

PACIFIC LUTHERAN UNIVERSITY
Wang Center for Global and Community Engaged Education
Policies and Guidelines: Essential and Non-Essential Accompanying Adults and Minors
in PLU Study Away Programs
Approved by the GEC on May 17, 2013
Updated June 30, 2026

INTRODUCTION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Below are the guidelines, policies, and procedures regarding the accompaniment of three categories of persons other than PLU student participants on PLU study away programs: essential adults, non-essential adults, and non-essential minors. For purposes of this policy, study away programs include, but are not limited to, Gateway and Featured semester programs; J-Term, Alternative Spring Break, and Summer Study Away courses; MBA Global Business Perspectives programs; MSW Comparative Health Care programs; Alumni Travel Seminars; and credit-bearing off campus field-courses. By way of introduction, the principles guiding these policies for study away programs are:

- When leading, teaching, or assisting PLU study away programs and courses, the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant assumes student safety and security as a first priority alongside the quality and centrality of the students' academic and intercultural learning.
- PLU is committed to the development of all faculty/staff in the area of global education, a commitment that must be supported by a policy that enables faculty program leaders, site coordinators, and program assistants to travel with family members if necessary.

1.- GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES, FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR ESSENTIAL ACCOMPANYING ADULTS

In limited cases, at the discretion of the Wang Center and in consultation with the Provost, financial support can be provided for accompanying adults that contribute essential services to the program's implementation abroad. Examples of "essential services" include, but are not limited to, the following circumstances:

- The accompanying adult is selected for the Program Assistants Professional Development Opportunity
- The accompanying adult is a person with expertise in the course content and/or has experience and contacts on site that will significantly enhance the quality of the course/program
- The accompanying adult provides additional leadership support

Decisions regarding support of accompanying adults performing essential course/program-related functions for a study away program will be made based on the budget or program fees of the program for which the assistant is being requested, the strength of the submitted rationale, and financial considerations such as travel, lodging, and course enrollments.

Not all requests will be met. Additionally, when considering a selection of candidates for participation in a study away program as an accompanying adult performing essential program duties, preference will normally be given to PLU faculty or staff.

A. Procedures

1. A request through this [Google Form](#) for support for the addition of an essential non-PLU accompanying adult to a study away program must be submitted at least six months prior to the program start date to the Program Manager, Wang Center for Global and Community Engaged Education. The request must include the following:

- name(s), age(s), relationship(s) of the accompanying adult and dates of their travel
- documentation of credentials of accompanying adult if relevant (e.g. a CV or Bio)
- rationale for providing support for other adult
- recommended compensation for the accompanying adult if that person will be contributing a significant academic component to the program
- backup plan in the event that the accompanying person should require emergency medical attention
- backup plan in the event that the accompanying person should withdraw from the program for any reason
- statement that outlines what travel arrangements, if any, the Wang Center will make for accompanying adult

2. The notification will be reviewed by the Wang Center Executive Director and program administrators as appropriate for consideration of liability implications. Final written approval will be sent out between three and five months prior to the program start date.

3. Subsequent to approval, a Service Contract will be drawn up and must be signed by the accompanying adult performing essential services by no later than two months prior to the study away program in which he or she will be participating.

4. The program leader/site coordinator/program assistant must demonstrate that all accompanying persons have adequate domestic and international (if applicable) health insurance (medical expenses and evacuation and repatriation) coverage during off-campus travel.

5. For essential accompanying adults who hold Service Contracts with the Wang Center, a complete background check must be provided before contract is finalized. Essential accompanying adults who do not complete a background check should not spend time one-to-one with students.

6. Essential accompanying adults must sign PLU's Statement of Responsibility and Authorization Release form.

2.- GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR NON-ESSENTIAL ACCOMPANYING ADULTS

An adult may accompany the program leader/site coordinator/program assistant of a study away program for the duration of the program or a significant portion of the program as long as it does not interfere with the leader's duties to the program and students. For minors accompanying the program leader/site coordinator/program assistant, please see guidelines and procedures in Section 3.

A. Procedures

1. If planning to travel with accompanying person(s) in a study away program, a program leader must submit a request through this [Google Form](#) at least six months prior to the program start date. The notification must include the following:

- name(s), age(s), relationship(s) of the accompanying persons and dates of their travel
- description of steps that will be taken to ensure that accompanying persons will not disrupt the academic and intercultural experience of PLU students enrolled in the

- study away program
 - backup plan in the event that the accompanying person should require emergency medical attention
2. The notification will be reviewed by the Wang Center Executive Director and program administrators as appropriate for consideration of liability implications. Final written approval will be sent out between three and five months prior to the program start date.

B. Financial Obligations, Pre-Travel, Insurance, and Other Arrangements

1. All travel arrangements, accommodations, and any other associated expenses are the sole responsibility of the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant and their non-essential accompanying adult. This includes any expenses incurred during a crisis situation. The Wang Center will not make arrangements or payments on behalf of a non-essential accompanying adult, but can provide limited information pertaining to itineraries and logistics.
2. Program funds may not be used to pay for accompanying persons. This information must be made transparent for all those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student fees are subsidizing non-participants. The only exception to this rule are PLU Gateway Semester Program Site-Directors, who may utilize their travel allowance to pay for accompanying person's travel. For more information on Gateway Program Semester Site-Director Travel Allowances, see Supplemental Appointment Statement provided to and signed by the Gateway Site Director.
3. Unless there is a per-person cost for accommodations, accompanying persons may share the program leader's/site coordinator's/program assistant's accommodation. Responsibility of costs of additional rooms and other per person costs rests with the program leader/site coordinator/program assistant.
4. Accompanying persons are not permitted to share accommodations with students.
5. Program leaders/site coordinators/program assistants are responsible for obtaining passports and visas for all non-essential accompanying persons.
6. The program leader must demonstrate that all accompanying persons have adequate domestic health insurance (medical expenses and evacuation and repatriation) coverage during off-campus travel.

C. Expectations

1. The non-essential accompanying adult must complete a background check if they will be present for more than one week. Please have the background check sent to the Program Manager.
2. The non-essential accompanying adult must sign PLU's Statement of Responsibility and Authorization Release form.
3. The non-essential accompanying adult shall not assume any responsibilities related to the academic program.
4. Participation of non-essential accompanying adults in program activities is at the discretion of the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant; however, consideration should be given first and foremost to the effect on the student experience. Costs for any program activities remain the sole responsibility of the non-essential accompanying adult.

3.- GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES FOR ACCOMPANYING MINOR DEPENDENTS

A faculty leader's/site coordinator's/program assistant's children or legal dependents under the age of 18 may accompany the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant for the duration of the program or for a significant portion of the program as long as it does not interfere with the leader's duties to the program and students. As stated in the [PLU Minors on Campus Policy](#), faculty leaders/site coordinators/program assistants are expected to supervise their accompanying minor throughout the study away program. For children under 15, a second adult is required to care for the child(ren) and be available 24/7 should an emergency arise. Programs arranged with assistance from a third-party program provider may require additional policies or documentation.

A. Procedures

1. If planning to travel with dependent minors on a study away program, a program leader must submit a request through this [Google Form](#) at least six months prior to the program start date. The notification must include the following:
 - name(s) and age(s) of the accompanying dependent minors and dates of their travel
 - description of steps that will be taken to ensure that accompanying dependent minors will not disrupt the academic and intercultural experience of PLU students enrolled in the study away program
 - a statement outlining backup plans in the event of the following three scenarios: the program leader must respond to a program emergency, the program leader requires emergency medical attention, the minor requires emergency medical attention.
2. The notification will be reviewed by the Wang Center Executive Director and program administrators as appropriate for consideration of liability implications. Final written approval will be sent out between three and five months prior to the program start date.

B. Financial Obligations, Pre-Travel, Insurance, and Other Arrangements

1. All travel arrangements, accommodations, and any other associated expenses for any dependent minors are the sole responsibility of the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant. This includes any expenses incurred during a crisis situation. The Wang Center will not make arrangements or payments on behalf of any accompanying dependent minor, but can provide limited information pertaining to itineraries and logistics.
2. Program funds may not be used to pay for accompanying dependent minors. This information must be made transparent for all those involved in the program, especially the students, so there is no misunderstanding that student fees are subsidizing non-participants. The only exception to this rule are PLU Gateway Semester Program Site Directors, who may utilize their travel allowance to pay for accompanying minor's travel. For more information on Gateway Program Semester Site Director Travel Allowances, see Supplemental Appointment Statement provided to and signed by the Gateway Site Director.
3. Unless there is a per-person cost for accommodations, accompanying dependent minors may share the program leader's accommodation. Responsibility of costs of additional rooms and other per person costs rests with the program leader.
4. Air, lodging, and local transportation arrangements are made to accommodate the needs of the students and program leaders and not of accompanying dependent minors.
5. Accompanying dependent minors are not permitted to share accommodations with students.

6. Program leaders are responsible for obtaining passports and visas for all accompanying dependent minors.
7. The program leader must demonstrate that all accompanying dependent minors have adequate domestic health insurance (medical expenses and evacuation and repatriation) coverage during off-campus travel.

C. Expectations

1. The faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant and accompanying dependent minor must sign PLU's Statement of Responsibility and Authorization Release form.
2. Participation of accompanying dependent minors in program activities is at the discretion of the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant; however, consideration should be given first and foremost to the effect on the student experience. Costs for any program activities remain the sole responsibility of the faculty leader/site coordinator/program assistant.
3. Hiring participating students for child-care purposes is not acceptable. Doing so creates a dual relationship between professor and student, with potential for conflict of interest.

4.- SUGGESTED GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY/SITE COORDINATORS /PROGRAM ASSISTANTS CONSIDERING TRAVEL WITH MINORS

For children under 18, please consider a limited power of attorney when a second adult is not present.

The following additional suggested guidelines are borrowed from the *The Guide to Successful Short-term Programs Abroad* 2nd Ed¹ co-edited by Sarah Spencer, Director of Study Abroad at the University of St. Thomas in Minnesota:

Previous program leaders offer the following guidelines and considerations. Before you invite accompanying minors on your study away program, as well as when you prepare for the program's departure, please give these guidelines consideration.

General Guidelines

- Program leaders should use their best judgment regarding interaction between their students and accompanying adults and children. Careful consideration should be made about the different aspects of your course, such as classes, lectures, site visits, group dinners, and overnight excursions, and when interaction with your guests is appropriate and when it is not.
- If co-directing a program, consider the impact of accompanying minors on the other leader. Seek approval and consensus of expectations from your colleague before making a final determination. Also consult with in-country hosts (university, program provider, tour operator, etc.) if applicable.
- Accompanying minors should be adequately prepared for the program, just like your students. What can they expect regarding travel? What cultural resources are available? How will they prepare for a different language?
- If you have organized a group check-in at the airport, accompanying minors should check-in separately – either before or after your group. This allows program leaders to focus on students' questions and excitement, as well as to meet their parents.

¹ Spencer, Sarah E. and Tuma, Kathy, *The Guide to Successful Short-term Programs Abroad*, 2nd Ed., Washington, D.C.: NAFSA, 2007.

- Depending on the course location, consider what kind of lodging and transportation will be used by accompanying minors.

Suggestions/Questions from Past Program Leaders with Children

- How does your child deal with routine and transitions? How will travel affect children in regards to their routine and what obstacles need to be considered? What portions of the routine from home can be transported, maintained and/or adapted for travel?
- What kind of foods or dietary changes need to be addressed? What will you do with a picky eater? (Suggestion – bring their favorite foods and snacks.)
- How will you handle the potential disruption of the child's routine, especially on days when the program moves (e.g. travel days)? How will you handle unexpected (for 'typical toddler to preschool') behavior from your child, especially if the child is near the student group?
- Spouses/partners should be prepared to be a solo parent for a significant portion of the program, especially if you maintain a shared-parenting model at home. Depending on the program, leaders may be busy in the evenings with student dinners, reflection, or debriefing meetings or events.