



MODEL SCHOOL POLICY ON OUTBOUND STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Introduction

The Council on Standards for International Educational Travel (CSIET), in partnership with the secondary-school and exchange program communities, has developed the following document to assist American schools in the process of administering successful international student exchange programs. CSIET, a national non-profit foundation, is dedicated to promoting quality international youth exchanges that enrich local high school communities. The CSIET Model School Policy on International Study Abroad Programs was developed with valuable input from individual high school administrators, exchange program managers, and national advocates for youth exchange. Although there are not any U.S. government regulations for outbound programs, the CSIET Outbound Standards provide a set of guidelines for these programs. The following model policy provides suggested guiding principles that will enable a foundation for local school policies and encourage every U.S. school to engage in international youth exchange and educational travel programs.

Study abroad programs provide American students with an international perspective and give them a more balanced understanding of their place in the global community. They encourage new perspectives and build global competencies that open students' minds to the world. More importantly, these connections help teenagers on both sides of exchanges grow and gain maturity. These cross-cultural experiences offer unique opportunities for American schools to help their students and communities:

- Learn first-hand about other cultures and customs;
- Create life-long friendships across cultures;
- Gain new perspectives on our country and the world;
- Begin to understand how tightly connected the peoples and countries of the world are to each other; and
- Open young minds to the importance of understanding other languages and other cultures, particularly with respect to career and personal opportunities.

Youth exchange programs internationalize American high schools - one exchange at a time. Thank you for your support of these seminal programs. Your school's participation and support help mold our next generation of world leaders.

The organizations below support the mission and activities of CSIET.



National Federation of State
High School Associations



American Association of School
Administrators



American Council on the Teaching of
Foreign Languages



National Council for
the Social Studies



NUMBER OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE STUDENTS

American high schools should strive to encourage their students to study abroad at least once in their high school career. These guidelines suggest a basic policy that recognizes the needs of schools, students and exchange programs, taking into account the interest and personal goals of the student participants.

Ideally, schools should work with faculty and guidance counselors toward a goal of 1% of the total high school student population participating in a study or travel abroad program including an academic semester or year, short-term summer study or educational travel program. Acknowledging that school conditions vary locally, it is important to set a school goal that best fits each school community

TIMING OF PLACEMENT PROCESS

- The school asks that organizations contact the school each year to indicate an interest in facilitating study abroad programs for their students. The students and parents should inform their home school about the student's intent to study abroad. Exchange organizations should also contact schools with advance notice if a student is considering study abroad.
- To facilitate greater communication between schools and prospective study abroad participants:
 - Programs should encourage students to inform their home school when they are placed in a study abroad program. It is the student's responsibility to inform the appropriate school personnel of their placement.
 - Students should communicate with their home school regarding their upcoming study abroad experience. Schools may request of the programs that they provide formal notice that the student will be on a study abroad program.

SELECTING STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

- The school reserves the right to work with exchange organizations that have met the school's criteria and have proven their commitment and responsiveness.
- The school will also be open to new organizations that meet their criteria and demonstrate a serious commitment to the school and community.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS

- Students should consult with guidance counselors and/or administration regarding the coursework needed during their time abroad to meet the school's graduation requirements.
- The school appreciates the challenges of a student's exchange experience, living and studying in a different language, culture and school. However, students are expected to attain passing grades by the end of their first semester overseas.
- Students should be encouraged to deliver, at a minimum, one presentation on their study abroad experience after returning to their home school.
- Generally, states give individual school districts broad latitude regarding the granting of credit toward graduation requirements. Schools should be flexible in order to encourage study abroad among their students.
- Ensure the home school receives educational transcripts from host institution and guidance on the host school's grading system to facilitate credit for study abroad coursework.

SCHOOL EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMS

Schools should require that each individual student exchange program must:

- Be listed for their outbound academic year/semester programs in the most current CSIET *Advisory List*. (For the current list visit www.CSIET.org).
- Maintain a network of qualified and trained local representatives.
- Provide continuing hands-on monitoring and responsiveness (pre-program, on-program, and post-program)- from local representative to national headquarters – including, but not limited to:
 - Student selection and preparation;
 - Selection, screening, and orientation of international host families;
 - Ongoing contact with students, host families and schools, and ongoing communication with parents.
- Interview and screen all potential international host families, matching student and family interests.
- Arrange host family placements and school admission prior to the student's departure.
- Provide counsel to students in terms of international coursework to meet the graduation requirements set by their home school as appropriate.
- Provide information on safety and emergency procedures with the students prior to departure.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Schools should strive to maintain an environment that encourages and supports study abroad and educational travel programs.
- Schools should review coursework and study plan with the student prior to departure, to facilitate potential academic credit transfers and the ease of re-entry into the school.
- Schools should work to integrate international exchange programs into the school's social fabric by encouraging returning students to share their experiences with the school community. These students may spread the word about their program informally and should make presentations in classes and to community groups and through talking to media when asked.

Approved by the CSIET Board of Directors, September-2010

Council on Standards for International Educational Travel
500 Montgomery Street | Suite 400 | Alexandria | Virginia | 22314
Phone: 703/739-9050; Email: mailbox@csiet.org