Thanks to the University of Delaware’s long legacy of study abroad, IGS has established a strong body of data demonstrating that short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs are a successful and worthwhile educational endeavor. To the surprise of many skeptics, short term faculty-led programs have been shown to build global citizenship, improving competencies in host-site knowledge, cultural awareness, and tolerance of both ambiguity and diversity. However, research has also shown that subject-based learning in a foreign context does not necessarily generate these outcomes. Developing global citizens on short-term programs requires smart program design. The Best Practices elaborated below will help to ensure that students achieve the level of academic enrichment that you – as faculty directors – strive to instill, as well as the global competencies that will set them apart from their peers throughout their careers. These practices are based on national and international standards set by NAFSA: Association of International Educators and the Forum on Education Abroad, the wealth of knowledge of IGS’s programming team, as well as UD’s 40+ years of experience with faculty-led programs. We encourage you to consider the following 20 Best Practices as you bring your academic expertise into the exciting world of education abroad.

**Structure:**

1) Slow down – The Grand Tour has long since been replaced by more evenly-paced programs that allow students time to read, reflect, and establish connections. Teach students to be global scholars, and allow them to become travelers on their own. Also, packing a program with touristic activities not only adds to the cost, but also detracts from its academic focus.

2) Size matters – A group of 20-30 students is the perfect size for encouraging active participation and personal reflection. While taking a larger group could save money, it often makes students feel removed from the place and part of a massive group, and unable to make deeper connections that are so important for global learning.

3) Consider access for all – We strive to make study abroad available to all students, regardless of their backgrounds. Lower cost equals more access. Remember that your choices for location, accommodations, flights, and excursions will significantly impact who can participate.

**Logistics:**

4) Less is more – Choose program locations and excursions that will lead to the best discussions about your courses, the place, or the people. Less time spent on buses or trains means more time for students to develop cultural awareness and knowledge of their host site. Time is a primary resource on short-term programs; use it wisely as you design your program.

5) Use travel experts only when you need them – Travel agents and tour guides can be helpful, but often aren’t necessary. Making your own program arrangements ultimately gives you more control over the program content, keeps down the cost, and gives you a chance to build a network of local contacts.

6) Manage expectations – One of the best ways to ensure a happy and successful program is to make sure that students know what to expect. If they cannot drink the tap water, or their access to WiFi will be sporadic, tell them. Students need to hear not only the incredible things about your site, but also the inconveniences, potential dangers, and most glaring differences that may startle them. You are the expert. Tell them what they need to know.

**Academics:**

7) It’s not a trip, it’s an academic program – A standard 6-7 cr. study abroad will include 70+ hours of organized academic content (about 14 hours per week). This will include relevant out-of-class visits and activities that may count as class time similar to how a lab or field trip may count on campus. The goal is for students to engage fully with course material and the program location, gaining a deeper understanding of the place and its people, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of normal instructional
requirement for credit. If it's safe to do so, include a few free days in the middle, providing students the opportunity to make discoveries on their own, but remember that programs typically begin, end, and focus consistently on academics.

8) Focus on your strengths – Similar to #5 above, take students to places you know well, where you can be your own expert. Guest speakers and excursion hosts can be excellent additions to your courses, but they are often costly. It’s important to strike a balance. Building your program around sites that you know well helps keep study abroad affordable and makes for a more coherent program.

9) Teach in the term – Respect the fact that students have busy semester schedules, and limit your orientation meetings to 2-4 meetings (3-5 total hours). The goal is to prepare students for the experience, but to keep the teaching (and assignments/grading) confined to winter or summer.

Safety, Behavior & Liability:

10) Encourage resilience and resourcefulness – Encourage students to be their own problem solvers, and look for ways to resolve issues on-site. If they need help beyond what they (and you) can provide, ask that they contact their IGS Study Abroad Coordinator directly, along with a quick summary of what they have done so far to help resolve the matter. Communicating directly with students, and not their parents, is key.

11) Encourage and model responsible behavior – Students must uphold the UD Code of Conduct and positively represent the University. This means no drunken behavior, no cheating, nothing disruptive or disrespectful. If students act inappropriately, contact IGS to confer on next steps. Alcohol consumption continues to be a major cause of problems abroad. Lay down the law – in advance and during your program. Additionally, for your own well-being, do not drink with your students. All it takes is one “funny” photo to ruin a career.

12) Know where your students are, even on free weekends, IGS will rely on you to reach a student in case of an emergency. If they are spending a night away from the group, make sure you know how to reach them.

13) Stay put and be reachable – Even on free weekends, students and IGS may need your assistance, and need to know how to reach you. We recommend staying in the main program location while your students travel. This makes it easier for them (and us) to reach you in an emergency, and saves you the frustration (and personal expense) of traveling back to help resolve an issue.

14) A few don’ts – High risk activities (adventure sports, zip lining, etc.) are a liability to the University, and should not be a part of study abroad programming. Driving on study abroad is also discouraged. Learning all of the official (and unofficial) rules of the road can be a challenge, and the decisions you make behind the wheel could put you – and the University – at risk.

A Few Rules:

15) Target enrollment – Taking 14 students (1 faculty) or 28 students (2 faculty) helps to keep programs affordable, both for UD and our students.

16) Program assistant – If you accept more students into your program than the target number, you may need some help. To this end IGS can cover approved travel costs for a program assistant for programs enrolling at least 18 students (single director) or 32 students (co-directors). (Some programs may require higher enrollments in order to qualify for an assistant, depending on their overall budget.)

17) Travel in the term – Respect the fact that UD and travel agents may be closed for holidays at the start or end of winter/summer session and may therefore not be able to assist if you have a problem. Schedule your flights for days when IGS is able to respond to flight, housing and last-minute emergencies.

18) Minimum enrollment – Your Coordinator can help you to navigate the challenging waters of study abroad budgeting. In general, all expenses covered by IGS (i.e. not included in the students’ program fee—things like faculty travel costs and classroom rental) should total no more than $1000/student for a standard program (or $700/student for a UDMicromester).
19) Budget guidelines – Before you go, carefully read the guidelines on spending UD funds abroad, and ask your Coordinator to clarify if you have questions. This is the best way to avoid spending funds on an unallowable expense, and having the unfortunate surprise of paying for it out-of-pocket.

20) Deadlines – Coordinating 70+ programs per year is no easy feat. IGS deadlines are scheduled to best meet the needs of the many people, teams, and UD units involved. Submitting materials by our deadlines helps to insure that we successfully do our part of the job.

**Last Important Note:**

21) Don’t panic – IGS and your Study Abroad Coordinator provide support through every stage, from program development to budgeting to guidance in a crisis abroad. All study abroad programs are collaborative efforts. You have access to a wealth of resources on our website, from friendly tips to samples and boilerplate. The IGS database provides detailed applicant information in a variety of reports. We do our best to make sure that you’re prepared to direct a successful study abroad program. Along the way, if you have questions or concerns, just ask us – we’re here to help.