

Strasbourg Study Abroad Program: May 25-June 29, 2012

TERMS OF PARTICIPATION

Last updated: August 19, 2011

This document outlines the terms of participation for students in Strasbourg Summer Study Abroad program. The purpose of these terms is to ensure your safety and that of other participants, to protect the interests of Texas A&M University and Mays Business School, 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 semester, during which these issues will be discussed in greater detail.

Your faculty director will conduct on-site meetings periodically to address such issues as cultural adjustment, safety, "dos" and "don'ts" of the host culture, housing, academics, corporate visits, and cultural activities. Following the rules of conduct and the guidelines set out by your faculty director will reduce (but not eliminate) these risks. It is imperative, therefore, that you exhibit proper care and judgment while abroad.

RISKS

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

I. Physical Risk

While on this study program, 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 Europe in general. Although 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 program including any possible travel delays. It is your responsibility to ensure that all 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.
- D. **Other.** Upon acceptance into the program, you will be directed to TAMU's Study Abroad [Pre-Departure Resource webpage](#) which will provide travel guidelines such as things to consider when traveling abroad (ex: electrical converters, public transit, safety concerns, etc.) [Study Abroad Programs Office website may be found at <http://studyabroad.tamu.edu/>]

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 program fee in full, or committed to complete the program fee payment through your enrollment into the Student Business Services "installment plan" (including the \$300 non-refundable deposit) prior to the established January 2012 SBS payment deadline date, and any refund of a portion of this fee will be subject to the withdrawal policy below.

- B. If you withdraw after having paid the full program fee, or committed to pay the program fee through the TAMU Student Business Services “installment plan”, you must withdraw by notifying Dr. Julian Gaspar in writing. An e-mail does not suffice; a signed letter is required. The letter must be hand-delivered to Dr. Gaspar in 230B Wehner. You will be refunded as follows:
1. The \$300 deposit is non-refundable, regardless of the circumstances of the withdrawal. Once you are accepted and commit to the program, you will be billed for the deposit which is due by November 30, 2011. (*NOTE: The remainder of the balance will be billed on January 12, 2012, which must be paid in full by the January payment deadline set by Student Business Services, or you must be enrolled in SBS’s installment payment plan.*)
 2. You will be refunded the meal allowance of €510 (34 days x €15/day), after the program is completed and the account is closed.
 3. Since the cost of group corporate and cultural visits by bus is fixed, there will be no refund associated with these travel items.
 4. Since payments for hotels in Strasbourg, Brussels and Paris are made in advance and as a group, no refund of lodging cost will be possible.
 5. We follow all university policies regarding tuition and course fee withdrawal penalties.
 6. If you withdraw anytime during your stay in Europe, you will forfeit all program fees except the unused meal allowance prorated at €15 per day. You will also not be able to participate in any of the group activities; this specifically includes the dorm room accommodations.

III. Financial Risk After Departure

- A. **Theft, damage, loss.** The main financial risk you could incur as a result of participating in this program 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 are responsible for all incidental expenses, which include weekend travel, individual activities during free time, laundry, snacks, souvenirs, airline fees for extra luggage, co-pays for doctor’s visits, co-pays for medication, etc.
- C. **Electrical equipment.** European countries use different electrical outlets and voltage than the US. So, you may need both: adapters that fit to European electrical outlets, and step-down transformers to bring the voltage down from 220V to 110V or you will destroy your equipment. Ensuring compatibility is your responsibility.
- D. **Credit cards and payment issues.** Most credit cards issuers 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.
- E. **Weekend Travel.** The costs associated with all weekend travel (except the group travel to Brussels and Paris) are yours. However, you will receive a meal allowance for those days. If you wish to extend your stay in Europe at the conclusion of the program, this will result in increased cost that will need to be borne by you.

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 Frankfurt, 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/Institutional Visits

- A. Students are expected to dress professionally (Business Casual: Guys -nice shirt/polos, slacks, dress shoes; Girls - nice shirt, nice skirt/slacks, flat-heel 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. Students are expected to 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. Behavior in Hotels

- 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 or banging at 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. You will be responsible for all payments associated with damages caused in your hotel rooms
- D. During your program you will typically have a shared, twin-bedded room. For safety reasons, no one is allowed to enter your room that is not affiliated with the Strasbourg 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.

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 (this is the law in Europe).
- E. No eating of messy foods on the bus. Snack items, soft drinks, etc. are allowed, but trash must be put away in the trash bag provided.
- 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. Trash bags are provided and should be used.
- H. Make sure that you do not leave any personal items in the bus when the trip is over.

IV. Alcohol Abuse/Binge Drinking/Public Intoxication

- A. It may be tempting to stay out a little too late or drink a little too much when you are overseas. However, this type of behavior is not encouraged since it 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 Strasbourg Program director. 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 if not two classmates at all times. This is helpful for safety and other reasons during the day, and particularly important at night.
- B. Before going on weekend trips, the faculty director must be provided with the names of all who are going, hostel details, destinations, time of departure, time of arrival, return and arrival times, and mode of travel.
- C. Please ensure that you have access to a phone 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 Europe) or you can purchase a pre-paid phone in Strasbourg. Be sure the phone is charged at all times and that you have the phone numbers of the professor programmed in your telephone correctly.
- D. All rules of behavior for Texas A&M University apply to the Strasbourg program, the same as if you were sitting in a classroom on campus (see <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/>). 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, puts 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, please turn in this form to your program director, Dr. Julian Gaspar and keep a copy for your reference.