

PPA Australia Short-Term Group Trip - June 2012

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

Last updated: November 21, 2012

This document outlines the terms of participation for participants in this international group trip to Australia. The purpose of these terms is to ensure your safety and that of other participants, to protect the interests of Texas A&M University, Mays Business School, the Professional Program and to honor and protect the relevant people and institutions in the host country.

The document is organized in two sections: risk (physical and financial) and conduct. Please be sure to read this entire document in depth and ask questions about it if needed. There will be several pre-departure meetings over the course of the Spring 2012 semester, during which some of these risks will be discussed in greater detail.

You will attend an on-site orientation meeting after arrival to address such issues as cultural adjustment, safety, "dos" and "don'ts" of the host culture, housing, academics, and cultural activities. Following the rules of conduct and the guidelines set out by the program will reduce (but not eliminate) these risks. It is imperative, therefore, that you exhibit proper care and judgment while overseas.

RISKS

This field trip, like any other, involves a variety of risks. The most important ones are physical and financial in nature.

I. Physical Risk

While on this trip, you will be exposed to a variety of physical risks. These physical risks, while small, are larger than those of ordinary life. This is not because the destination is inherently more risky; rather, it is because you will be in an environment where you may not always be well-equipped to properly assess that risk. Below are some (but not all) of the risks you should consider.

- A. *Travel*. The most obvious examples of elevated risk involve local transportation in Australia. Even though local travel is generally very safe, it is important to know that the risk of bodily harm here is elevated, up to and including death.
- B. *Medication*. If you regularly take any kind of medication, it is wise to bring a sufficient amount to last you for the duration of the field trip including any possible travel delays. It is your responsibility to ensure that any medication is packed in such a way as to not violate the travel rules set by the Transportation Security Administration (for more details, see <http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm>).
- C. *Harm inflicted by others*. The chances of you becoming a victim of any kind of violent crime are low. Nevertheless, like in any other big city, violence sometimes erupts and it cannot be ruled out completely.

II. Financial Risk Prior to Departure: Withdrawal Policy

- A. You are incurring a significant financial risk prior to even embarking on this field trip. You will have paid the field trip fee in full as part of your Spring 2012 tuition and any refunds of this fee will be subject to the withdrawal policy below.
- B. If you wish to withdraw after having paid the field trip fee (or portions thereof) you must withdraw by notifying Joan Sanders in writing. An e-mail does not suffice; a signed letter is required. The letter must be hand-delivered to Joan Sanders in 487C Wehner.
 - i. Depending on the timing of the withdrawal, you may be refunded a pro-rated amount:
 1. Refunds will be made in accordance with the Study Abroad Withdrawal Policy for Faculty Led Programs (attached to end of this document)

2. If you withdraw during your stay in Australia, you will forfeit all fees and any non-recoverable expenses made on your behalf. You will also not be able to participate in any of the group activities; this specifically includes the hotel room accommodations.

III. Financial Risk After Departure

- A. *Theft, damage, loss.* The main financial risk you will incur as a result of participating in this trip is theft or damage to your personal property. This includes, but is not limited to, cell phones, laptop computers, backpacks, and passports. Your luggage (bag, suitcase and /or contents) may be damaged as a result of air or ground transportation. While robbery is unlikely, especially if you travel in groups, pick-pockets are active in all major cities. Many items get stolen on trains or trams without the owner ever realizing what happened. Besides pick-pockets, a significant risk is posed by thieves who work together (example: one distracts you while the accomplice snatches your purse or bag when you are not looking). **The responsibility for your personal property is solely your own.**
- B. *Expenses.* You will be expected to carry a cellular phone with you at all times in Australia. You are responsible for maintaining a sufficient balance on the account to ensure that you can be reached at any time. You are also responsible for all incidental expenses, which include individual activities during open days, souvenirs, airline fees for extra luggage, co-pays for doctor's visits, co-pays for medication, etc.
- C. *Receipts.* In those cases where you are expected to keep receipts of the expenses associated with the field trip (not including expenses that are discretionary), it is your responsibility to maintain those records. Without those receipts, you will not be able to receive reimbursement.
- D. *Electrical equipment.* Australia uses different electrical outlets and voltage than the US. Most modern electrical equipment is equipped to handle the conversion with an adapter (more information will be provided). However if you use an adapter on a device that is only designed for 110V (US standard), you will destroy your equipment. Ensuring compatibility is your responsibility.
- E. *Credit cards and payment issues.* Most credit cards charge international service fees for each transaction. It is your responsibility to be fully informed. Some credit card companies will block their customers' cards if purchases are made abroad. It may be in your best interest to inform your credit card provider of your travel plans. Credit cards are generally very useful for ATM withdrawals, but many retailers (for example, grocery stores) do not accept them. In that case, cash is your only option.
- F. *Travel.* The costs associated with any additional personal travel (such as on one of the open days) are yours. You will receive a meal allowance on those days. If you wish to extend your stay in Australia at the conclusion of the course, this may result in an increase in the price of your airline ticket. This difference is also your additional cost.

IV. Other Risks

Invalid travel documents. It is your responsibility to ensure that you have a passport that is valid through your intended return date. If you cannot produce this document on the day of the flight to Australia, you will not be able to participate in the field trip. This would lead to forfeiting the field trip fee.

RULES OF CONDUCT

- I. Company Visits/Academic Sessions
 - A. Students are expected to dress professionally (Guys: coat, tie, nice shirt, slacks, dress shoes; Girls: coat, nice shirt, nice skirt/slacks, dress shoes)
 - B. Students are expected to be on time and prepared.
 - C. Students are expected to be well-rested, attentive, taking notes, and asking questions.
 - D. It is recommended that students be in by midnight the evening before we have professional visits/presentations so they will be fresh for our meetings.
 - E. Students are expected to treat all company employees with respect.
 - F. Chewing gum is not allowed.
 - G. Texting or any cell phone use is not allowed during company visits/academic sessions.

- H. Eating food and drinking beverages of any kind are not allowed during company visits/academic sessions unless offered by the host.
- I. Students are expected to thank the host before leaving.

II. Hotel Behavior

- A. Your behavior in the hotel lobby, hallways and in your room should always reflect well on Texas A&M University. Loud talking, loud music, slamming doors, and other disruptive behavior will not be tolerated. Alcohol should not be consumed in the lobby or hallways.
- B. Theft of any item from the hotel (including towels, pillows, blankets, etc.) is theft, is no different from stealing university property, and will be dealt with accordingly.
- C. During your program you will typically have a shared room. For safety reasons, no one is allowed to enter your room that is not affiliated with the PPA Australia Group Trip Program or the hotel staff. This includes persons you may meet during your free time day or night, as well as friends or relatives not with our program. Please respect your roommate.

III. Coach (Bus) Behavior

- A. No consumption of alcohol.
- B. No lying or sleeping in the aisles. No backpacks, luggage, etc. in the aisles.
- C. No talking with the coach driver while he or she is driving.
- D. Seat belts are to be worn while the coach is in motion.
- E. No eating of messy foods on the bus. Snack items, soft drinks, etc. are allowed.
- F. Failure to keep the coach tidy will result in the suspension of snack and drink privileges.
- G. Do not leave litter under your seat, on the seat, in the aisle, or in the overhead shelf. Litter bags are provided and should be used.

IV. Alcohol Abuse/Binge Drinking/Public Intoxication

- A. It may be tempting to stay out a little too late (or even the whole night) or drink a little too much when you are overseas. However, this type of behavior often leads to several problems:
 - 1. It jeopardizes your own safety and the safety of others;
 - 2. It diminishes your alertness for company visits/academic sessions;
 - 3. It reflects poorly on Texas A&M University; and
 - 4. You may be at risk of being arrested by local authorities for public intoxication or behavior caused by alcohol abuse/binge drinking.
- B. Any alcohol abuse/binge drinking/public intoxication will be dealt with as a disciplinary case in an appropriate manner by the PPA Australia Short-Term Group Trip Program Leader. It can lead to expulsion from the program and immediate return to the U.S.

V. Other

- A. Please ensure that you are in the company of at least one classmate at all times. This is helpful during the day, and particularly important at night. For safety reasons, students should not take side trips by themselves.
- B. Any side trip must be discussed in advance with your faculty. If a side trip is undertaken, faculty must be provided with the names of all who are going, destinations, time of departure, time of arrival, return and arrival times, and mode of travel.
- C. Please ensure that you have a cellular phone and maintain sufficient balance to ensure that you can be reached – or can call for help – at any time. You can either bring your own U.S. phone (so long as it is set to work in Australia) or you can purchase a pre-paid phone in the airport. Be sure the phone is charged at all times and that you have the phone numbers of your teammates and the instructors programmed in your telephone correctly. Please observe any instructions or requests for periodic check-in by voice or text, and respond to incoming voice or text messages from the instructors and/or director as soon as possible.

- D. All rules of behavior for Texas A&M University apply to PPA Australia Short-Term Group Field Trip Program, the same as if you were sitting in a classroom on campus (see <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule24.htm>). This includes the unlawful use or possession of narcotics, drugs, drug paraphernalia, and any other type of behavior that cause distractions or disruptions to the program or that reflect poorly on Texas A&M University.

PENALTIES FOR VIOLATION OF RULES OF CONDUCT

1. Serious or repeated violations of the Rules of Conduct, including being late for meetings, appointments or leave times, put one at risk of being expelled from the program.
2. Any student who is expelled from the program for Rules of Conduct violations will be required to arrange their own transportation back home (including bus/train/airfare expenses) and will not be allowed to physically stay with the group after their expulsion. The overall cost of an expulsion can be substantial and will be born directly by the offending student.

SIGNED AGREEMENT TO THE TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

I have read the Terms of Participation, understand its content, and agree to abide by the provisions contained therein. I understand that these guidelines are designed to provide a safe, healthy and enriching environment for all participants, and to provide a positive representation of Texas A&M University. I understand that failure to comply with these rules shall result in disciplinary action, which could include expulsion from the overseas program. I also understand that in the event of expulsion I will assume the cost of transportation to return to the U.S., I shall receive no refund of any money paid to Texas A&M University.

Date

Signature

Print name

After signing, you are to turn in this form along with your "2012 PPA Australia Short-Term Group Trip Application" and make one copy to take with you on the trip.

Study Abroad Withdrawal Policy for Faculty Led Programs

I. General Guidelines

Your request to withdraw and potentially receive a refund must be made in writing by letter or email. In your withdrawal notification, please include your reasons for withdrawing from the program, such as finances, time conflict, academic reasons, or illness. Upon notification of your intent to withdraw from the program, your study abroad liaison will update your record. It is your responsibility to withdraw from any course related to the study abroad program, as you would with your regular campus courses. The university policies regarding tuition and fees for dropping a course will apply to your study abroad courses.

The Study Abroad Programs Office has no control over airline payment and refund policies. If you withdraw from the program after you purchase your airfare, you need to contact your airline carrier regarding its refund policy. If a study abroad faculty-led program is canceled due to unforeseen circumstances (i.e. natural disasters, war or civil unrest, posting of U.S. State Department Travel Warning, pandemic, etc.), all efforts will be made to recover any funds already expended on your behalf. If you are concerned you may not be able to complete your study abroad program, we recommend you purchase travel insurance. Please refer to the International Insurance section of our website (<http://studyabroad.tamu.edu>) for possible options.

II. TAMU Faculty- Led Programs

Once your application for a study abroad program is reviewed and accepted, you will have 10 days to confirm that you will participate on the program. Log into the Aggies Abroad Portal, access your program application, then click "Confirm." Shortly thereafter a \$300 confirmation payment will be posted to your Texas A&M student account; \$150 of that amount is non-refundable. If you withdraw after the Drop Date (see chart on page 2), the \$300 Confirmation Payment will be forfeited, as well as any non-recoverable program expenses. If you withdraw 31-60 days before departure, you will forfeit 50 percent of program fees plus any non-recoverable expenses. If you withdraw 1-30 days before departure, you will forfeit 75 percent of your Program Fees plus any non-recoverable expenses. Students who withdraw once the study abroad program begins (after the time of the group departure) will forfeit all program fees. The total penalty for withdrawal will never exceed 100 percent of the program costs.

Example: A student notifies the Study Abroad liaison that he/she is withdrawing from a program 47 days prior to the program start date. Per the terms of this policy, the student is responsible for 50% of the program cost in addition to any non-recoverable expenses that exceed that amount. Half of the program cost is \$2,500, but at this point, \$900 has been paid on the student's behalf. The vendor has a 50 percent cancellation policy, so \$450 is not recoverable. The student's financial commitment at that point is \$2,500 PLUS \$450, for a total financial obligation of \$2950. The study abroad office would never charge a student more than the program fee, even if the non-recoverable expenses and withdrawal fee are higher than the program costs.

If you are enrolled in a preparatory one credit hour class and withdraw from the program, please ask the professor about completing the course. If you can't complete the course for some reason, you will have to drop the course using the Q-drop process. You will only receive full credit for your study abroad courses if you complete the entire in-country program.

III. Requesting a Waiver of the Withdrawal Penalties

If you are facing a personal, financial, or medical hardship, you can petition to have the withdrawal penalty reduced. Please initiate the request through the study abroad liaison for your program by providing a written summary explaining the reason for the withdrawal; provide as much detail as possible regarding the hardship, and any supporting documentation as appropriate.

IV. Summary

	<u>Drop Dates</u>	<u>Drop Fees</u>
All Programs	Once Confirmed to the Program	\$150 Application and all non-recoverable expenses
Summer Programs	After February 1st	\$300 Confirmation Payment PLUS all non-recoverable expenses
Fall Programs	After April 1st	\$300 Confirmation Payment PLUS all non-recoverable expenses
Winter and Spring Programs	After October 1st	\$300 Confirmation Payment PLUS all non-recoverable expenses
All Programs	31-60 days before departure	50% of program fees PLUS all non-recoverable expenses
All Programs	1-30 days before departure	75% of program fees PLUS all non-recoverable expenses
All Programs	Once program has started	All program fees

V. Student Acknowledgement of Withdrawal Policy

I have received and read the Withdrawal Policy for my Study Abroad Program. I accept the terms as stated therein and agree to adhere to them.