



TO: Council on Academic Affairs and Council on Graduate Studies

FROM: Dr. Kristin Brown, IEC Chair  
Dr. Ryan C. Hendrickson, Dean  
Dr. Nichole Hugo, IEC Vice Chair  
Mr. Andy Kabasele, Assistant Dean for International Education

RE: Virtual Study Abroad Options

DATE: November 30, 2020

---

### **Proposal for Virtual/Remote Study Abroad Options**

We write to propose the creation of "Virtual Study Abroad Programs," which would provide an innovative, affordable and experimental approach to novel Study Abroad opportunities during the COVID pandemic. By creating virtual courses, the primary goal is to provide a meaningful alternative to classic/traditional study abroad courses. We seek to provide new learning and international cultural enrichment opportunities that are currently unavailable due to restrictions on travel.

#### **Rationale:**

At this time, the prospects for any EIU supported faculty-led study abroad programs (for summer 2021) are limited at best. EIU and all other state universities in Illinois have placed limitations on all faculty and student travel in accordance with recommendations from Illinois Governor Pritzker and the CDC. Moreover, all of our current external destinations for faculty-led study abroad programs scheduled for summer 2021 remain under the State Department's Level 3 travel warnings. Level 3 warnings traditionally result in study abroad course cancellations. Thus, at this time there are no study abroad options available to students that can be supported by the university and universities are largely providing only online instruction.

This proposed/new virtual option meets EIU's mission; a Virtual Study Abroad course is affordable and likewise is accessible to a broad range of students. The course may also generate heightened interest from those wary of study abroad, and thus can potentially serve later as a gateway to traditional study abroad enrollment.

#### **Basic Course Requirements for Virtual Study Abroad:**

All Virtual/Remote Study Abroad Courses will have the following elements:

- The substance of the course is foreign/international in scope and breadth
- Have experiential components through virtual means
- Entail some synchronous interaction with individuals at the international study site, which may be external faculty members, colleagues at partner institutions, host families, international experts, inter alia.

- 1 to 3 credit hour limitation
- These courses would not count toward the university Senior Seminar requirement.
- These courses would be billed as online program courses with regularly associated online course fees. Separate course fees may be utilized to cover possible expenses with international experiences

### **Voting Agenda Item: Course Approval Process**

Though the course will be delivered remotely, we propose to utilize the exceptions language in IGP 46.1 regarding course approval procedures. We are requesting that CAA and CGS allow the International Education Council (IEC) to provide its regular oversight and course approval procedures for all Virtual Study Abroad course proposals, as it does with all traditional Study Abroad course approval requests. Given that the course content is all international and experiential to the best extent possible through virtual means, we believe that the curriculum oversight role should remain with IEC, though understand the need to confirm an exception with these governance bodies as noted in IGP 46.1. This process will be utilized for virtual courses proposed and offered in the summer and fall semesters, 2021, on an experimental basis.