

**POLICIES AND GUIDELINES:
SHORT-TERM PROGRAM ASSISTANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY**

*Approved by Provost, Global Education Committee, and Human Resources on February 16, 2016
Updated April 21, 2026*

PLU's Short-Term Study Away Program Assistant program was created in 2003 as part of the university's global and cross-cultural education initiatives. Administered through the Wang Center for Global and Community Engaged Education, it aims to provide PLU faculty and staff with a demonstrated interest in global education with the opportunity to participate in one of PLU's short-term programs in a support capacity. The program aims to provide faculty and staff with a first-hand experience of PLU's study away opportunities. Additionally, it is designed to continually broaden and deepen the understanding, within the PLU community, of the institution's mission-driven commitment to global education.

For health and safety reasons as well as to best support the faculty leader, students, and the program assistant's own experience, the program assistant is expected to have their full attention on their duties supporting the short-term study away program. To achieve this, applicants for the Short-Term Program Assistant Professional Development Opportunity are expected to work with their supervisors to limit their on-campus job duties for the duration of the study away program.

All program assistants serve in a faculty-support capacity. Compensation, however, will vary based on employment status.

Exempt Status

- Faculty and staff with exempt status that are selected for the opportunity will have their time be considered paid work time (not vacation) and the university will cover their travel expenses. Additionally, vacation and sick time will continue to accrue. No additional compensation will be paid.

Nonexempt Status

- Staff with nonexempt status that are selected for the opportunity will have their time be considered paid hours worked (not vacation) and the university will cover their travel expenses. Additionally, vacation and sick time will continue to accrue. Overtime will be paid (but every attempt will be made to limit overtime) including travel time, for the length of the program. Please refer to the [Nonexempt Travel Policy](#) for additional information about compensable time.
- For the purposes of this policy, the 40-hour work schedule for a program assistant is determined in collaboration with the faculty program leader and requires final approval from the Wang Center Executive Director.
- Per the Washington State Department of Labor, "Hours worked" is defined as, "all hours during which the employee is authorized or required, known or reasonably believed by the employer to be on the premises or at a prescribed workplace." When working hours cannot be held to forty hours in the PLU work week, nonexempt employees are entitled to overtime compensation at the rate of 1 1/2 times the regular pay.
- Overtime hours need prior approval by the Wang Center.

Below is an outline of the guidelines, policies, and procedures for the application, selection, duties, and responsibilities of program assistants for PLU's short-term programs.

Eligibility

Contingent on pre-approval of staff supervisors and VPs and faculty chairs and deans as appropriate, all benefits-eligible (0.50 FTE and above) PLU faculty and staff that have been employed by the university for at least one year by study away program start date are eligible to apply for the Short-Term Program Assistant Professional Development Opportunity.

Application

The online application for short-term faculty-led programs occurring in 2027 will open in May 1, 2026. To receive consideration for the Short-Term Program Assistant Professional Development Opportunity, candidates must submit their complete online application by June 15, 2026.

Selection Process

Because the number of applications exceeds the number of opportunities available, the following criteria will guide the selection of short-term program assistants. The highest priority will be given to candidates whose participation in the Short-Term Program Assistant Professional Development Opportunity will have a measurable impact on the future of PLU's Global Education efforts. Special consideration will be given to faculty intending to lead a study away program in the future and to staff members that have not previously served as short-term program assistants. Other selection criteria include: the need for gender balance, for a unique program or site-specific skill set, or for a second PLU representative in the case of a large program (over twelve students). Because the program was conceived as a PLU employee professional development opportunity, faculty spouses and partners that are not PLU employees normally will not be approved as program assistants. NOTE: Non-PLU faculty spouses or partners may be eligible for travel under "Policies and Guidelines: Essential and Non-Essential Accompanying Adults and Minors in PLU Study Away Programs." See: <https://www.plu.edu/wang-center/documents/plu-policy-guidelines-for-accompanying-persons/>

To maintain consistency, transparency, and fairness in the program, short-term program leaders may recommend a program assistant candidate but their selection is not guaranteed. Final review and approval of selected program assistants will be determined by the Executive Director of the Wang Center in consultation with Human Resources and the Provost.

Notification of Selection

All applicants will receive notification on the outcome of their applications no later than October 1, 2026.

Program Assistant Duties and Responsibilities

Selected program assistants are required to participate in all pre-departure orientations and must carry out their assistant role for the full duration of the program. On-site, program assistant duties and responsibilities will be determined in consultation with the program leader and may range from administrative and logistical support to taking the lead in a crisis management situation. Selected program assistants are required to submit a reflection on their experience within thirty days of the end-date of the program in which they participated.

Travel Accommodations and Restrictions

Please note the following notes on travel accommodations, limitations, and restrictions:

- Program Assistants normally receive private accommodations
- Travel plans normally do not deviate from established group travel
- Seat upgrades or other personal preferences for food or lodging will be at the Program Assistant's own expense
- Program Assistants normally do not travel with accompanying partners or minors.
- ADA needs and requirements are consistent with the "reasonable accommodations" policy and may or may not be available outside the U.S.