Oversight Transition of UGA Field Study Programs to the Office of International Education

1. Background

Effective immediately, all previously approved faculty-led field study programs running Fall 2019 onward will go through an annual planning process managed by the Office of International Education. The planning process will cover academic, financial, and risk management aspects of the program. This policy is being implemented in conjunction with a number of improvements to UGA’s field study processes that include:

- Use of the GoAbroad.uga.edu portal for field study that provides a one-stop-shop for program information, recruitment, student applications to programs and scholarships, and resources for faculty directors and administrators.
- Improved data collection and reporting on field study participation at the institutional, college, and departmental level, that will be available directly to academic unit heads and their designees.
- Streamlined financial processes that will allow programs to pre-budget expenditures and focus on the actual costs of running programs.
- Enhanced risk management through improved insurance coverage for all program participants.

2. Rationale

This planning process brings UGA in alignment with guidelines articulated by national organizations and with best practices at peer and aspirational institutions. The overarching goal is to expand student access to and participation in UGA field study programs while ensuring that:

- Programs are academically rigorous, meet unit, college, and university learning goals and objectives and comply with SACS principles for reaccreditation;
- Program budgets are appropriate to support the academic program, follow all UGA budgetary rules, and are mindful of both student affordability and allocation of state resources; and
- Programs include student and faculty risk management considerations in their design.

3. The Planning Process

The annual planning process begins soon after the conclusion of a field study program. Program directors will initiate the planning process through the one-stop GoAbroad.uga.edu portal by submitting the following materials for academic, financial, and risk management review:

a. Academic

Program directors will submit academic program information, including courses to be offered, instructors, course syllabi, and program itineraries, to ensure it is consistent with approved course information in CAPA and complies with academic policy. These materials will be initially reviewed by Curriculum Systems and forwarded to unit heads of relevant departments/colleges in which these courses are housed for review and approval of academic content.
b. **Risk Management**

Program directors will submit destination details and a daily itinerary as part of this process. Having this information on hand allows OIE to anticipate any risk factors that need to be considered in advance of approving the program and allowing students to enroll, and be able to provide effective support to program directors in event of an emergency during the program.

c. **Financial**

Program directors, with help from OIE staff, will develop and submit a budget that reflects both instructional and program costs and incorporates risk management considerations. OIE will provide support for allowable instructional costs for the program. Once OIE has confirmed the amount of support to be provided and the program cost to student has been established, no changes can be made to these amounts without express approval of OIE.

Program information submissions will be reviewed and approved as they are received and programs will be informed about approval or for additional information within 4 weeks.

### 4. Responsibilities

a. **Faculty director**

The responsibility for initiating the planning of a field study program resides with the faculty director of the program. It is his/her responsibility to gather relevant academic and risk management materials, secure sign offs of respective academic unit heads, and develop the budget and destination details for submission.

b. **Department heads and deans**

It is the responsibility of academic unit heads to review the syllabi and course content of their courses being offered as part of field study programs. Their signature denotes that the courses meet the department’s requirements in terms of content and credit hours and that the faculty indicated as the instructors of record are qualified to teach the respective courses. In addition, the department head and dean of the academic unit in which the program is housed need to sign off on the proposal as a whole indicating that the field study program is consistent with the academic mission and goals of the unit. Unit heads will also be given the opportunity to view and comment on the overall program budget.

c. **Office of International Education**

OIE will be responsible for receiving and reviewing all field study program planning materials, and keeping program directors and academic unit heads informed about the status of the review. OIE will consult with program directors, unit heads, and the Office of the Vice President for Instruction as necessary during this review. The final authority for program planning will reside with the Associate Provost for International Education.

### 5. Benefits to the UGA community

a. **Field study Students**
As a result of this process, potential field study students will have standardized and transparent information about all field study programs well in advance of the program being offered. This will increase the likelihood of students choosing UGA programs versus programs of other universities or third party providers. The GoAbroad.uga.edu portal will facilitate the receipt of applications, provide comparable financial information, and provide a one-stop-shop for scholarship applications.

b. Field study directors and faculty

The annual program planning process will provide assurance to program directors that their programs and courses have the formal support of relevant academic units. There will be an early determination of OIE financial support for the program, allowing program directors to make decisions regarding program viability/recruitment goals. OIE will have the most up to date and vetted information on the program to display on the GoAbroad.uga.edu portal and allow academic and field study advisors to inform potential students about their program. Program directors will benefit from the functionalities of the GoAbroad.uga.edu portal, which will help in recruitment, application management, communication with students, and allow them to generate targeted reports. As OIE field study advisors gain access to the most up-to-date knowledge of their programs, the OIE Education Abroad unit will be better able to align its services to the needs of faculty directors. Faculty directors can count on ongoing training and assistance from Education Abroad staff on using the GoAbroad Portal and on program budgeting and risk management. It should be noted that the program planning process will eliminate the need to apply separately for OIE’s approval of “major changes” in the program.

c. Department heads and deans

Academic unit heads, as a result of this annual process, will gain full knowledge about their unit’s courses that are being taught abroad. This will allow a better integration of field study programming with on-campus academic offerings. They will be able to review course content and syllabi to ensure the academic quality of their courses and program. Unit heads will benefit from powerful reporting capabilities that will allow them to view enrollment and credit hour trends over time and view student evaluations to demonstrate successes in their field study programs to donors and other stakeholders.

OIE is offering a comprehensive package of services for program directors, office managers, academic administrators, and students taking part in the programs. These services include:

- program marketing,
- online application system,
- online program brochure page and cost of attendance information,
- online deposit gateway,
- comprehensive risk management system ensuring that all participants comply with necessary paperwork and have access to health and safety information and tools,
- help with various aspects of field study programs,
- assistance with student enrollments, including course set up for student billing,
- processing students withdrawals, billing, and refunds,
- assistance with account management,
- risk management training and tools,
- ongoing support and training for users of the GoAbroad Portal,
- online program evaluations in compliance with institutional accreditation standards.