

Curriculum Committee Criteria and Procedures for FACULTY-LED TRAVEL SEMINARS

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE/OCSE PROPOSAL FORM

By their very nature, international and domestic travel seminars involve educational, geographic, financial, and administrative elements that go well beyond most traditional, classroom-centered courses. While the central criterion in evaluating proposals for this type of course is the educational value of the travel component, the unique nature and cost of travel seminars lead the college to use an extended time frame and more extensive criteria for their development and review.

Given the preparation time and resources required for travel seminars, an expression of intent to propose a travel seminar should follow the deadlines outlined below. The Curriculum Committee will review and approve courses based upon their pedagogical merit, but because of financial and administrative factors, the final decision to offer a travel seminar rests with the Dean of the Faculty in consultation with the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges (OCSE).

For most travel seminars, including courses previously approved by OCSE and curriculum committee, sponsoring faculty should anticipate an 18-month process of proposing, planning and preparing the course. For example, faculty proposing a travel seminar for the academic year (the January, March or summer breaks) 2011 should submit expression of intent by October 15, 2009.

NOTE: Travel seminars offered during winter or spring break should respect the existing academic calendar by scheduling travel to and from the destination when classes are not in session.

1) PROGRAM MODELS

Faculty may propose one of the following travel seminar models.

- **Stand-alone travel seminar**: This program is not connected to any course on campus; rather, the course is delivered in its entirety off campus. This program model may be offered during the January and summer breaks.
- **Travel seminar incorporated into an on-campus course**: This program is a combination of an on-campus course and an off-campus academic experience – the travel seminar. The on-campus course is offered during the fall or spring semester. The off-campus portion may be offered during the January, March or May breaks. The travel seminar should follow or be delivered in the middle of the on-campus course rather than precede it. Faculty must submit two complete proposals – one for the on-campus course and one for the off-campus travel seminar. Typically, students may participate in the on-campus course without completing the travel seminar; however, students cannot participate in the travel seminar without completing the on-campus course.

The various iterations of this model are:

- Fall semester on-campus course plus January travel seminar
- Spring semester on-campus course plus spring break travel seminar
- Spring semester on-campus course plus early May travel seminar (beginning the week following final exams)

2) PROCESS AND DEADLINES

Due to the financial aid resources required to fund these courses, a limited number of travel seminars will be approved for each academic year. The number of courses usually will not exceed four; the total number of students on all programs usually will not exceed 60, unless resources allow.

Deadlines for ALL travel seminars

- **ALL** travel seminars must be proposed at the same time to ensure that OCSE and the Dean of the Faculty are able to strategically plan the entire year of programs. This includes programs that have been approved and delivered in the past. OCSE must have a clear understanding of what travel seminars might be available in order to make appropriate recommendations to the Dean of the Faculty and Curriculum Committee.
- All sponsoring faculty must consult with OCSE for any and all travel seminars offered at any time.

Oct. 15 Faculty to submit to the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges an “Expression of Intent” to propose an existing or new travel seminar.
NOTE: Courses that have been previously approved by OCSE and Curriculum Committee must be approved again by ACOP and Dean of the Faculty each time they are proposed. A call for proposals will be sent approximately 18 months prior to the January of the appropriate calendar year. (For example, all proposals for the calendar year 2011 will be due on October 15, 2009.) The Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges will consult with the Advisory Committee on Off-Campus Study (ACOP – a CEPP sub-committee), the Dean of the Faculty, and others as appropriate and will provide an initial response by the end of the semester. At that time, faculty members will be notified if their proposals are being considered for possible approval.

Dec. 1 After consultation with ACOP and the Dean of the Faculty, OCSE to inform faculty of recommendations. At this time faculty will be told if their programs are being considered for further review. Faculty whose programs are still under consideration will be asked to submit full proposals based on Curriculum Committee guidelines (given later in this document).

Jan. 15 Faculty to submit a final proposal to OCSE for final administrative review. OCSE and ACOP to review proposals for completeness and appropriateness. Upon ACOP approval, OCSE to forward proposals to the Curriculum Committee through the Associate Dean of the Faculty. At this point, all appropriate signatures must be in place. Courses that contribute

to an Interdisciplinary Program must also be signed by the program director before being submitted to the Associate Dean.

Feb. 15 Announcement of travel seminars for the following academic year.

Sponsoring faculty submit a proposal that should describe both the on-campus and off-campus components of the course as appropriate. If a travel seminar is attached to a new credit-bearing on-campus course, then faculty must submit a separate proposal for the on-campus course for a total of TWO proposals. If a travel seminar is attached to an existing credit-bearing on-campus course(s), then establish connections and parameters between the travel seminar and the on-campus course(s). As required for any course, travel seminar proposals must include a syllabus and acquaint the committee members with the topics and student-learning objectives of the course (see below, #6 Syllabus and learning objectives). In addition, travel seminar proposals must include materials about travel plans, costs and budgets, and other administrative considerations (see below, #12 Resources and Logistics). Much of this information was provided in brief form in the Expression of Intent. This is an opportunity to expand on the Expression of Intent and include all of the details of the Travel Seminar.

NOTE: Proposals that do not include all of these details will be considered incomplete and will not be considered in the proposal review process.

Submit **one copy** of the final Curriculum Committee/OCSE proposal form, with all the appropriate signatures in place, to the Director of OCSE. Courses that contribute to an interdisciplinary program must also be signed by the program director before being submitted. The Director of OCSE will work with the Associate Dean of the Faculty to review final proposals. Curriculum Committee will defer consideration of a proposal until the Associate Dean and the Director of OCSE have explored the resource implications and signed the proposal form.

**CURRICULUM COMMITTEE/OCSE TRAVEL SEMINAR
PROPOSAL FORM**

1. Term of Travel Seminar

☐ January of 20____	This travel seminar will be attached to an on campus course: Yes No If yes, term of on-campus course:
☐ March of 20____	
☐ Summer of 20____	

2. Course Information

2a. Course title: abbreviated title 23 or fewer characters: Please take care with the abbreviated title, which will appear on registration materials and on transcripts. It will also be used to attract students to the program (on brochures, etc.). Please keep this in mind.

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2b. Course number

Course # (2XX, 3XX for new courses) – Must include course number even if this course has been offered before

2c. Course instructor(s) and department(s)

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2d. Course description: The course description should be brief and carefully worded to reflect the actual content of the course. Also consider using lively prose to capture student interest. We urge faculty to follow basic writing guidelines, such as limit abstractions, long Latinate words, and passive verbs, especially regarding student involvement. Use student-centered language, and use concrete examples and brief, direct words, where possible. Avoid using such phrases as "in-depth" and "intense" or "this course will carefully analyze and extensively research" which add nothing substantive to the description. Consult the [Skidmore College Guide to Writing](#) for stylistic clarification. Consult descriptions of previous successful travel seminars for examples.

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2e. Proposed enrollment cap with a brief rationale: Course enrollment minimums and maximums should adhere to the guidelines for enrollment caps for travel seminars, which are generally 7 to 10 students per faculty member. Only under extremely unusual circumstances will the committee approve an enrollment cap below or above those specified in the guidelines.

Cap	
Rationale	

3. Prerequisites (include brief rationale):

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4. Semester hours of credit and rationale (see guidelines on travel seminars outlined in “Travel Seminar Criteria and Procedures”):

Hours of Credit	
Rationale	

5. Rationale for level of course (200, 300): Travel Seminars must offer carefully structured, focused, and challenging learning experiences—experiences deserving 200-level or 300-level college credit within a liberal arts context.

6. Syllabus and learning objectives: Every course should explain where and when the learning occurs, whether on or off campus. If the Travel Seminar includes both the on-campus and off-campus components, attach a copy of both proposed syllabi with thorough descriptions of course topics, readings, assignments, and requirements and well-established connections and parameters between the travel seminar and the on-campus course(s). In addition, for on-campus and off-campus components specify the learning tasks and the goals for the students and the means for assessing the learning outcomes. For the off-campus component, the syllabus should clearly indicate a detailed itinerary relating sites visited to the subject matters of the course.

7. Curricular contributions: Briefly describe how the Travel Seminar will fit into the present curriculum, explaining, in particular, how the travel component contributes to a department, program, or all-College curriculum. Also, highlight why this course must take place off campus and how the off-campus resources enhance the course in substantive ways.

8. Liberal Arts credit: YES_____ NO_____

(Courses carrying liberal arts credit are directed to general intellectual enlargement and refinement, not restricted to the special requirements of technical or professional training. See

[annual report](#) of the 1999-2000 Curriculum Committee on the adoption of a more liberal interpretation of the qualifications for Liberal Arts credit.)

9. Mark all the All-College requirements that the course will meet and provide a rationale. (See Curriculum Committee guidelines and append relevant materials where necessary.)

Requirement (see links for guidelines)	X	Note
Expository Writing		Explain how course adheres to EW guidelines
Foreign Language		
Quantitative Reasoning		Explain how course adheres to QR guidelines
Culture-Centered Inquiry		
Non-Western Culture		Explain how course adheres to NW guidelines
Cultural Diversity		Explain how course adheres to CD guidelines

Rationale: If the course meets a Breadth Component, check the one that the course will meet:

Humanities	
Social Sciences	
Natural Sciences	
Arts	

10. Faculty qualifications: Sponsoring faculty should briefly describe their academic and administrative expertise (including experience with student support/student affairs questions) and relevant experiences required to inform and guide the proposed travel seminar. Provide evidence of the extent of the faculty's past experience with and expertise in the locations in which the course is to be held. (The level of personal preparedness to sponsor a travel seminar will also be reviewed by the appropriate deans and directors in consultation with academic department chairs. See guidelines.)

11. Selection of students: Provide criteria for student participation and application deadlines. The sponsoring faculty and OCSE will review the applications and make final selections based on established criteria. Give an indication of the likely number of students interested in the course and a plan for their recruitment. Note that students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0. Students who do not meet this requirement must petition the Committee on Academic Standing. Students participating in programs delivered during the academic year (January, spring break and May following a spring course on campus) will be eligible for financial aid. For eligible students, aid will be apportioned as 50 percent loan and 50 percent grant. Students participating in a stand-alone summer program are not eligible for financial aid. Please keep this in mind when developing a recruitment plan.

12. Resources and logistics: The questions below are intended to elicit information that will allow the Associate Dean, the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges, and the Curriculum Committee to assess the resource implications of the course. Because off-campus study requires extensive resources, the proposal must include evidence of consultation on resource implications with the relevant department chair(s), program director(s), and the Director of Off-Campus Study & Exchanges. Although every effort will be made to determine the practical viability of a proposed Travel Seminar in advance of submitting the proposal to the Curriculum Committee,

limits on staff resources, limits on student financial aid, practical obstacles, emerging health or safety concerns at the host location, institutional resources, low levels of enrollment, or other factors may, of necessity, lead to the cancellation of an otherwise approved course at any time. Judgments concerning the specifically practical or financial viability of a course rest with the Dean of the Faculty.

- a) How will this new course affect the instructor's teaching schedule?
- b) Will the course replace a course previously offered by the instructor? (If so, then you must submit a Routine Course Revision Form to delete the course.)
- c) Will offering the travel seminar course require hiring adjunct faculty to cover an on-campus course? Has this impact been considered by the department chair? Explain.
- d) Include information on the impact, if any, on the department's plans to provide a sufficient number of seats for first- and second-year students at the 100/200 level.
- e) Provide a preliminary budget based on realistic estimates of all costs of the course, including partner institutions, classroom space, housing and meal arrangements, international and local transportation, accommodations for field trips, safety and health considerations, and admission fees. Please indicate and describe which resources are available in the host country (classroom space, housing, etc.). Please attach detailed information prepared in consultation with OCSE. Note: It is understood that these figures may change. However, student fees will affect the financial aid obligation of the College. Therefore, estimates at this time must be as realistic and inclusive as possible.

Approvals:

Chairperson of Faculty Department	Date

Interdisciplinary Program Director (when appropriate)	Date

Director of Off-Campus Study and Exchanges	Date

Associate Dean of the Faculty	Date

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Chair of Curriculum Committee	Date