

EDUCATION ABROAD

Policy on Accompanying Individuals

The following guidelines apply to all individuals accompanying study abroad programs sponsored by The Ohio State University. While Ohio State does not restrict resident directors from bringing an accompanying spouse, partner or legal dependent(s) on study abroad programs, it is not a practice that is encouraged. Ohio State reserves the right to impose limits and/or conditions on the roles, activities and presence of accompanying individuals. Such limits or conditions derive from concerns related to health, safety or security as determined by Ohio State. In some cases, accompanying individuals may not be permitted to join the study abroad group for some or all activities.

- 1. Accompanying Individual Deadline:** Accompanying individual(s) requests must be made by the program application deadline, at the latest. The Office of International Affairs will review requests on a case-by-case basis. Requests made after the deadline can be considered, but may be denied if logistical and payment deadlines have passed.
- 2. Resident Director Responsibility:** The resident director assumes far greater responsibility than overseeing the academic content of the program. Resident directors must be available on a 24/7 basis to program participants while the program is in session. Programs administered by Ohio State are designed by academic units as complete programs focusing on both the curricular and student development needs of participants. Ohio State expects resident directors to serve as the program participants' primary contact and to be the first responder to a participant emergency. In the event that the program needs to depart the country for political, natural disaster or other reasons, the resident director's responsibility is to travel with the group.
- 3. Definition of Accompanying Individual:** An accompanying individual is considered to be the spouse, partner or legal dependent of the resident director. Grandchildren, nieces, nephews or other relatives and family friends who are not legal dependents are not allowed to accompany a program unless they are enrolled as Ohio State students participating in the program.
- 4. Supervision of Minor Children:** Accompanying individuals who are children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by another supervising adult. Hiring or relying on program participants for childcare during the program is not acceptable. An additional relative or nonrelated adult is permissible so long as their role is to serve as a primary childcare professional while the resident director(s) are performing program duties. Such persons must follow the conditions and requirements of the policy on accompanying individuals.
- 5. Roles and Expectations of Accompanying Individuals:** Accompanying individuals are not considered in any way to be resident directors, program staff or official representatives of Ohio State. Therefore they should take no role in leading the group or making decisions regarding the program or program participants. Accompanying individuals are not protected by the university liability insurance. Although accompanying individuals are not program staff or participants, they are expected to abide by all program policies and any additional restrictions that are imposed for safety reasons.
- 6. Arrangements for Accompanying Individuals:** Due to logistical and risk management considerations and State of Ohio ethics laws, the strong preference is for accompanying individuals to participate as a full program participant.

- **“Full Program” Individual:** Accompanying individuals who wish to participate in all program travel or events (e.g. group flight, field trips, museum visits, group meals) will be responsible for paying the full unsubsidized program fee plus any necessary additional expenses not included in the program fee. Accompanying “full program” individuals are not permitted to enroll in the program via the Office of Extended Education. Accompanying “full program” individuals are expected to participate in all program events; there should be no ad hoc selection of which events to opt into or out of.

Requests for partial arrangements will be reviewed by the Office of International Affairs and approval will be based on feasibility of in-country logistical and payment options and compliance with Ohio State travel policies and State of Ohio Ethics laws.

- 7. Expenses of Accompanying Individuals:** All expenses for “full program” individuals must be paid within two weeks from the date students have been admitted in the program. If the accompanying individual withdraws prior to the program start date, the resident director may only receive a partial refund if “non-recoverable costs” cannot be avoided. By paying the program fee, “full program” individuals will receive the same inclusions (accommodations, transportation, services, meals, etc.) as the students. Any additional expenses for meals or extra activities are the responsibility of the resident director and the accompanying individual. Program funds can only be used toward expenses of paying participating members. Payment arrangements for partial participation will be determined when the request is being reviewed. Therefore if the accompanying individual does not pay the full program fee, he or she will not participate in activities or use any services provided to the group.
- 8. Liability, Preparation and Insurance for Accompanying Individuals:** It is the responsibility of resident directors and accompanying individuals to ensure they have made arrangements for proper documentation and health concerns for travel overseas. In preparation for travel, accompanying individuals are encouraged to read all pre-departure materials and participate in orientation sessions. Ohio State is not responsible for the injury, illness, loss or death of accompanying individuals. Approved accompanying individuals must also enroll in the GeoBlue Supplemental Insurance required of resident directors and program participants. In order to enroll in the insurance, the program resident director must be already enrolled in the OIA plan. Accompanying individuals must enroll directly with GeoBlue via a Group Health Insurance Enrollment Form provided by international risk manager, Dru Simmons. The 2016-17 daily rates for accompanying individuals are:
 - Spouse: \$4.25
 - Child: \$2.20
 - Children: \$4.40

Payment (check, money order, credit card) must be made directly to GeoBlue when submitting the form. OIA must receive verification of the enrollment prior to departure. All insurance premiums, additional medical costs and costs associated in the event of an evacuation are the responsibility of the accompanying individual.

Those resident directors and accompanying participants who understand and are willing to meet these conditions must submit an Accompanying Individual Information Form and sign an Acknowledgement of Risk and Release document by the study abroad application deadline for the relevant program. These forms must be submitted to the education abroad coordinator assigned to the program. The ability of an individual to accompany the program is not final until these documents have been submitted and approved by the international risk manager.

