

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL OF FOREIGN SEMESTER AND YEAR-LONG STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS ESTABLISHED BY ABA-APPROVED LAW SCHOOLS

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Preamble

The Council has adopted three sets of Criteria applicable to study abroad: Criteria for Approval of Foreign Summer and Intersession Programs Established by ABA-Approved Law Schools; Criteria for Approval of Semester and Year-Long Study Abroad Programs; and Criteria for Student Study at a Foreign Institution.

Standard 307 provides that a law school may not grant credit toward the J.D. degree for studies in a foreign country unless those studies are approved in accordance with the *Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools* and *Criteria* adopted by the American Bar Association's Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar.

The ABA's oversight role with regard to study abroad programs is designed to provide assurance of a sound educational experience in a study abroad program sponsored by an ABA-approved law school.

The Criteria related to study abroad provide a framework for law schools to grant students credit toward the J.D. degree for studies abroad. They seek to provide flexibility for a school to design programs and to permit study abroad consistent with the law school's mission while maintaining a level of oversight of the school's program of legal education that is consistent with the role and scope of the *Standards for the Approval of Law Schools*.

These Criteria recognize that the primary responsibility for determining the quality of the educational experience that students receive during a study abroad experience rests with the faculty and administration of the law school.

The *ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools* shall apply to study abroad programs except as modified by the Criteria or by necessary implication.

I. The Program

A. The dean and faculty of the sponsoring law school (or schools if there is more than one sponsoring law school) are responsible for formulating and administering the foreign semester and year-long study abroad program.

B. The faculty of each of the sponsoring law school(s) must approve the academic content of the program in the same manner as the curriculum of the sponsoring school's on-campus program.

C. The academic content of the program must meet the same standards, including evaluation of student performance, as the on-campus program of the sponsoring school(s).

D. A substantial portion of the academic program must relate to the socio-legal environment of the host country or have an international or comparative focus.

E. The number of students enrolled in the program shall not exceed the number appropriate for the academic content of the program, available facilities, the number and availability of faculty members, the administrative support structure, and any special educational program goals.

II. Faculty and Staff

A. Program Director

1. The sponsoring law school(s) must provide a program director who will be present onsite for the duration of the program and who must be appointed with the approval of each of the sponsoring law schools.
2. The program director must be a tenured, tenure-track or full-time faculty member from the law school (or one of the co-sponsoring law schools). A visiting professor to one of the co-sponsoring law schools is not considered a full-time faculty member for purposes this provision.
3. The program director must be well qualified by experience with the sponsoring law school (or one of the co-sponsoring law schools) to provide leadership and appropriate faculty oversight of the program for the sponsoring school(s).
4. The requirement of a continuous presence of the program director may be satisfied by having more than one program director serving at different times as long as one program director who satisfies subsection A.1. is on site at all times and there is provision for continuity of administration and oversight.
5. The director may not participate concurrently in another program.
6. The director shall have had some experience with the same or a similar program or possess a background that is an adequate substitute for such experience.

B. Faculty

1. In addition to the director, the sponsoring law school(s) shall assign at least one tenured, tenure-track or full-time faculty member from the law school (or one of the co-sponsoring law schools) who will be present onsite for the duration of the program.

a. A visiting professor to a sponsoring law school is not considered a full-time faculty member for this provision.

b. The requirement of a continuous presence of a tenured, tenure-track or full-time faculty member from the sponsoring law school(s) may be satisfied by having different faculty members from the sponsoring law school(s) participating in the program at different times as long as one faculty member who fulfills subsection B.1. is on site at all times.

2. Faculty members who are not from the sponsoring law school(s) shall possess academic credentials equivalent to those of the faculty at the sponsoring law school(s) and must be approved to teach in the program in the same manner as required for an adjunct faculty appointment at the sponsoring law school(s).

3. All faculty teaching in the program must be able to communicate effectively with the students in the language of instruction used in the program.

C. The program director or at least one member of the full-time faculty or on-site staff must:

1. Be fluent in both English and the language of the host country, and

2. Be familiar with the country in which the program is offered.

III. Program Administration

A. The program must have a staffed administrative office or other mechanism in place that is convenient to students and through which the students may communicate effectively with staff and faculty in a timely manner.

B. Students must be provided with the name and contact information of the program director or another responsible person onsite who can be reached at all times during the program.

C. The program director shall be provided with appropriate assistance, including secretarial and administrative support.

D. Faculty members shall be provided with adequate secretarial support services.

IV. Educational Program

A. Although a student in an ABA-approved law school may be permitted to take courses in foreign segment programs during the course of study toward the J.D. degree, the total credits in foreign segments shall not exceed one-third of the credits required for the J.D. degree at the law school in which the student is enrolled.

B. Credit shall be stated in terms of credit hours according to the following formula: one semester hour for each 700 minutes of class time or equivalent or one quarter hour for each 450 minutes of class time or equivalent.

C. Language of instruction

1. If instruction is not in English, students must be fluent in the foreign language in which courses are taught or provided with a translation.
2. When instruction is offered in a foreign language with consecutive English interpretation, the time expended in class is not commensurate with class time spent when instruction is in English. For purposes of calculating required class minutes for required class hours, classes in which consecutive translation is necessary may not count more than fifty (50) percent of actual class time expended.
3. When instruction is offered in a foreign language with simultaneous English interpretation, the time expended in class is commensurate with class time spent when instruction is in English. For purposes of calculating required class minutes for required credit hours, classes in which a simultaneous interpretation is needed may be counted at one hundred (100) percent of actual class time expended.

D. If credit is given for externship placements (e.g., in a law firm, government office, or corporation), then faculty supervision must be individualized and integrated with classroom work to ensure that the credit allowed is commensurate with the educational benefit to the participating student. Additionally, the program must meet the other requirements of Standard 305(d) and (e) and Interpretations thereof. (i.e., a clear statement of goals and methods; adequate instructional resources to supervise program and be available to students; clearly articulated methods for evaluating student performance involving both a faculty member and a field placement supervisor; methods for selecting, training, evaluating and communicating with field placement supervisors; periodic review following the school's established procedures for approval of the curriculum.)

E. If credit is given for Distance Education courses, those courses and credits must comply with the requirements of Standard 306 and the Interpretation of that Standard.

F. The sponsoring law school(s) shall determine whether specific prerequisites are required for enrollment in certain courses.

G. The program shall include at least two visits to legal institutions in the host country. Time or a portion of the time allocated for visits to legal institutions may be calculated in the 700 minutes per class credit hour only when the content of the visit is academic in nature and specifically related to the class for which the credit is being awarded.

H. The sponsoring law school(s) shall offer students at or shortly after the conclusion of the program an opportunity to evaluate in writing both the foreign study program and the faculty and courses offered in the program.

V. Library

A. In accordance with Standards 601 and 702, the program must have or must provide acceptable access to a library and study facility adequate for its academic program. This requirement may entail development and supervision of the library holdings by the sponsoring law school librarian.

B. Library holdings must be adequate to support the course offerings of the academic program, including any research component.

VI. Students

A. The sponsoring law school(s) shall determine the academic criteria for admission to the program.

B. Students enrolling in a semester or year abroad study program for credit toward a J.D. degree must have completed at least one year of full- or part-time law study at an ABA-approved law school or a law school described in Standard 506(a)(1) prior to enrolling.

C. All students must furnish a letter or other documentation from their dean or registrar certifying their current good standing.

D. The sponsoring law school(s) may include participants other than those described in VI.B., provided that such participation does not detract from the law school's ability to maintain a program that meets the requirements of these Criteria and the Standards.

VII. Physical Facilities

A. The faculty shall be provided with office space adequate to achieve the purposes of the program.

B. Classrooms must provide adequate seating with writing surfaces for students, sufficient lighting, and adequate soundproofing.

C. Equipment necessary for the teaching of scheduled courses and administration of the program must be provided.

D. Adequate facilities for studying must be available to students.

E. Housing

1. Students must be informed if the housing made available by the program is significantly lower in quality, sanitation, or safety than housing normally used by law students in the U.S. and must be provided with information regarding the cost and availability of better quality housing in the same area.
2. If the program does not provide housing, information on the availability, quality, approximate cost, and location of housing must be provided.

VIII. Cancellation, Change, or Termination of Programs

A. If a program is subject to cancellation for insufficient enrollment or any other reason, the circumstances under which cancellation will occur must be disclosed in accordance with Section IX.15.

B. If a program is subject to cancellation, application materials must include information regarding what arrangements will be made in the event of cancellation, as well as any history of prior cancellations.

C. If changes are made in the course offerings or other significant aspects of the program, those changes must be communicated promptly to any registrant who has paid a deposit or registered for the program, and an opportunity must be provided for that person to withdraw.

D. State Department Travel Information

1. As part of the registration materials for the program, the school shall supply the U.S. State Department Country-Specific Information for the country(ies) in which the program will be conducted. If the Country-Specific Information for the country(ies) is revised prior to or during a program the updated information must be distributed promptly to students.

2. Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts

- a. If, prior to the commencement of a program, a U.S. State Department Travel Warning or Alert covering program dates and destinations is issued for the country(ies) in which the program will be conducted, all registrants must be notified promptly and be given an opportunity to withdraw from the program.

- b. If, during the course of a program, a U.S. State Department Travel Warning or Alert covering program dates and destinations is issued for the country(ies) in which the program is being conducted, students must be notified promptly and given an opportunity to withdraw from the program.

E. Refund Policy

1. If students withdraw as permitted in Sections VIII.C., VIII.D.2.(a) or VIII.D.2.(b) prior to the commencement of the program, or if a program is canceled, students must receive a

full refund of all monies advanced within twenty (20) days after the cancellation or withdrawal.

2. If students withdraw as permitted in Sections VIII.C., VIII.D.2.(a) or VIII.D.2.(b) during the course of the program, or if the program is terminated, students must be refunded fees paid except for room and board payments utilized prior to the date of termination or withdrawal.

IX. Disclosures

The following information must be disclosed when program information is initially made available to prospective students (i.e., on the program website, in the initial announcement or brochure, and in any communication sent directly to prospective students):

1. Dates, location(s), description of the program, and anticipated enrollment;
2. The nature of the relationship with the foreign institution, if any, other than the provision of facilities and minimal services;
3. The number of students who participated in the program the previous year from the sponsoring law school(s) and the number from other schools (if the program is open to other students);
4. If the program is not limited to students from U.S. law schools, the countries likely to be represented and the expected number of students from those countries;
5. Description of each course and number of credit hours;
6. Schedule of classes with days and times for each class;
7. Requirements for student performance and grading method;
8. Enrollment limitations on any courses offered and criteria for enrollment, including prerequisites;
9. A statement that acceptance of any credit or grade for any course taken in the program, including externships and other clinical offerings, is subject to determination by the student's home school;
10. Descriptive biographies of program director;
11. Descriptive biographies, including academic credentials and experience, of each faculty member responsible for teaching a course or any portion of a course;

12. Name, address, telephone, e-mail and fax number of an informed contact person at (each of) the sponsoring law school(s);
13. Complete statement of all tuition, fees, anticipated living costs, and other expected expenses;
14. Description and location of classrooms and administrative offices;
15. The extent to which the country, city, and facilities are accessible to individuals with disabilities;
16. Circumstances under which the program is subject to cancellation, how cancellation will be communicated to the students; what arrangements will be made in the event of cancellation, and information about any prior cancellations, if any;
17. State Department Travel Information; and
18. Refund policy in the event of student withdrawal as permitted in Section VIII, or program cancellation or termination.

X. Procedures for Approval

A. Established programs previously reviewed and approved by the Accreditation Committee will be reevaluated with a site visit every seven years.

B. New Programs

1. A school or schools seeking to establish a new program must submit an application in the form required by the Consultant's Office by October 1 of the year preceding the first offering of the new program. The application shall contain the following information regarding the impact of the program on the sponsoring school:

- a. A statement of finances for the proposed program, including income and expenditures, and an assessment as to the degree to which funding for the program affects the program of the parent campus;
- b. The current accreditation status of the sponsoring school; and
- c. A statement of how the program relates to the academic program and mission of the sponsoring school.

2. If the program faculty changes after the questionnaire has been filed, the sponsoring school(s) shall promptly notify the Office of the Consultant of the change.

3. On the basis of the written submission, the Accreditation Committee will determine whether to approve the program for its first year of operation.

4. If the Accreditation Committee grants approval, the program will be evaluated with a site visit during its first year of operation. The Accreditation Committee will then determine whether to approve the program for further operation on the basis of the site evaluation and written materials submitted by the school.

C. Approval after the first year, if granted, is effective for five years. If the program continues to be approved following that review, then the program will be subject to continuing review in accordance with paragraph A. and D.

D. Monitoring of Approved Programs

1. If it is determined that a program is operating out of compliance with these Criteria, approval may be withdrawn by the Accreditation Committee.

2. To assist the Accreditation Committee in monitoring semester abroad programs, a questionnaire shall be filed each year. New programs shall file a new program questionnaire by October 1. Approved programs shall file an annual questionnaire by October 15 and programs subject to a site visit shall file a site visit questionnaire by October 15.

3. The Accreditation Committee may ask for further information or direct a site visit of an approved program in any year where responses to the questionnaire suggest that the program is out of compliance with these Criteria or that the program has so substantially changed its focus or operation that its compliance with the Criteria cannot be determined without further information and, potentially, a site visit. Examples of actions or changes that might trigger this review include:

- a. failure to timely file the annual questionnaire;
- b. submitting an incomplete questionnaire;
- c. number and nature of the concerns raised in the most recent review of the program;
- d. significant change in location of the program (country, city, or specific location);
- e. changes in the curriculum that significantly reduce the comparative or international focus of the program;
- f. continuing turnover in the administration of the program;

- g. significant change in the enrollment in the program;
- h. adding a new externship program or a substantial increase in the enrollment in existing externship programs; and
- i. a persistent pattern of complaints by students in the program regarding the quality of the educational experience or the administration of the program.

E. Change of Location

1. If the location of an approved program is changed by changing the city in which the program is conducted, adding one or more additional cities or sites to the program, or changing the institution or other facility at which the program is located, written notice of such change shall be provided to the Consultant no later than October 1 of the year prior to the implementation of the proposed change.
2. The sponsoring school(s) shall file a New Semester Abroad Program Questionnaire no later than October 1 of the year prior to the implementation of the proposed change, but the school(s) need not pay the fee assessed for applications for approval of new foreign summer programs.
3. The Accreditation Committee will review the information submitted concerning the proposed change and determine whether a site evaluation is necessary to evaluate the program's compliance with the Criteria in light of the changes in the program. If the Committee determines that such a site evaluation is necessary, the sponsoring school(s) will be required to pay the fee established for Evaluation of Major Changes in Foreign Programs.

F. Expiration of Approval. If an approved program is not offered in two consecutive years, approval is withdrawn and the sponsoring school(s) must reapply for approval of the program as a new program. This requirement may be waived by the Accreditation Committee for good cause shown.