

## 2015-2016 VCU Education Abroad Budget Planning Suggestions

The following are important considerations and some helpful tips in preparing your program budget. A fillable Budget Planning Form along with comprehensive budget planning information can be found on the Education Abroad website: <http://www.global.vcu.edu/abroad/faculty/>

### Consideration #1

Program cost is one of the primary barriers to study abroad. Our goal is to offer high-quality, affordable programs. Good budget planning helps achieve that.

### Consideration #2

The main cost categories include: faculty leader expenses, student housing and meals, local honoraria and stipends, and excursions and transportation. Careful planning in each will help give students get the most value for their money.

### Consideration #3

Paying directly in advance for as many program expenses as possible will simplify fiscal matters on the ground as well as reduce tedious record keeping and the delays and complications often encountered in completing complicated reimbursements.

### Tips

1. Determine the costs in each of the program categories. Seek out the most efficient means of getting good value for lower cost in as many of the expense categories as possible.
2. Determine which educational tours, museum visits, excursions, etc. are pedagogically critical for your program and include them in your budget. Limiting these will reduce the overall program cost and speed the reimbursement process. You are welcome to make available to students optional trips, excursions, etc., which students electing to participate can then pay directly in-country.
3. Contact any and all relevant program service providers and/or vendors to determine their quotes for fees/services to be included in your budget (student lodging, program provider fees, etc.). Some program providers require signed contract documents. Please request and submit them to the Education Abroad Office as soon as possible to ensure that your program is approved. Try to work as directly as possible with service providers versus contracting a third party intermediary/liaison that is likely to charge an extra fee for services.
4. Determine if you would like to include participant airfare as part of your program fee (note that VCU cannot purchase tickets until the program has met the minimum enrollment quota.)
5. Determine and specify all of your additional transportation needs – shuttles, public transportation, taxis (likely minimal), van/bus rentals, gas (estimated), etc. Paying a single vendor to coordinate transportation in advance will potentially reduce headaches with reimbursement.
6. In order to ensure an expeditious reimbursement process, the Global Education Office strongly recommends a maximum of two group meals paid for by the program director- an initial meal on-site to discuss program goals and another at the conclusion to discuss each participant's experiences. Note that all meals must include itemized receipts and may not include alcohol. Group meals may include faculty and participants (any other individuals attending should be approved in advance). Please justify any additional group meals that you plan on including beyond the two.
7. Determine if you'll include honoraria in your budget such as faculty lectures, etc. GEO will provide receipt forms you can fill out for providers to sign on-site.

8. Recognizing that faculty director expenses are borne directly by student fees, except in rare circumstances the Global Education Office will not approve lodging and/or meals and incidentals rate for faculty directors over 50% of the site-specific State Department listings found here: [https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per\\_diem.asp](https://aoprals.state.gov/web920/per_diem.asp)

Please submit a completed budget planning sheet before scheduling an appointment with our Fiscal staff.

You may refer to the Faculty Leader Handbook for additional guidance and helpful information:

<http://www.global.vcu.edu/media/geo/pdf/education-abroad/VCUEducationAbroadProgramLeaderHandbook2015-2016.pdf>