

SIT Study Abroad

a program of World Learning



STUDENT HANDBOOK

August 2011

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The 2011 *Student Handbook* is a publication of the SIT Office of Student Affairs. This publication supersedes all previous editions of the Student Handbook. The dean of students reserves the right to change its policies, either by publicly promulgating the changes and/or by including the changes in future editions of the *Student Handbook*. Every student is held responsible for knowledge of the policies and procedures contained in this handbook and any special instructions and directives promulgated by the dean of students or his/her designee. All inquiries or comments should be directed to the Dean of Students, 1 Kipling Road, Box 676, Brattleboro, VT 05302, (802)258-3212. The *Student Handbook* is also published on SIT Study Abroad's official home page at sit.edu/studyabroad.

SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook

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Introduction

ABOUT SIT STUDY ABROAD

A pioneer in experiential, field-based study abroad, SIT provides academically rich programs in more than 40 countries for over 2,000 undergraduates from 200+ colleges and universities each year. The semester program model focuses on an examination of critical global issues in a specific cultural and geographical context. Programs are offered in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. Over the last fifty years, SIT's model and philosophy have deepened and expanded across disciplines and countries. SIT is committed to not only educating its students, but also to contributing to its host communities in meaningful and sustainable ways.

To date, more than 30,000 students have benefited from the field-based academic programs offered by SIT Study Abroad. Alumni of our programs return from around the world to their home colleges equipped with academic insight, strong field research skills, essential intercultural competencies, and a comprehensive understanding of critical global issues in a regional context.

Field-based learning is the cornerstone of SIT Study Abroad. In every program, students integrate classroom study with field and research experience, creating synergies that enrich both their time abroad and their future studies.

SIT Study Abroad has long-established relationships with academic institutions and organizations around the globe. Academic directors with experience in a relevant area of study and extensive knowledge of the host country supervise in-country coursework while facilitating student access to local resources, facilities, and experts. Each student group also benefits from the expertise of talented language instructors, lecturers, homestay coordinators, and other local staff.

In addition to formally structured coursework, students typically undertake a month-long Independent Study Project. Building on field study techniques acquired throughout the semester and working together with a local advisor, students have the opportunity to conduct research using primary sources on an approved topic that they find particularly interesting.

Both the curriculum and program administration are coordinated centrally from World Learning's main campus in Brattleboro, Vermont. SIT Study Abroad is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.

ABOUT WORLD LEARNING

World Learning is a nonprofit organization that runs education, training, and exchange programs in over 70 countries, with participants from more than 140 countries. Through its international education programs – The Experiment in International Living, SIT Study Abroad, and SIT Graduate Institute – World Learning fosters global citizenship by connecting over 3,000 students annually across cultural differences and social barriers.

World Learning International Development Programs focus on a single purpose: to bridge the gap between the desire for human development and the ability to achieve that goal. Programs in more than 20 countries work to enhance the capacity of individuals, communities, and institutions to take ownership of their own development, secure just and effective policies and structures, and create sustainable positive change.

Over 75 years, World Learning has built a deep and diverse array of offerings and services that transform lives and strengthen the capacity of communities and institutions to address pressing global needs.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

SIT Study Abroad's program components form a logical progression enabling students to gain greater language proficiency, further understanding of the host culture, field research skills, and advanced knowledge of a particular subject. During the semester programs, students advance from a structured learning environment to a more independent one through the program's six interrelated components. Program-specific components vary and will be covered in detail during orientation. You may also visit individual program pages on our Web site at www.sit.edu/studyabroad.

PROGRAM ORIENTATION

During the first week of the program, the academic director and other professionals conduct academic, cross-cultural, health and safety, and site-specific orientations. Through group discussions, readings, and participatory methods, students are introduced to the host country and develop skills for successful cross-cultural communication. Orientation is also a time to review academic requirements, understand program objectives, and develop relationships within the student group.

HOMESTAY

Through a homestay placement, students become a member of a family and share in its daily life. This opportunity facilitates cultural immersion, helps develop language skills, and provides a context for academic learning. Students frequently cite the homestay as an educational highlight of the term.

Homestay placements are arranged by a local coordinator who screens and approves each family for suitability. These families represent a variety of occupational, educational, and economic levels, and live in diverse neighborhoods, towns, and rural settings. Families include one or more adults and may or may not include children. The success of the homestay experience depends largely on each student's willingness to adapt as an active family member.

When not living with a homestay family, students stay in lodgings chosen under the guidance of the academic director. Accommodations may include guesthouses, educational institutions, lodges, hostels, hotels, or camping facilities, depending on local conditions and customs.

INTENSIVE LANGUAGE STUDY

SIT Study Abroad language instruction is offered through universities, language institutes, or qualified private teachers. With its focus on oral communication, SIT Study Abroad language learning enriches the academic experience and enhances cultural immersion. Based on in-country evaluation, including estimated ACTFL (American Council of the Teaching of Foreign Languages) oral proficiency testing complemented in many cases by a written evaluation, students are placed in a small class at the appropriate language level. Through up to six hours of daily formal classroom instruction and discussion, as well as field exercises, students develop conversation skills and learn aspects of written language. Guided self-instruction under the supervision of host country language instructors is available for students who place above the language levels offered. There may be an additional fee associated with this option.

THEMATIC SEMINAR

This interdisciplinary course focuses on the program's theme, such as sustainable development, post-conflict transformation, global health, natural resource management, or the arts, within the context of the host-country culture.

In many cases, this seminar is conducted in cooperation with a host-country university or institute. SIT Study Abroad students do not enroll in these institutions. Instead, the program draws lecturers and instructors from these and other academic institutions and from the professional community, taking advantage of carefully selected local resources to provide a variety of informed perspectives. Classroom

activities and required readings are complemented by educational excursions, rural stays, and field-based assignments.

FIELD STUDY SEMINAR

The Field Study Seminar trains students to learn effectively in a non-classroom environment and prepares them to develop, implement, and present their Independent Study Projects. Students learn the most effective and appropriate field study methods to use in the host communities. Students also learn to be aware of the effect of their informants' biases - and their own - on the design of field study projects and the interpretation of data.

Material includes cross-cultural adaptation and skill-building; project selection and refinement; appropriate methodologies; field study ethics; developing contacts and finding resources; developing skills in observation and interviewing; gathering, organizing, and communicating data; and maintaining a work journal.

Environmental studies programs include an Environmental Field Studies Seminar, which has an additional emphasis on fieldwork in the natural sciences.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT

In the final weeks of most SIT programs, each student pursues an Independent Study Project related to the program's theme. During the semester, students work with the academic director to develop plans of study utilizing primary sources. Appropriate topics have a manageable focus and can be carried out in a variety of settings, such as schools, nongovernmental organizations, or field research stations. All projects must be in accordance with the Human Subjects Review process (see page 9).

Students work closely with a project advisor and other key contacts during the independent study period. The culmination of this project is typically a 20- to 40-page paper that is presented to colleagues, the academic director, and often the project advisor and other interested host-country individuals.

COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

Diversity is at the core of World Learning's mission. At SIT Study Abroad, we seek to engage students from a variety of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences, and to ensure that the breadth of our thematic and regional programs meets students' academic and personal goals. Our staffs, which have diverse cultural and academic backgrounds, are committed to fostering an atmosphere of understanding, acceptance, learning, and growth for every student.

SIT Study Abroad offers scholarship funds for students who demonstrate financial need and whose participation will broaden the perspectives and collective background of our student body. In addition to SIT institutional funds, we continually seek foundation and other support to help us increase financial assistance to all students, particularly those from public institutions and Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

SIT Study Abroad is dedicated to expanding outreach and providing quality programming and support to all students.

Academic Affairs

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in each and every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed in advance with the academic director or other designated staff person.

STUDENT INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Independent travel during the program is limited and restricted except when it is part of the program's educational excursions. Students may not travel outside the program's country independently during the program period without prior written consent from SIT Study Abroad. Students traveling independently before the program begins and following the close of a program assume total responsibility for their actions and safety. The period of enrollment for students begins on the program arrival date in country and concludes the day of the scheduled program departure for return to the US. SIT Study Abroad and its employees assume no liability for individuals before the beginning of the program and after the program has concluded.

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Academic assessment is ongoing throughout the term through conferences, journal writing, cultural analyses, theme papers, ISP presentations, language use and proficiency, the Field Study Seminar, Thematic Seminar participation, meetings with in-country advisors and participation in host family life. Students on SIT programs are expected to take responsibility for their learning by setting goals and working toward them systematically. The importance of taking the initiative and setting goals and standards of quality for one's work is emphasized throughout the SIT program. Specific grades are given in language study, the Thematic Seminar, the Field Study Seminar, and the Independent Study Project.

Satisfactory academic performance is based on a student's ability to meet the requirements of each individual course and on the student's ability to function within the program as a whole. Specific academic expectations and grading criteria for each program will be discussed during orientation.

GRADES

Grades will be given in accordance with the system below.

A = 4.0 or 94-100

B - = 2.7 or 80-83

D+ = 1.3 or 67-69

A- = 3.7 or 90-93

C+ = 2.3 or 77-79

D = 1.0 or 64-66

B+ = 3.3 or 87-89

C = 2.0 or 74-76

F = 0.0 or below 64

B = 3.0 or 84-86

C- = 1.7 or 70-73

I = Incomplete

W = Withdrawal (student initiated)

AW = Administrative withdrawal

NR = No grade received from instructor

Note: SIT does not award an A+ grade

SIT Study Abroad awards letter grades to all students in order to give standard values to an assessment of work. Pass/Fail and Credit/No Credit are not options. Other than letter grades, only I (incomplete), W (withdrawal), or AW (administrative withdrawal) will be submitted, as explained below. Program specific grading policies and criteria for A-B-C-D-Fail will be shared with the students during orientation.

TRANSCRIPTS

Students should be advised that an official transcript may take up to 45 days after the program completion date to reach their home institution. Additional transcript copies may be obtained for a small fee from SIT's registrar.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic dishonesty is the failure to maintain academic integrity. It includes, but is not limited to, obtaining or giving unauthorized aid on an examination, having unauthorized prior knowledge of the content of an examination, doing work for another student, having work done by another person for the student, and plagiarism. Academic dishonesty can result in severe academic penalty, including failure of the course and/or academic dismissal from the program.

Plagiarism is the presentation of another person's ideas or product as one's own. Examples of plagiarism are: copying verbatim and without attribution all or parts of another's written work, using phrases, charts, figures, illustrations, computer programs, Web sites without citing the source; paraphrasing ideas, conclusions, or research without citing the source; using all or part of a literary plot, poem, film, musical score, computer program, Web sites or other artistic product without attributing the work to its creator.

Students can avoid unintentional plagiarism by carefully following accepted scholarly practices. Notes taken for papers and research projects should accurately record sources of material to be cited, quoted, paraphrased, or summarized, and research or critical papers should acknowledge these sources by the use of footnotes.

Violations of SIT Study Abroad's academic integrity policy are handled as violations of the student code of conduct and will result in disciplinary action.

ETHICS IN FIELD STUDY

While conducting fieldwork, complex relationships, misunderstandings, conflicts, and the need to make choices among apparently incompatible values often arise. It is students' fundamental responsibility to anticipate such difficulties to the best of their ability and to resolve them in ways that are compatible with the principles stated here. If a student feels such a resolution is impossible, or is unsure how to proceed, s/he should consult as immediately as possible the academic director or project advisor and discontinue the field study until resolution has been achieved. Failure to consult in cases which, in the opinion of SIT Study Abroad, could clearly have been anticipated can result in disciplinary action.

Students must respect, protect, and promote the rights and the welfare of all those affected by their work. The following general principles and guidelines are fundamental to ethical field study:

RESPONSIBILITY TO PEOPLE WHOSE LIVES & CULTURES ARE STUDIED

Students' first responsibility is to those whose lives and cultures they study (please refer to the Human Subjects Review policy below). Should conflicts of interest arise, the interests of the human subjects take precedence over other considerations, including the success of the field study or Independent Study Project.

If the study has negative repercussions for any members of the target culture, the project cannot be considered a success. Students must do everything in their power to protect the dignity and privacy of the people with whom they conduct field study.

The rights, interest, safety, and sensitivities of those who entrust information to students must be safeguarded. Students may not realize the risk that people could take by participating in the student's research; therefore, students should endeavor to understand and appreciate the role of their human subjects. The right of those providing information to students either to remain anonymous or to receive recognition is to be respected and defended. It is the responsibility of students to make every effort to determine the preferences of those providing information and to comply with their wishes. It should be made clear to anyone providing information that despite the students' best intentions and efforts, anonymity may be compromised or recognition may fail to materialize. Students should not reveal the identity of groups or persons whose anonymity is protected through the use of pseudonyms.

Students must be candid from the outset in the communities where they work about the fact that they are students. The aims of their study projects should be clearly communicated to those among whom they work. Students must acknowledge the help and services they receive. They must recognize their obligation to reciprocate in culturally appropriate ways. Students must take into account and, where relevant and to the best of their ability, make explicit the extent to which their own personal and cultural values affect their field study.

To the best of their ability, students have an obligation to assess both the positive and negative consequences of their field study. They should anticipate any possible consequences and inform individuals and groups likely to be affected.

Students must not represent as their own work, either in speaking or writing, materials or ideas directly taken from other sources. They must give full credit in speaking or writing to all those who have contributed to their work.

RESPONSIBILITY TO HOSTS

Students should be honest and candid in all dealings with their own institutions and with host institutions. They should ascertain that they will not be required to compromise either their responsibilities or ethics as a condition of permission to engage in field study. They will return copies of their study to SIT Study Abroad and, in consultation with their academic director, may be required to submit copies to other sponsoring institutions and to the community that hosted them.

INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECTS & HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW POLICY

All final Independent Study Project (ISP) proposals must reflect a thoughtful and culturally appropriate consideration of the effects of the inquiry on the participants. To that end, students will be required to submit a *Review of Research with Human Subjects* application form that includes questions about any potential harm that might occur as a result of the study; appendices to the form should include interview and survey protocols. If the academic director believes that the concerns of this policy have not been sufficiently addressed, he/she may require a revision of the proposal. Standards for this Human Subjects Review policy are developed in country and reflect local academic practice. Completion of the *Review of Research with Human Subjects* application occurs during the SIT Study Abroad program and is a standard part of ISP preparation.

If a student's research has been funded by a US government agency or if the student plans to take the research back to the home school or community for further dissemination, then more stringent standards must be followed, i.e., not only those of the host community, but also those of the Office for Human

Resource Protections, with which SIT Study Abroad is registered. Any questions or concerns will be forwarded to World Learning's Institutional Review Board for consideration. A student's home school may have its own procedure to follow regarding Human Subjects Review, and SIT Study Abroad recommends checking in with the study abroad office and academic advisor on the home campus prior to the start of the program.

FAILURE TO COMPLY

When SIT Study Abroad determines that a student has violated SIT's statement of ethics, the student will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the program.

INCOMPLETE GRADE POLICY

The expectation is that all course requirements are due on the dates set by instructors in the course syllabi unless prior arrangements are made. A grade of incomplete (I) is awarded only as a result of illness or other extenuating circumstances (such as a family emergency) and must be confirmed in writing by the academic director at least one week prior to the end of the term or at the beginning of the program's evaluation period. At the time of grade submission, the academic director will provide the registrar with the Report of Incomplete Grade form that outlines the agreement made between the student and the academic director. The specific deadline of materials due to the academic director is arranged between the student and the academic director and may not exceed 60 days after the last day of the term. The academic director is responsible for the submission of a final grade to the registrar within 30 days. If the registrar does not receive a final grade within 90 days of the term end, the Incomplete will convert to an "F".

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL

Voluntary withdrawal occurs when a student withdraws from the program for any reason, other than for disciplinary actions. If a student withdraws from the program voluntarily for any reason while a program is in progress, the grade of W is assigned.

At the discretion of the academic director, a failing grade (F) may be assigned for any student withdrawing without proper notification and completion of forms.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

SIT Study Abroad does not permit students to voluntarily withdraw from an individual course. If a student is considering withdrawing from the program, the student must contact his or her home institution prior to withdrawing to discuss possible implications for credit transfer or the student's standing at that institution. If a student wishes to withdraw from the program, the student must notify the academic director who will ask the student to sign a withdrawal form. Upon notification, or last date of association with the program, whichever is later, the student will be considered withdrawn from the entire program. Once withdrawn, the student will not be permitted any further association with the program and will forgo any of the benefits that the program provides, including insurance coverage and visa sponsorship. Students agree that when they withdraw voluntarily or are dismissed from a program, they will leave the program site and discontinue contact with the program. Students will be responsible for making and paying for their own travel arrangements from the program site.

ADMINISTRATIVE WITHDRAWAL GRADE

The administrative withdrawal grade (AW) is initiated by the academic director and approved by the academic dean, and includes dismissal from the program. If coursework has not been submitted and a student leaves the program, a grade of AW is assigned. In accordance with the SIT Study Abroad program design and philosophy, credits are given after the completion of the program and are not compartmentalized according to components of the program. In the presence of extenuating circumstances

that warrant partial credits, an AW will be assigned for work not completed or handed in according to an agreed-upon timeframe.

ACADEMIC PROBATION

A student may be placed on academic probation, and will be notified of such in writing if s/he:

1. Is continuously absent at program activities;
2. Repeatedly falls asleep in class or is repeatedly late;
3. Is repeatedly rude and/or shows a lack of consideration to the academic director, other students, program related personnel, program lecturers, homestay families, host nationals, or others.
4. Repeatedly engages in behavior which is, in the opinion of the academic director(s) and/or program-related personnel, culturally insensitive and/or inappropriate;
5. Engages in behavior which endangers the academic director, other students, themselves, and/or host nationals, including, but not limited to, a repeated refusal to take action to address physical, behavioral, or mental health problems;
6. Commits a further transgression of a norm about which a warning was previously issued;
7. Has received a letter of warning from the academic director indicating that the student is failing to work up to the standards or within the spirit of the program;
8. Has received an incomplete and has not satisfactorily outlined a course of action to meet any outstanding course requirements;
9. Has failed 33% or more of course requirements.

The student is required to discuss his or her academic status with the academic director and make a plan for regaining satisfactory status.

ACADEMIC DISMISSAL

A student is subject to dismissal and is so notified in writing if, in the opinion of the academic director, s/he:

1. Has failed to meet the conditions of any academic probation;
2. Has failed 50% or more of the program's requirements;
3. Demonstrated inadequate quality of participation.

In cases of academic dismissal, the academic director makes a recommendation to the appropriate academic dean for his/her region who will make the final decision. SIT Study Abroad's only obligation to a dismissed student is to confirm in writing the reasons for dismissal. The normal published refund schedule applies.

ACADEMIC APPEAL PROCESS

Students may appeal a decision of dismissal consistent with SIT's policies and procedures. Appeals of any decision must be made in writing to the SIT provost within 48 hours of the initial decision. The student's status remains dismissed until the appeal has been decided.

Phase One

A student seeking a grade change or to appeal the applications of an academic policy other than academic integrity cases must first, within six months of the posting of the grade, file a written request for reconsideration directed to the appropriate academic dean (Africa and the Middle East; the Americas and Europe; or Asia and the Pacific), via email (preferred) or regular mail: SIT Study Abroad, Box 676, 1 Kipling Road, Brattleboro, VT 05302. Any and all relevant materials and information the student has to support the appeal must accompany this letter by email attachment or in hard copy. Students should follow up with the academic dean to confirm receipt of these materials. A copy of the student's appeal letter and

materials will be forwarded to the academic director(s) and a copy of the appeal letter will be sent to the SIT registrar by the academic dean.

In considering the appeal, SIT Study Abroad relies on the materials and information the student submitted, feedback and documentation from the academic director, consultation with appropriate in-country faculty, evaluated work that may have remained in country, and any other documentation relevant to the specific course(s) being appealed. Within forty-five days of receipt of the appeal, the academic director must submit an evaluation of the appeal and recommendations for action to the academic dean. The academic dean forwards the letter of decision to the student and SIT registrar, which becomes part of the student's academic file. The dean also returns to the student all hard copy materials the student submitted with the appeal.

Phase Two

Should the student want to proceed further, s/he must submit an appeal in writing to the SIT Study Abroad provost with any and all relevant materials, documentation, and information within forty-five days from the date a response to Phase I is sent from the academic dean to the student. The academic director(s) is given the opportunity to submit any additional response to the student's appeal at this point. Upon receipt of the academic director(s)' response, the SIT provost forwards all documents to the SIT Academic Review Board and informs all concerned individuals that the appeal rests with the Academic Review Board. This board is comprised of members of the SIT faculty, including one SIT Study Abroad representative who is not in any way connected to the case, and the SIT registrar as an advisor and recorder. The board can request additional information from the academic director(s) and/or the student if it deems it necessary.

The board will make every effort to deal expeditiously with the appeal. Under normal circumstances, an appeal will be taken up at the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the board and the case will be decided within sixty days of the board receiving the appeal. Ideally, decisions are made through consensus, but otherwise through majority opinion. The board's decision and rationale are then sent to the registrar, who notifies the student and the academic dean/academic director(s).

Phase Three

Should the student want to further pursue the appeal, a board decision can be appealed in writing to the provost of SIT within sixty days of the date of the board's decision. This appeal must be based only on the evidence and rationale previously considered by the SIT Appeals Board, and the provost will review the official record of these proceedings. A copy of this appeal letter is also sent to the registrar, the academic dean, and the academic director. The provost's decision is final, and s/he will notify the involved individuals within sixty days of receipt of the student's final appeal.

If the student's appeal results in a change to the academic record, the SIT registrar will forward an updated grade report to the student's permanent home address as it is recorded in SIT's files. The student must provide the registrar with a written request for an updated transcript for his/her home institution.

Students may appeal a decision of academic dismissal consistent with SIT's policies and procedures listed above. Appeals of any decision must be made in writing by the student to the SIT provost within 48 hours of the initial decision. The student's status remains dismissed until the appeal has been decided.

To request a deferral of implementation of the dean's sanction, the student must submit a written request no later than 5 PM the business day after receipt of the sanction letter and email or present the request in writing. The dean's written decision will be available for the student the following business day.

Office of Student Affairs/Dean of Students

The dean of students for SIT and the Office of Student Affairs staff are responsible for providing leadership and vision in the areas of student health services, crisis management, counseling, housing, safety and security issues, diversity, student conduct issues, and support for students with disabilities. The dean establishes and monitors best practices and institutional protocols for all student affairs operations in the

US and abroad. The dean of students and the Student Affairs staff can be reached at 802.258.3292, 888.272.7881 toll-free in the US, or via email at studentaffairs@sit.edu.

Student Responsibilities

One of SIT Study Abroad's goals is to promote understanding among people from different parts of the world through a commitment to mutual learning and respect for others. Students attending an SIT Study Abroad program become an integral part of a community striving toward these goals, which can only be realized if individuals honor the rights and privileges of all community members and take responsibility for their own actions. The following guidelines, policies, and procedures are designed to support this purpose.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENT CONDUCT

Students are required to comply with all policies and procedures of SIT Study Abroad, including program-specific ground rules and codes of conduct introduced during the orientation portion of the program. Behavior of student participants on SIT Study Abroad programs must be above reproach at all times. Students must take into consideration an accurate perception of the values and norms of the host communities, and the wellbeing of fellow group members and program staff, and act accordingly. The following is a non-exhaustive list of prohibited conduct:

1. Violation of safety practices or action or inaction that might cause injury or death to oneself and any other person.
2. Sexual or other harassment of any kind.
3. Creating excessive noise, disturbing the peace, violation of individual rights or privacy, or disruption of lawful activities of others.
4. Deliberately or carelessly damaging or stealing SIT Study Abroad property or the property of those associated with SIT Study Abroad or a host community.
5. Theft or unauthorized use of property from any other person or entity.
6. Unauthorized entry or use of program facilities, including host facilities such as host universities, hotels, or offices of program staff and contacts.
7. Possession or use, including the threat of use, of a weapon or other hazardous materials, such as, but not limited to, a firearm, knife, explosive, or other object that could be considered a weapon while on the program.
8. Violation of host country or US laws, including, but not limited to, those that relate to the use of alcohol and controlled substances on the program. Violation of local laws may result in fines, punishment, imprisonment, or deportation in addition to punitive actions by SIT Study Abroad.
9. Failure to comply with the reasonable directions of program employees acting in the performance of their duties.
10. Violations of all approved SIT Study Abroad policies and regulations as published in the SIT Study Abroad Student Handbook, Conditions of Participation, program materials, or other official SIT publications and Web site.
11. Any conduct which jeopardizes SIT Study Abroad's ability to maintain positive relations in host communities or to continue to carry out its programs, including but not limited to culturally inappropriate behavior or defamatory statements regarding host families, organizations, communities, or countries in "blogs" or other public media.

HARASSMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are acts of aggression, whether verbal or physical. They include various forms of sexual abuse and sexual assault, including both acquaintance and stranger rape. All such behavior is illegal under both state and federal law. It is also a violation of standards of conduct that are cherished in the SIT Study Abroad community and is not tolerated under any circumstances. An

individual who engages in harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual assault is subject to appropriate disciplinary action by the administration, including, but not limited to, reprimand, suspension, termination, or expulsion. In addition, he or she may face criminal or civil liability. It is also illegal for an employee or student to attempt in any way to retaliate against a person who makes a claim of sexual harassment. Any such retaliation will also result in disciplinary action, up to and including expulsion, and may also result in criminal or civil liability.

SIT Study Abroad, in an effort to create an environment where all people can work and study without fear of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation, is committed to the following: educating the community about harassment, sexual harassment, and sexual assault; implementing appropriate, consistent, and prompt procedures for protecting the rights and well-being of victims, the respondent, and the community-at-large; and assisting victims to secure needed services.

Students and staff from other countries must abide by U.S. federal laws and regulations while members of this community. Students and/or staff involved in programs in countries other than the United States must abide by U.S. laws and regulations while overseas, as well as observe local laws and regulations of their host-country. Harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault, as defined below, are never acceptable, although a special effort is made to explain and clarify the rules for those from other cultures who may not be familiar with such a code of behavior. Please note that SIT Study Abroad has no control over the behavior of host country individuals who are not associated with the program and cannot necessarily prevent harassment toward students and others in these locations where it may be considered culturally acceptable or otherwise.

DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT

Harassment is a form of discrimination and is defined as verbal or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of his/her race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin, age, disability or handicap, or veteran's status, or any other characteristic protected by law or that of his/her relatives, friends, or associates, and that:

1. Has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work, educational, or living environment;
2. Has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or academic performance; or
3. Otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment or educational opportunities.

Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs, or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts; denigrating jokes; and written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group and that is placed on walls or elsewhere on SIT Study Abroad premises or program sites or property controlled by SIT Study Abroad.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct or written communication of an intimidating, hostile, or offensive sexual nature when:

1. Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment or education;
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for academic or employment decisions affecting that individual;
3. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's academic or job performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive employment, educational, or living environment for the person as a student and/or employee.

Examples of conduct which may constitute sexual harassment include but are not limited to: conditioning a promotion, pay raise, or course grade upon the receipt of sexual favors, unwelcome hugging, kissing,

embracing, patting, pinching, or leering; persistent unwelcome social invitations; use of vulgar language of a sexual nature; graphic comments about a person's body; displaying sexually explicit pictures or other materials; making sexually suggestive comments or telling sexually suggestive or "dirty" jokes or stories; asking an employee or student questions about his or her sex life; retaliating against an individual for complaining about the behaviors described above.

DEFINITION OF SEXUAL ASSAULT

Sexual assault (including acquaintance and stranger rape) may fall by definition within the scope of sexual harassment and may be subject to criminal prosecution by law enforcement authorities to which it must be referred by SIT Study Abroad. Such conduct must be addressed by SIT Study Abroad in conjunction with any external criminal proceedings.

Sexual assault is defined as any sexual act that is perpetrated without consent of the victim. The type of force employed may involve physical violence, coercion, or the threat of harm to any person. A victim is considered unable to consent, and therefore, sexually assaulted if he or she is:

- 1) Mentally incapacitated or physically helpless due to drugs or intoxicants;
- 2) Cognitively impaired;
- 3) Unaware that the sexual act is taking place;
- 4) Under 16 years of age (except where the persons are married and the act is consensual), or under 18 years of age when the accused:
 - a) Is a parent or entrusted by law to care for the victim;
 - b) Uses a position of authority over the victim to persuade him or her to submit.

Examples of acts defined as sexual assault by Vermont law and SIT/World Learning policy include forcible rape by an acquaintance or stranger, incest, and sexual abuse of minors, as well as sexual assaults that do not involve penetration.

DUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Employees and students should be aware of conflicts of interest and potential abuses of authority that are inherent in personal relationships where professional and educational careers are involved. This is especially true of amorous or sexual relationships between faculty, staff, or administrators and students, given the inherently unequal power dynamics between them within the program structure.

Given the special relationship that exists between SIT Study Abroad program staff and students, it is important that these relationships not be compromised, even if without intent, by relationships of a personal nature. For this reason, faculty and administrators are not permitted to engage in such relationships with students of SIT Study Abroad. This policy remains in effect after the student leaves the program, and subsequent consensual relationships between program staff and former students are also viewed as inappropriate.

REPORTING INCIDENTS OF HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, & ASSAULT

Any member of the SIT Study Abroad community, including students and staff participating in programs overseas, who believes he or she has been harassed or sexually harassed is strongly encouraged to report any episode(s). All complaints are investigated thoroughly and appropriate corrective action will be taken, including, but not limited to, termination or expulsion.

SIT Study Abroad students and staff will receive a copy of the Harassment Policy and be informed that any incident of harassment and/or assault should be reported to one of the following persons:

On-site contacts:

- Academic director(s)
- One designated local staff member, such as a program assistant or homestay coordinator, trained to receive complaints

US-based contacts:

- Academic deans (the caller should state the name of the program)
 - Said Graiouid, Dean for Africa and the Middle East, (802) 258-3212, ext 3286 said.graiouid@sit.edu
 - José B. Alvarez, Dean for Latin America & Europe, (802) 258-3212, ext 3229 jose.alvarez@sit.edu
 - William Collins, Dean for Asia & the Pacific, (802) 258-3212, ext 3277 william.collins@sit.edu
- Dean of Students, Michael P. Smallis, (802) 258-3212, ext. 3570 michael.smallis@sit.edu
- Associate Dean of Students, Christopher Clarke, (802) 258-3212, ext 3278 christopher.clarke@sit.edu
- Student Affairs Coordinator, Stephen Sweet (802) 258-3212, ext. 3292 stephen.sweet@sit.edu
- Student Health Administrator, Cheryl Pennie Williams, (802) 258-3212, ext. 3523 cheryl.williams@sit.edu
- Director of Human Resources, Rachel Henry, (802) 257-7751, ext. 3112 rachel.henry@worldlearning.org

These individuals will be able to help in assessing each situation, in clarifying possible courses of action, and in contacting the appropriate people once a course of action has been decided. They also will be able to direct people to needed services, such as counseling, translation, and medical or police assistance, within or outside of SIT Study Abroad programs. Care will be taken to protect the identity of the person with the complaint and of the accused party or parties, except as may be reasonably necessary to successfully complete the investigation. SIT Study Abroad requires program staff to report all complaints or incidents of harassment, sexual harassment, sexual assault, or retaliation, regardless of the offender's identity or position.

Every supervisor is responsible for promptly responding to, or reporting, any complaint or suspected acts of sexual harassment. Supervisors should report to the Director of Human Resources. If an incident involves a student then the Director should notify the SIT Study Abroad Dean of Students. Failure by a supervisor to appropriately report or address such harassment complaints or suspected acts shall be considered in violation of this policy.

Please see the **General Policies** section of this Handbook for more information on reporting, confidentiality, and requirements of information sharing.

ASSISTANCE FOR VICTIMS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT OR HARASSMENT

Any student who has been sexually assaulted should contact either his/her academic director or program assistant for immediate assistance. This person will be able to assist in obtaining needed services such as medical or police assistance, translation services, counseling, and other help.

RETALIATION IS PROHIBITED

SIT prohibits retaliation against any individual who reports discrimination or harassment or participates in an investigation of such reports.

POLICY ON ALCOHOL AND OTHER DRUG USE

STATEMENT OF PHILOSOPHY

In keeping with its mission, it is the intent of SIT Study Abroad to provide an environment that fosters tolerance, a commitment to learning, personal development, and respect for others. While there does exist some latitude for individual choice regarding the personal use of alcohol that freedom of choice exists within certain guidelines. Students and staff are required to obey all applicable laws regarding the possession, use, and distribution of alcohol, comply with SIT Study Abroad alcohol and other drug policies, and take full responsibility for their conduct. This includes respect for individual and collective rights and property. Behavior which threatens to create disorder, public disturbance, damage to oneself or to others, or that otherwise interferes with the proper functioning of the institution or the program will not be tolerated. SIT Study Abroad expressly prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, possession, or use of any controlled substance by students or staff. Convincing indication of drug use requires immediate dismissal from an SIT Study Abroad program.

Use of alcohol will be shaped by local laws, cultural norms, individual program regulations, and safety considerations. The academic director will set guidelines and rules for alcohol consumption, in relation to local cultural norms and program standards, for each program. SIT Study Abroad reserves the right to prohibit alcohol use on any of its programs at any time. SIT Study Abroad staff will not purchase alcoholic beverages for students. Excessive alcohol use and/or alcohol abuse is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action.

SIT STUDY ABROAD ALCOHOL POLICY

If moderate consumption of alcohol, within the limits of local law, cultural norms, program standards, and safety considerations is permitted, the following guidelines apply:

1. Students must obey local laws and take full responsibility for their conduct.
2. Students must behave in a culturally appropriate manner.
3. Behavior must not violate the rights of roommates, host families, host community members, other students, program staff, program contacts, or others.
4. Inappropriate behavior resulting from alcohol consumption, including but not limited to behavior which is offensive to others; and/or poses unreasonable risk to the student or others; and/or results in damage to property; and/or affects student performance; and/or causes embarrassment or otherwise interferes with the proper functioning of the program, is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action.

SPONSORING SIT STUDY ABROAD EVENTS WHERE ALCOHOL IS REQUESTED

There may be events where alcohol may be served when this is in keeping with local alcohol laws and local custom. Alcohol may be served at sponsored events under the following conditions:

1. All SIT Study Abroad-sponsored events at which alcohol is to be served must be approved by the academic director.
2. When alcohol is served at an event, food, as well as an equal amount of nonalcoholic beverages (such as soda and juice), must also be provided.
3. Academic directors cannot purchase alcoholic beverages for students. Purchase of alcoholic beverages must be paid for by the student.

VIOLATIONS

Students who violate the SIT Study Abroad Alcohol and Other Drug Policy are subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the program, and may face possible criminal or civil liability. Such persons may be referred to law enforcement authorities for prosecution and/or referred to substance abuse programs for evaluation or treatment.

RESOURCES FOR SUBSTANCE ABUSE COUNSELING & TREATMENT

SIT Study Abroad supports the prevention of substance abuse and encourages the rehabilitation of those persons who may be affected by alcohol and other drug problems. Information and counseling availability varies by program, and the academic director is the main resource person who will inform students of the counseling options in the program area.

PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS

Students are prohibited from engaging in certain activities for a variety of reasons, including but not limited to: potentially dangerous consequences for the individual(s) concerned; potential disruption of the SIT Study Abroad program as a whole; non-insurability; or U.S. State Department or other authoritative warnings. Participation in these activities is not permitted and is grounds for dismissal. These include, but are not limited to: motorcycling, hitchhiking, driving, parachuting, bungee jumping, branding, hang-gliding, surfing, riding in private airplanes, rock climbing, white water rafting, and scuba diving. In addition, academic directors will inform students during orientation of other activities that are prohibited due to specific factors in country. When a student requests to participate in an activity not listed above, the academic director will determine if it is a sanctioned activity

HOUSING

Student housing will vary during the program and may include homestays, hotels, guesthouses, lodges, educational institutions, camping, hostels, and other appropriate housing. Students are responsible for their behavior and actions in their housing situations and students must respect the policies and practices of each establishment or facility at which they are housed, including respectfully following their homestay family's rules. Any damage to property or environment, disruptive activities, or willful disregard of policies and practices of any housing situation may result in disciplinary action, including expulsion from housing and/or dismissal from the program. Students should inform their academic director and/or homestay coordinator if conflicts arise during the homestay and efforts will be made to either resolve the issue or find an alternative placement.

Although visitors are strongly discouraged during the program, any visitors to students during the period of enrollment must plan independent accommodations. SIT prohibits students from bringing any visitor to stay at a homestay or other provided place of housing. SIT Study Abroad homestay families can accommodate only their assigned student and should not be asked to host students' guests. Any possible guests must be approved by the academic directors as they examine possible program conflicts.

PEER RELATIONS

SIT Study Abroad fosters an environment of mutual respect for all program participants. It is incumbent upon each student to try to work out disagreements with peers. If the students cannot satisfactorily resolve the issues, students are urged to approach the academic director or program assistant to assist students with resolving the disagreement. Sexual harassment issues or complaints will be handled in accordance with SIT Study Abroad's Sexual Harassment policies and procedures.

DISABILITIES SERVICES

SIT Study Abroad Disability Services aim to facilitate an accessible educational experience for students with disabilities and to serve as a resource to all members of the academic community in furthering this goal. Students with disabilities (including physical, learning, or other types of disabilities) should contact the SIT Disability Services office as soon as possible to discuss their needs and to obtain information about the accommodation process. Each situation will be considered on a case-by-case basis, and every effort is made to work collaboratively with qualified students to facilitate an accommodation. In-country conditions and resources do vary by site, however, and specific program locations may have limited accessibility.

Students seeking accommodations are asked to provide the following:

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1. A written request for specific accommodations signed by the student; please use SIT's Accommodation Request Form which can be obtained by contacting disabilityservices@sit.edu
2. Current documentation of the disability provided by a qualified professional. Documentation must be written on that professional's letterhead, be personally signed by the evaluator, and at a minimum include the following:
 - Specific diagnosis of the disability
 - Specific evidence of the disability, including any tests or other evaluations performed and results
 - Impact of the disability on the person's functioning (functional limitations)
 - Recommendations for accommodations, including academic adjustments or auxiliary aids

Documentation should be recent, ideally no more than three years old.

3. A copy of the student's accommodation letter from his/her college disability office, if available

Requests for accommodations and documentation of the disability should be submitted as early as possible, within 15 days of students' offer of admission and no later than 60 days prior to the start of the program. Please note that additional information may be requested to assist SIT Study Abroad in making a determination on reasonable accommodations.

Please send all information and inquiries to:

SIT Disability Services
Attn: Jane Buckingham, Director
SIT Study Abroad
One Kipling Rd.
Brattleboro, VT 05301

disabilityservices@sit.edu
phone at 802-258-3367
fax 802-258-3252

GLBTQ STUDENT INFORMATION

Sexual orientation and sexual identity are viewed differently in the various host communities a student may have contact with during the program. While on the program, students may be challenged by vastly different beliefs and boundaries than those in their home community. Specific local cultural and religious realities, as they apply to GLBTQ issues, should be discussed with the academic director during orientation. Students may also contact the SIT Office of Student Affairs at studentaffairs@sit.edu. For more information about GLBTQ information abroad, visit the NAFSA: Association of International Educators GLBT Special Interest Group's Web site at www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm. This site has information on lesbian and gay issues, as well as links to international lesbian and gay organizations, overseas support and other important information.

VISITORS DURING THE PROGRAM

SIT occasionally sends visitors from the home office or from home institutions to program sites during the term in order to monitor progress and evaluate program components. Aside from these special cases, SIT does not encourage any visitors during the term, due to the rigorous nature of the programs and the disruption that such visits cause in program flow and group dynamics. Students should be sure that friends and relatives are aware of this policy and do not make plans to visit during the program. All plans for visits

are to be scheduled for dates after the formal conclusion of the program. SIT may grant or refuse permission for any visits during the program in its sole discretion.

STUDENT LEGAL FEES

Students are expected to abide by all of the laws, policies, and procedures of the program country. In the event of a legal matter during the academic program, the student is responsible for all penalties, costs, and legal fees associated with the incident. SIT Study Abroad will not be liable for the selection, hiring, or vetting of legal professionals for the student or for any legal fees incurred.

SIT CODE OF CONDUCT

STANDARDS OF FAIRNESS & STUDENT RIGHTS IN DISCIPLINARY CASES

SIT Study Abroad respects and is determined to protect the individual dignity, integrity, and reputations of its students. At the same time, it requires that students comply with those conventions and conditions of participation that are necessary to maintain order, to protect individuals and property, and to fulfill its purposes and responsibilities as a global institution of experiential learning.

Toward that end, the model for disciplinary procedures that SIT Study Abroad adopts is that of the administrative/educational process, not that of the criminal or civil courts. Certain procedural rights shall be guaranteed to a student in any SIT disciplinary proceeding in which he or she stands to bear significant injury, such as dismissal, suspension, permanent reprimand, or other stigmatizing actions. He or she is therefore guaranteed full protection of his or her rights:

1. The right to notice of charges whenever formal action upon such charges is initiated. Such notice is to be given within a reasonably prompt period and with sufficient particularity as to the facts so that the student may reasonably investigate the charge and prepare/offer his or her explanation of the incident.
2. The right to know, prior to any disciplinary action, the contents of, and the names of the authors of, any written statements that may be introduced against him or her and the right to rebut unfavorable inferences that might be drawn from such statements.
3. The right not to be compelled to be a witness against himself or herself.
4. The right to submit documentation pertinent to the matter in question from parties who were involved in the incident. This includes self-created documents, witness testimony, and appeal letters. Letters from individuals not identified as principle participants will not be used in the disciplinary process.
5. The right to a decision based upon evidence of a kind upon which responsible persons are accustomed to rely in serious affairs. However, rules of evidence in courts of law shall not, as such, be applied. The disciplinary officer shall operate under the guiding principle of fairness to all participating parties.
6. The right not to be sanctioned unless the decision maker is persuaded by the preponderance of the evidence, which means that it is more likely than not that the student is responsible.
7. The right to have the case processed without prejudicial delay.
8. The right to utilize a parent or legal professional as an advisor during the disciplinary process. This advisor may counsel the student, but is not an active participant in the proceedings.

SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATIONS OF DISCIPLINARY AND BEHAVIORAL EXPECTATIONS

Violations of the codes of conduct may result in one or more of the following sanctions:

OFFICIAL WARNING

A warning is given in verbal and/or written form to the student stating that s/he has violated SIT Study Abroad policy and that any additional violations may result in more serious disciplinary action during the stated period of reprimand. Documentation of warnings will be kept on file.

DISCIPLINARY PROBATION

Probation is a period of time during which a student's actions and behavior are subject to close examination. Any further violation committed during this time period can result in further sanctions, up to and including dismissal from the program. While on probation a student may be denied permission to participate in certain program activities. A copy of the written and signed probationary letter will be kept on file and shared with the student's sending institution. Each sending institution may have their own policies, procedures and additional sanctions to address policy violations.

DISCIPLINARY DISMISSAL

Dismissal serves as a sanction for violations of the Conditions of Participation, the Statement of Responsibilities and SIT's code of conduct. In addition, SIT Study Abroad, in its sole discretion, reserves the right to dismiss any student for the following reasons: failure to participate fully in all program components; failure to observe published policies or procedures; falsifying information provided on any official SIT Study Abroad form, including the application, the health form, transcripts, references or any other document required of the student; failure to disclose material information requested by SIT Study Abroad (e.g., emergency contact information, ISP information, health information), behaviors that interfere with effective program participation; or conduct that is, in the judgment of SIT Study Abroad, represented by the dean of students and academic dean, improper or offensive to the host community; potentially detrimental to the health or safety of the student or others; or inappropriate for the program or for study in a cross-cultural environment. A student who leaves the scheduled program at any time without prior written authorization from SIT Study Abroad will not be allowed to return to it and will be considered immediately withdrawn (see the section on Voluntary Withdrawal).

Once withdrawn or dismissed, the student will not be permitted any further association with the program and will forgo any of the benefits that the program provides, including insurance coverage and visa sponsorship. Students agree that when they are withdrawn or dismissed from a program, they will leave the program site and discontinue contact with the program. Students will be responsible for making their own travel arrangements from the program site. NOTE: If a student is dismissed, then the student will forfeit his/her tuition and receive no credits for any courses of the program (i.e., an "F" for all courses).

APPEAL PROCESS FOR DISCIPLINARY DISMISSAL

Any non-academic disciplinary decision may be appealed by the student to the dean of students and/or designee. Any dismissal decision may be appealed by the student to the provost and dean of students and/or designee. All appeals must be submitted in writing by the student within 48 hours of the notification of the decision. Only one appeal is permitted per student in any disciplinary case. Disciplinary sanctions may be increased, decreased, or modified in any number of ways through the appeals process. All decisions made based on an appeal are final.

Students found responsible for violations may submit a written appeal (via their email account or in writing) to the designated appeals officer requesting a review of findings (i.e., responsible for violation(s) and/or sanctions). An appeal/review does not constitute a re-hearing of the case, but a review of the process. For an appeal to be considered, the following guidelines must be adhered to:

- A. Letters of appeal must be received in writing (hand-delivered or via email) to the designated SIT Appeals Officer no later than 48 hours from the date of the written report issued by the Hearing Officer. Failure to appeal within the allotted time will render the original decision final and conclusive.

- B. Grounds for appeal: A written statement outlining the specific issues for which review is sought and the grounds upon which exception is taken to the original finding or ruling. Grounds for appeal are limited to the following:
- There is evidence that was not available at the time of the disciplinary decision which had it been available, would in all reasonable likelihood have produced a different finding (responsible or not responsible).
 - The factual findings are “clearly erroneous” based on the evidence presented.
 - There was a substantial procedural irregularity.
 - The sanctions imposed are grossly disproportionate to the violation.
 - The student received a sanction of suspension or dismissal. If you are appealing a suspension or a dismissal from the SIT program, you will be required to move out of program housing accommodations until the appeal process can be completed.

Please note:

1. The appeal officer (who will be the dean of students or designee, as long as he or she was not involved in an earlier stage of the disciplinary proceedings) may, in his or her discretion, elect to schedule a phone appointment with the student or base the appeal solely on the content of the letter.
2. The appeal officer may alter the findings if they are clearly erroneous, may reduce the sanctions imposed, and/or, in some cases, may remand for additional fact-finding to be made at a hearing. Letters of appeal will be reviewed and a determination on the appeal will be emailed to the student’s email address.
3. The decision on appeal shall be issued within seven business days from the date of receipt of the appeal and is final.

EMERGENCY INTERIM SUSPENSION

If a student’s behavior constitutes endangering behavior that presents an immediate, severe, and direct threat to him or herself or others (by evidencing a likelihood of harm to him or herself or others) or there is a presence of grievous misconduct and violation of SIT policies, the academic director, in consultation with the dean of students, or designee, may direct that the student be suspended for a period not to exceed seven (school) days, pending the results of administrative proceedings or, where mental health issues are present, psychological evaluation. During that interim suspension, the student shall not be allowed to participate in program activities or utilize program resources. Alternate housing arrangements may be necessary and will be the responsibility of the student placed on suspension. Additional violations while the student is placed on interim suspension will result in immediate dismissal from the program.

The fact that a student has threatened to commit or attempted to commit suicide, however, may not, in and of itself, be used as the basis for an emergency interim suspension. In such a circumstance, the dean of students, associate dean of students, or designee will work with the program’s academic director and staff to refer the student to a mental health professional for an assessment of whether the student presents a severe, direct, and imminent threat to him or herself or others. Furthermore, under SIT’s medical withdrawal policy, if the student refuses to submit to the assessment, the dean of students and/or associate dean of students may determine whether he or she poses such a threat based on the available evidence and act as permitted under the policy.

A student subject to emergency interim suspension will be granted a phone appointment with the dean of students or associate dean of students as soon as is practical to discuss the action taken.

Health, Safety, and Risk Management

SAFETY STATEMENT

Student safety is SIT Study Abroad's highest priority. Due to SIT's long experience with risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and crisis management, SIT is able to adapt quickly to dynamic international challenges. Given that socioeconomic, political, environmental, and medical conditions vary widely across the countries in which SIT operates, SIT Study Abroad specifically tailors health, safety, and security measures to each location and current circumstances.

SIT Study Abroad has a full-time Office of Student Affairs dedicated to addressing health, safety, and risk management issues first from a preparation and prevention approach to reduce risks and secondly from an incident response approach that functions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The various types of health and safety situations that arise for individual students or for the programs in the field are reported to the Dean of Students who works with the program's academic director to respond carefully, appropriately, and swiftly to all situations that arise. The Student Affairs Office maintains an on-call system of trained professional staff for any emergencies that occur after normal business hours.

SIT academic directors in country are trained in risk assessment and crisis management, and we continuously gather information from a variety of sources to evaluate safety and security conditions, as noted below:

1. SIT Study Abroad monitors US government advisories, considering those issued both by in-country embassies and consulates and by the State Department in Washington, DC.
2. SIT academic directors and other in-country staff also rely on the considerable in-situ knowledge and analysis from local institutional colleagues with whom SIT has long and trusted relationships.
3. SIT Study Abroad consults with local academic and nongovernmental organizations using our global networks.
4. SIT Study Abroad maintains close contact with other study abroad programs and professionals around the world using academic, personal, and online networks.
5. SIT Study Abroad senior staff have lived and worked in the regions where our programs operate and they use their familiarity with local institutions to inform their decision making.

SIT Study Abroad infuses safety and security throughout the program curriculum. Key elements of the SIT model help to maximize in-country safety, including:

- Orientation - During the initial orientation period, academic directors and others educate students about potential safety risks and strategies for students to keep themselves safe within their new context. SIT staff provides further safety and security briefings at key junctures throughout the semester, most notably at times of movement to different program locations.
- Homestays - Homestays provide students with grounding in the local culture – critical to building realistic perceptions of risk. Host families help students navigate their new surroundings by providing firsthand exposure to local norms, modeling culturally appropriate behavior, and giving precautionary advice about the local environment.

Total safety cannot, of course, be guaranteed abroad just as it cannot be guaranteed in the United States. SIT Study Abroad is committed to taking the necessary steps to maximize student safety at each and every program site.

STAYING HEALTHY

Students receive a copy of SIT Study Abroad's Health Guidelines and Requirements specific to their program as part of the pre-departure materials, with the exception of some Europe programs which deliver

these materials to students upon arrival in country. Students should read these guidelines and requirements carefully and discuss precautions and preventive measures with their health care professionals before departure. Students must acknowledge that they have read and understood the contents of this document before they will be permitted to participate on the program. During orientation, students will receive an additional health briefing and are expected to follow the recommendations and requirements set forth by program staff.

MEDICAL REVIEW

SIT Study Abroad's medical review process allows our medical staff to determine whether a student has any health issues that may require support in a particular program setting. Full and timely disclosure of any medical or mental health issues or special student needs is required and helps SIT Study Abroad assist students to have the best possible program experience.

All students must submit a complete SIT Study Abroad medical form by the stated deadline. Please note that SIT Study Abroad does not accept medical forms completed by a relative. The information contained in the medical form is not used in the admissions process, and documented health issues do not necessarily preclude acceptance. Each student's health information must be cleared by our medical staff in order for a student to participate in the program. All students are fully expected to disclose their medical history so that we can properly prepare them for their experience, make arrangements for any special accommodations if necessary, and in some cases assess whether there may be any medical reasons that a student should consider another program. Failure to disclose complete and accurate information on the medical form will result in denial to participate prior to the program or dismissal from the program. Health information will be kept confidential and will be provided to our academic director in country to be accessed in case of an emergency. If our medical staff has any questions about a completed medical form, an SIT Study Abroad staff member will be in touch to request further information.

We require that all students participating on SIT Study Abroad programs show medical and mental health stability for no less than six months prior to the program's start date.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH

SIT Study Abroad programs offer exciting academic and personal challenges, including the experience of adapting to another culture. The cultural adjustment process requires psychological flexibility in the face of different customs, beliefs, and living conditions. These new situations may trigger "culture shock" while studying abroad, marked by symptoms such as sad mood, anxious thoughts, homesickness, and difficulties eating and sleeping, to name a few. Students who are currently managing a mental health condition are encouraged to discuss any concerns with their health professional and/or SIT Study Abroad Student Affairs. SIT's medical review process is designed to support students in making the safest and most reasonable choices regarding their mental health; full disclosure on health forms is required to aid in this process.

Cultural views on mental health vary greatly around the world, as do the types of resources that are available. Some countries have a broad range of services, including access to Western-trained providers, while others have more limited options. SIT has identified counseling resources in country, where available. However, students can best prepare for a positive study abroad experience by developing a set of healthy coping strategies that they can utilize while on the program.

STUDENT HEALTH INSURANCE

SIT Study Abroad will provide students with illness and accident insurance as specified in the accident and illness policy available on the SIT Study Abroad Web site <http://www.sit.edu/studyabroad/10057.htm>. All students are automatically covered by SIT Study Abroad's accident and illness insurance for the period of enrollment on the program. All students should read the insurance policies carefully and arrange personally

for any supplemental coverage desired. Although SIT can make no representation as to the availability or level of proficiency of medical care in all circumstances, in the event of accident or illness we will attempt to ensure that appropriate care is provided. Financial responsibility for medical treatment of pre-existing conditions rests solely with the student. Insurance fees for participating students are part of the non-refundable deposit given upon acceptance into the program.

Claim forms to request reimbursement for medical care expenses are available on the SIT Study Abroad Web site at [http://www.sit.edu/SSA Other documents/health claim form.pdf](http://www.sit.edu/SSA_Other_documents/health_claim_form.pdf). Note that students are responsible for paying medical expenses on-site and filing claims with the insurance company. The insurance company will then reimburse the student for approved expenses above a \$50 deductible per injury or period of illness. Any questions regarding insurance coverage, filing a claim, or medical bills should be directed to the Student Insurance Specialist at SIT Study Abroad. Be aware that SIT Study Abroad's insurance is supplementary to any other insurance coverage the student may have; claims must be submitted to the student's primary insurer first. SIT Study Abroad has no control over any insurer's policies or decisions regarding coverage.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATION

Students should plan for communication with family and friends at home, realizing that in many program locations communication can be slow and difficult. In the event of an illness, crime, or emergency while on the program, students should immediately contact their academic director or other appropriate staff member with all relevant details.

Students should not give phone numbers of host families, academic directors, or other program staff to family and friends at home without the specific permission of the people involved. In an emergency, SIT Study Abroad needs to have the ability to rapidly communicate with staff on-site and phones need to remain clear for this purpose.

Parents, relatives, and friends needing to urgently contact a student while on a program should do so through the SIT Office of Student Affairs in Brattleboro, Vermont, where a staff member can contact the academic directors and/or other program staff.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR, RELATIONSHIPS, AND CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE COMMUNICATION AND DRESS

Students must be fully aware that both verbal and non-verbal communication, including dress, conveys specific sexual expectations in every culture. The subtleties of acceptable sexual behavior vary widely and it will be difficult at first for students, as outsiders, to grasp the host communities' sexual norms. Students' assumptions about what is acceptable may be frequently challenged. Students need to become sensitive to these differences, and strive to educate themselves quickly on appropriate behavior. This is a matter of personal safety as well as of cultural learning. Appropriate dress for the specific culture is required, and students in many programs will be informed by their academic director of what clothing is unacceptable in the new cultural setting and what is required instead.

One of the greatest concerns regarding safety for those choosing to engage in sexual activity is the use of effective protection against life-threatening diseases and other associated risks. It is vital to obtain the most current information possible regarding sexual relationships, host-country expectations in this regard, and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and unwanted pregnancies. Students should make every effort to address these issues before going abroad. If necessary while enrolled in the program, students should seek medical advice on how best to protect themselves and the availability of different methods of protection.

SIT STUDY ABROAD POLICY ON HIV

The following is SIT Study Abroad's policy with respect to HIV infection and AIDS:

1. As it is not a US legal requirement and, for reasons of privacy, SIT Study Abroad does not require students or host family members to submit to HIV testing or to disclose their status for our records. However, some countries require HIV testing as part of the visa application process; in cases where SIT Study Abroad facilitates this process by collecting visa application materials, we do not keep test results on file at SIT Study Abroad.
2. We provide our students with written information on precautions that should be taken to avoid transmission of communicable diseases. With respect to HIV/AIDS, specifically, we strongly encourage that universal precautions be observed.
3. The prevalence of HIV infection and AIDS is a fact of life around the world. SIT Study Abroad students and staff should take steps to inform themselves of modes of transmission and preventive measures to minimize the likelihood of exposure and adjust their behavior accordingly.
4. Medical information concerning our students, including HIV status, is confidential and is to be disclosed only with the written consent of the student or otherwise in accordance with applicable law.

HIV UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS

Due to the threat of HIV and other infectious diseases, a series of simple rules has been developed to prevent the spread of these preventable diseases. The precautions, if followed, will help greatly to protect students and others from acquiring these infections.

1. Avoid any unprotected sexual contact in any area of the world. Remember that condoms are not 100% effective. Also avoid tattooing, body piercing, or handling used medical needles. In addition common household items such as razors, toothbrushes, personal care scissors, tweezers, etc., can be contaminated with blood, and therefore should never be shared.
2. Avoid exposure to potentially HIV-containing fluids, primarily blood, but also semen, vaginal secretions, mother's milk, and any other body fluid that contains blood, e.g., bloody vomit, feces, saliva, or urine.
3. When exposure is unavoidable, as in caring for an injured person, or in cleaning up a bloody spill, always wear surgical gloves and protective garb, and, where splattering is likely, protective mask and eye wear. Do not re-use gloves, gowns, or masks; dispose of them in a manner that prevents contaminating others. Blood spills should be cleaned up (while wearing gloves) with 1 part in 10 Bleach/water solutions, and the rags safely disposed of. Thorough hand washing after clean up is also necessary.
4. These precautions are universal, i.e., they must be observed at all times in any part of the world, regardless of the perceived level of endemicity of HIV in a given individual or population.
5. Following these precautions also minimizes exposure to Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C, which are other common blood-borne viral infections.

ILLNESS AND CRIME REPORTING

It is each student's responsibility while a participant on an SIT Study Abroad program to report any illness or crime that happens to the student or that the student is involved in, to the program's academic director immediately. Communication of this information allows SIT Study Abroad to provide optimal support to students, and can also assist students with later insurance claims. SIT Study Abroad also analyzes incident reports to assess and adjust programs to minimize health and safety risks.

All health and crime incidents are reported to SIT Study Abroad's Office of Student Affairs in Vermont, with serious incidents reported immediately. Both health and crime incidents are considered confidential information and only shared with staff members at SIT and your home institution on a "need-to-know" basis.

Financial Matters

FEES

The SIT Study Abroad fee covers all scheduled program expenses during the period of enrollment.

Students are expected to pay for the following additional expenses: domestic and international airfare to the program's meeting site; food and lodging prior to arrival at the orientation site on the program start date; baggage insurance; fees for passports, visas, tourist cards, and identification cards; pre-program medical expenses (e.g., inoculations) and prophylactic medicines; travel expenses as part of the Independent Study Project; expenses for student books and supplies, tips, laundry, telephone, fax, and email expenses, postage, gifts, all alcoholic beverages and beverages that are not a customary part of meals, food outside of customary meals provided by the program, and all other such personal expenses.

Fees, as posted on our Web site, have been established based on all known circumstances at the time of calculation. Due to the nature of SIT programs and the global economy, SIT reserves the right to change its fees without notice. In the event of a fee increase, students will be provided with a reasonable amount of time prior to the program's start date and not less than ten (10) days from the date of notice, in which to withdraw. In the absence of notice of withdrawal, students will be committed to the program.

PAYMENT

A \$400 deposit, credited toward the student's program fee, must be received before a space on a program can be confirmed. The deposit is nonrefundable and may not be transferred to another term. Payment of the balance of the program fee is due:

July 15 for fall semester programs.

December 15 for spring semester programs.

May 15 for summer programs.

Students are expected to pay the program fee according to this schedule. If payment is not made on schedule, the student will be withdrawn for nonpayment. For enrolled participating students, insurance fees are included in the non-refundable deposit as soon as a student begins the program.

SCHOOL BILLING

SIT Study Abroad maintains special billing relationships with some colleges and universities. These agreements facilitate the use of financial aid to cover the cost of SIT Study Abroad programs. The terms of the agreements vary by school. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of their home institution's current billing policies and agreements.

LIABILITY AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that SIT Study Abroad has a correct mailing address at all times. Failure to receive a Student Statement of Account will not exempt the student from the responsibility to pay the balance on the assigned due date, nor will it exempt the student from late penalties, neither from World Learning Collection Policies and Procedures, nor from having a Bursar Hold or administrative hold which would restrict transcript access. Students are responsible for the payment of all financial obligations: this includes all costs associated with the collection of this debt, which, on a past due account can include collection fees, court costs, and legal fees.

REFUND POLICY

It is the policy of SIT Study Abroad that students who withdraw from a program for any reason are entitled to a refund in accordance with federal and school policies, whether or not they are recipients of federal or institutional financial aid. The effective date of withdrawal is the date SIT is notified or the last date of association with the program, whichever is later. The period of enrollment for which the student is charged

is defined by SIT Study Abroad as from the program start date to the program end date. Students who are dismissed from a program are not entitled to any refund.

VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL REFUND PROCEDURES

After acceptance to the program, refunds in the event of withdrawal will be made according to the schedule below. Refunds will be calculated from the time SIT is notified by the student or by the last date of association with the program, whichever is later. The amount of the total refund will be determined by the Office of the Registrar. After the refund amount has been determined, balances will be refunded or invoices issued for outstanding funds.

Students withdrawing before the first 50% of the term is over will realize an adjustment of tuition, room, and board, excluding the nonrefundable deposit, according to the following schedule:

Up to the day of the student's departure from the US or home country	100% refund minus the \$400 deposit and any airline cancellation fees (if SIT cancels the program) and penalties
during the first 10% of the term	90% refund of tuition, room, and board
between 11% and 20% of the term	80% refund of tuition, room, and board
between 21% and 30% of the term	70% refund of tuition, room, and board
between 31% and 40% of the term	60% refund of tuition, room, and board
between 41% and 50% of the term	50% refund of tuition, room, and board
After 50% of the term	No refund of tuition, room, and board

If a student believes individual circumstances warrant an exception to these procedures, a written request with supporting documentation should be sent to the Office of the Registrar and copied to the dean of student affairs.

DISMISSAL FOR NONPAYMENT OF FEES

Students are expected to pay their tuition fees in full as outlined in the Tuition and Fees Schedule Sheet. If payment is not made on schedule, the student will be administratively withdrawn for nonpayment. The refund policy above will apply in all such cases and collection procedures will be initiated.

ACCOUNT BALANCE REFUND POLICY

When a student's account shows a credit balance after the period of enrollment begins, the refund will be disbursed to the payee within 14 days of the date the credit balance occurs.

General Policies

EQUAL EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

It is the policy of World Learning/SIT to provide equal employment and educational opportunities for all persons regardless of age, ethnic origin, gender, nationality, physical or learning ability, race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, protected veteran's status, or any other legally protected status.

PRIVACY OF EDUCATIONAL RECORDS

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as Amended (FERPA): Overview

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 as amended is a federal law. The "Act" was designed to protect the privacy of education records, establish the rights of students to inspect and review their education records, and to provide guidelines for the correction of inaccurate or misleading data through informal or formal hearings.

FERPA affords students certain rights with respect to their education records. They are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days of the day the SIT registrar receives a request for access. Students should submit to the Office of the Registrar written requests that identify the record(s) they wish to inspect. The registrar will make arrangements for access and notify the student of the time and place where the records may be inspected. If the records are not maintained by the Office of the Registrar, the registrar shall advise the student of the correct official to whom the request should be addressed.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the student believes is inaccurate or misleading. Students should write to the SIT official responsible for the record, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate or misleading. FERPA was not intended to provide a process to be used to question substantive judgments, which are correctly recorded. The rights of challenge are not intended to allow students to contest, for example, a grade in a course because they felt a higher grade should have been assigned. If SIT decides not to amend the record as requested by the student, SIT will notify the student of the decision and advise the student of his or her right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the student when notified of the right to a hearing.
3. The right to consent to disclosures of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.* One exception which permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by SIT in an administrative, supervisory, academic or research, or support staff position (including law enforcement unit personnel and health staff); a person or company with whom SIT has contracted (such as an attorney, auditor, collection agent, or official of the National Student Clearinghouse); a person serving on the World Learning Board of Trustees; or a student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. **

SIT may disclose education records in certain other circumstances: to comply with a judicial order or a lawfully issued subpoena; to appropriate parties in a health or safety emergency; to officials of another school, upon request, in which a student seeks or intends to enroll; in connection with a student's request for or receipt of financial aid, as necessary to determine the eligibility, amount, or conditions of the financial aid, or to enforce the terms and conditions of the aid; to certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the Comptroller General, to state and local educational authorities, in connection with certain state or federally supported education programs; to accrediting organizations to carry out their functions; to

organizations conducting certain studies for or on behalf of SIT; and the results of an institutional disciplinary proceeding against the allegation of a crime of violence may be released to the alleged victim of that crime with respect to that crime.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by SIT to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the office that administers FERPA appears directly below:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202-4605

5. World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may release directory information without prior written consent. Directory information is limited to: name, address, telephone numbers, email address, dates of attendance and classes, field of study and certification, certificates, diplomas, and degrees conferred including dates, honors, and awards, the most recent previous educational agency or institution attended, participation in officially recognized activities, practicum location and organization, enrollment status, and anticipated graduation date.

6. Directory information shall be released freely unless the student files a written request to withhold disclosure of information with the registrar. SIT Study Abroad students can file a written request by contacting the registrar's office in advance or with the assistance of the academic director once the program has begun. The block will remain in effect until the registrar receives a written statement from the student releasing the hold on directory information.

*The Approval of Participation or Student Disclosure Form signed by each applicant to SIT Study Abroad authorizes SIT and the home institution to release educational records to each other.

**In the case of students studying abroad who remain enrolled in their home institution, and, hence, are dually-enrolled in that institution and SIT, a "school official with legitimate educational interests" includes an individual at the home institution with professional responsibilities for oversight of study abroad. Information that may be shared may include, but is not limited to, academic status, disciplinary actions, dismissal, or withdrawal.

PUBLIC RIGHT TO INFORMATION

As soon as is feasible after an incident which seriously disrupts student life on the program, the academic director or other staff member may notify the student group regarding an incident or actions being taken in one of several ways, including through a designated person, a group meeting, or written memos. Incidents which may involve the greater community or public interest may be made public, when necessary, through on-site staff and/or the World Learning Marketing and Communications team in collaboration with the SIT Dean of Students.

PROGRAM CHANGES

Although SIT will attempt to maintain its programs as described in its publications, SIT reserves the right to terminate or alter a program at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and shall not be responsible for any expenses or losses resulting from such changes.

SSA CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

I understand that future SIT/World Learning publicity materials, including but not limited to its Web site, may include statements made by participants and/or their photographs, film or video images and voices, and I consent to SIT/World Learning's free and perpetual use of any statements, photographs, likenesses, film or video images and voices in any medium, including those that SIT/World Learning obtains from me or any participant or other source.

MODIFICATIONS

World Learning/SIT Study Abroad may modify, supplement, and/or replace, without notice, any of its policies, procedures, and/or fees.

Other Offices and Services

FINANCIAL AID OFFICE

The Financial Aid Office provides scholarship counseling and assistance to SIT Study Abroad students from the time of initial inquiry until completion of studies. Details on how to apply for scholarships are available at www.sit.edu/studyabroad/710.htm.

PHILANTHROPY OFFICE

Achieving World Learning's global vision means investing today in strengthening and deepening the impact of our programs worldwide while ensuring access and opportunity for all students, regardless of background, who have the desire to engage global issues through our programs. The World Learning Philanthropy Office designs and implements SIT's fundraising efforts to support the institution in achieving its mission, including securing support for scholarships, program development, general operations, capital projects, and endowments.

Support comes from many areas, including alumni of all World Learning and SIT Study Abroad programs, parents, friends, staff and faculty, foundations, and corporations. The Philanthropy team works closely with SIT Study Abroad and World Learning's Constituent Relations Office in an ongoing effort to keep alumni and friends informed of current and future opportunities for funding support.

Alumni donations help provide scholarships and keep tuition costs as low as possible. To make a gift, visit [OurWorld](#) and click "Make a Donation" or respond to World Learning's annual appeals by mail, email, or phone.

REGISTRAR'S OFFICE

The Registrar's Office handles registration, grade processing, and maintenance of enrollment records, school identification cards, and certification of student enrollment. Academic transcripts are issued by the Registrar's Office. All requests for transcripts must be made by the student in writing and a nominal fee is charged for each transcript copy. The student's account with SIT Study Abroad must be paid in full in order for transcript requests to be honored.

Mandatory Student Evaluations

SIT Study Abroad requires all students to complete a program evaluation at the end of the term. If a student is not able to complete the online survey within 3 weeks of the program's end date, s/he should contact SIT at studentevaluation@sit.edu to make other arrangements so that the student's transcript is not placed on hold. If a student has completed the program evaluation, his/her transcript will automatically be sent to the home school.