Disabilities**

The following statement describes Mary Baldwin University’s responsibilities in assisting students with disabilities to study abroad.

Mary Baldwin University faculty-led May term and summer abroad programs will endeavor to make any May term and summer course accessible upon request during the application period.

Students with disabilities seeking to study abroad are advised to:

(1) disclose the nature of their needs early so that accommodations can be made;

(2) carefully research study abroad options in terms of destinations, program length, activities, language, housing and transportation options, learning environment, and food, and

(3) discuss how they will be accommodated in their program destination, and the ways they will describe their requests to people in that country.

Mobility International provides helpful resources: <http://www.miusa.org/>

**Underrepresented Students**

A major challenge across the nation and on our own campus is increasing the participation of African-American, Latino, and Native American students, as well as first generation college students, men and people with disabilities, in study abroad.

Reasons cited for low enrollment of students from these groups include:

* parent discomfort with or lack of support for study abroad,
* finances,
* the perception that study abroad is for “rich kids,”
* lack of awareness of available scholarships,
* fear of discrimination abroad,
* concern over immigration status and legality,
* lack of faculty leaders or program representatives who identify as they do
* limited programs with material pertaining to their majors,
* concern about delaying graduation,
* lost wages from not being able to work abroad,
* study abroad advertising that does not reflect racial or ability status diversity.

The Spencer Center is dedicated to continuing the conversation about increasing our enrollment of underrepresented students in study abroad to better mirror our on-campus student population. Faculty can be a part of this process by ensuring that any under-represented students on May Term Abroad programs are provided with the proper resources to have a safe, successful and engaging time abroad. Spencer Center staff can assist with this process.

Other tips for faculty include:

* Seek a diverse group of faculty/staff members to serve as program leaders;
* Provide detailed study abroad information for parents. Many parents who have not had an opportunity to travel themselves may be very wary of their child studying abroad. Often parents are uncomfortable with the idea of their child leaving the country with a group that might not understand the needs of particular groups;
* Seek out relevant information or resources for students;
* Encourage students to plan early (first or second year) and to talk to the Assistant Director in the Spencer Center about potential scholarship availability.

**Step 5: Refer to the “May Term/Summer Study Abroad Checklist for Faculty Leaders”** for a complete timetable of steps.