

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

MSU's International Travel Policy

Effective March 31, 2015, all campuses, agencies, departments, centers and other entities within Montana State University must abide by the [International Travel Policy](#). The information on the current page provides guidelines pertaining to the travel of family members and unaffiliated travelers.

304.60 *Family Members*

Group Leaders may not include family members on group travel programs without advance permission from the Provost (or comparable campus official) and the Responsible Official.

313.00 *Special Approvals for Minors and Unaffiliated Travelers*

Any minor (student or non-student) proposed to participate in University International Travel must be approved by the Responsible Official to ensure safety and compliance with various visa requirements of minors. Minors must also receive informed parental/guardian written consent and non-student minors may only participate as part of an approved Group Travel program.

Non-student, non-employee International Travel must be approved by the Responsible Official before participating in University International Travel.

General Guidelines for Unaffiliated Travelers

A successful program abroad depends on the full attention and leadership of the Group Leader. While faculty enjoy a wide network of student support and related resources on campus, the fact is that while abroad the faculty member is the primary point of contact for all issues that occur to program participants. Thus, the workload for programs abroad is much higher than that of teaching a similar course on campus. For this reason, faculty must carefully weigh the pros and cons of having any family members or other companions accompany them on University International Travel.

Group Leaders are entrusted by the University for the direction and safekeeping of program participants. Thus, their first priority is to be available to the program participants in any potential emergency (or perceived emergency) 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, while the program is in session. Unaffiliated travelers and/or the demands of family responsibilities can be a distraction and a source of additional stress for the Group Leader, causing conflicts that are to the serious detriment of the program.

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

Accompanying unaffiliated travelers are not considered in any way to be participants in the program or representatives of MSU. Therefore, the University assumes no responsibility for unaffiliated travelers. The University will not provide administrative support (orientation, transportation, visa services, housing, childcare, etc.) to unaffiliated travelers. The University also reserves the right to impose limits and/or conditions on the roles, activities and presence of unaffiliated travelers who accompany group leaders. Such limits or conditions derive from programmatic concerns related to academic quality, health and safety as well as other issues determined by the Responsible Official, the International Travel Review Committee and/or Provost. Each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis. As such, unaffiliated travelers may not be permitted to join the group for some or all activities.

Basic Limits and Conditions:

1. **Accommodations:** Unaffiliated travelers may not share rooms, tents or other accommodations with any program participants. Unaffiliated travelers may share accommodations with the Group Leader(s), provided such sharing is allowed by the housing provider. The Group Leader will receive housing reimbursements for one person, regardless of how many accompanying unaffiliated travelers share the accommodation. If housing costs are based on a "per person" rate, the Group Leader will be reimbursed for only one person and the unaffiliated travelers will be personally responsible for their portion. In the event that an additional room, tent or other accommodation is required on behalf of the unaffiliated traveler, then the unaffiliated traveler is responsible for full costs. The Group Leader is responsible for the cost difference in cases where logistical arrangement such as a double room for a dependent or spouse/partner costs more than the price for a single room.
2. **Background Checks:** As part of the review process, unaffiliated travelers are required to submit a background check to the Responsible Official. The cost associated with the required background check is the responsibility of the unaffiliated traveler.
3. **Behavior:** Although unaffiliated travelers are not participants in the program, they are expected to abide by any and all program policies and restrictions, including expectations outlined in the MSU Student Code of Conduct. Unaffiliated travelers should be aware

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

that their personal behavior must not in any way negatively affect the quality of the program or the experience of the participants.

4. **Class Attendance:** In the event that an unaffiliated traveler wishes to take part in international travel associated with a credit-bearing course, the unaffiliated traveler cannot attend classes or expect to receive any formal record (e.g., transcript) associated with the program.
5. **Communication:** For purposes of data tracking and reporting, the University requires approved unaffiliated travelers to register their travel plans in the University's [International Travel Registry](#). Unaffiliated travelers will not be invited to in-person group leader or program participant orientation sessions, but they may review online materials made publically available on the [International Travel Resource Page](#).
6. **Indemnification:** Unaffiliated travelers are not covered by the immunization, defense and indemnification privileges extended to University employees in accordance with [Mont. Code Ann. §2-2-305](#).
7. **Insurance:** All unaffiliated travelers are required to carry emergency medical and evacuation insurance that meets or exceeds the minimum levels established by the Responsible Official for the program abroad. It is strongly recommended that travelers contact their insurance provider to confirm that their coverage extends to locations outside the U.S. In addition, as a participant in the program, the spouse/partner or relative understands and agrees that all program-related costs are their responsibility. In an emergency situation all costs associated with such an emergency will be the responsibility of the unaffiliated traveler. Details on how to purchase international insurance are posted on the [International Travel Resource Page](#).
8. **Liability:** It is the responsibility of all unaffiliated travelers to read and monitor the US Department of State Travel Warnings and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Health Information Notices pertaining to their travel. It is important for unaffiliated travelers to carefully consider the risks of participating in international travel. The University is not responsible for the health, safety and security of unaffiliated travelers.

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

-
9. **Meals:** Program money cannot be used to purchase meals for unaffiliated travelers. As such, unaffiliated travelers are responsible for all personal meal expenses. If participating in group meals, the Group Leader must reimburse the program for any expenses incurred by unaffiliated travelers if a separate bill cannot be obtained.
 10. **Perception:** If unaffiliated travelers are approved to participate in a program abroad, and they accompany the group on any portion of the program, Group Leaders are expected to inform the program participants that their program fees do not cover the participation costs of the unaffiliated travelers. This will eliminate the potential for program participants, parents and others to develop the impression that program fees are covering what could be perceived as a family member or friend's vacation.
 11. **Program Activities:** If participating in group excursions, accompanying dependent must pay for all per person expenses (i.e., entrances to parks or museums, theatre tickets, etc.). University funds cannot be used to pay for dependent participation. If the cost for the dependent is included on the group receipt, it must be deducted before the receipt is submitted for reimbursement.
 12. **Reimbursements:** MSU will not reimburse Group Leaders for any expenses incurred on behalf of unaffiliated travelers. Therefore, Group Leaders are required to maintain detailed records demonstrating the separation of expenses of any unaffiliated travelers from the reimbursable expenses of the Group Leader. In the event that group leaders elect to combine personal travel with unaffiliated travelers around the study abroad program, all additional costs incurred due to non-program travel before or after the program, stopovers, route modifications, or mode of transport made for the convenience of unaffiliated travelers will be borne entirely by the group leader. When getting price quotes on flights, OIP will need a comparison for a direct trip to the program site. The ticket can be billed to MSU, but any difference should be reimbursed prior to departure.
 13. **Risk:** All unaffiliated travelers must sign MSU's Unaffiliated Traveler Acknowledgement of Risk form prior to having their participation reviewed by the Responsible Official.

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

-
14. **Special Approval:** The inclusion of unaffiliated travelers must be approved by the Responsible Official before participating in University International Travel. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may require additional conditions, documentation and/or approvals as determined by the Responsible Official.
15. **Travel Arrangements:** Unaffiliated travelers may participate in program excursions and field trips, provided that such participation does not inflate the cost of the excursion or negatively impact the academic quality of the program. Program excursions are planned to accommodate all students plus the participating leader(s). If there are empty seats on the bus, boat, or other arranged travel, accompanying unaffiliated travelers may travel with the group at a prorated rate that covers the cost of their participation. However, if a larger or additional bus, boat or other mode of transportation must be arranged in order to accommodate accompanying dependents, the dependent is responsible for the entire additional costs incurred. Under no circumstances will program participant fees be used to pay for all or part of the costs associated with the travel of unaffiliated travelers.
16. **Volunteers:** Unaffiliated travelers may serve in a volunteer capacity as long as their participation is approved by the Responsible Official and is in accordance with MSU's [Volunteer Policy](#).

Guidelines for Accompanying Family Members

Spouse/domestic partner or relative of student participant:

MSU study abroad program budgets are calculated on cost-recovery and are based on unaccompanied individual students. For this reason, accompanying spouses or relatives are not permitted. A spouse or relative may participate in the program as long as they enroll for academic credit, participate in all scheduled activities, satisfy MSU's international health insurance requirements and pay the full program cost.

Spouse/domestic partner or relative of faculty or staff group leader:

The University strives to create a family friendly environment for its employees. As such, faculty or staff who are designated as group leaders may petition for special approval to allow family members to participate in University International Travel. However, faculty should carefully consider the pros and cons of including family members in program abroad. Family members taken abroad typically require more attention from a faculty member than they require at home due to language barriers as well as lack of friends, recreational, and educational activities. Each request is reviewed on a case-by-case basis, and requires approval by both the Responsible Official and Provost. The following limits and conditions apply to all family member participants. However, additional limits and conditions may apply.

Basic Limits and Conditions:

1. **Care of Minors:** The faculty member's primary responsibility is to the program participants. As such, the faculty member will be required to provide a caretaker for any minor dependents accompanying the program. The faculty member must cover the costs of the caretaker's expenses. Students on the program should never be asked to serve as a caretaker, as this detracts from the program and the student's experience. In addition, it exposes the University, the faculty member and the student to increased liability.
2. **Employment:** In accordance with the University's policies on Conflict of Interest and Nepotism, family members are generally NOT hired to perform duties related to international programs. It is possible, with special permission, for family members who are both current employees to be co-directors of a program, provided they do not supervise one another. Any request to hire a family member to perform duties related to international programs must be in writing and include written endorsements by the department head or director, and dean. These materials must be submitted to the Responsible Official, who will review the request and consult with the Provost, Vice

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

President for Research and/or Legal Counsel to ensure such employment is not a violation of applicable laws, regulations and policies.

3. **Impact:** The presence of accompanying family members should not interfere with the group leader's duties or negatively impact the experience of program participants. Because of the intense nature of many international programs, faculty leaders are expected to be readily accessible by program participants at all times.
4. **Role:** Family members should understand that their primary role on the study abroad program is that of family member and/or caretaker of any dependent children also accompanying the faculty member. In order to protect the University and the family member, it is important that family members do not have responsibilities related to the study abroad program (e.g. taking roll, monitoring tests, managing funds, counseling students, etc.) unless these are approved in advance by the Responsible Official and Provost.
5. **Special Approval:** The inclusion of family members must be approved by the Responsible Official and Provost before participating in University International Travel. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may require additional conditions, documentation, and/or approvals as determined by the Responsible Official and Provost.
6. **Unaffiliated Status:** In addition to the provisions outlined in this section, family members who are unaffiliated with MSU will be subject to all of the limits and conditions that apply to unaffiliated travelers.

Guidelines for Accompanying Minors

The Office of International Programs defines an accompanying minor as any proposed participant (student or non-student) in University International Travel who is under the age of eighteen (18) at the time when travel is to commence. Out of concern for the safety and security of accompanying minors, a commitment to ensuring a high quality experience for all program participants and additional complexity pertaining to passport and visa issuance, the following limits and conditions apply to all minor participants. However, additional limits and conditions may apply.

Basic Limits and Conditions:

1. **Affiliation:** Minor children who are not MSU students are subject to the additional limits and conditions applicable to family members and/or unaffiliated travelers.
2. **Parental Consent:** Because of increasing instances of child abduction in custody cases, human trafficking and other illegal activities involving minors, an immigration officer, airline, travel agent or other official may request or require documentation of parental consent if a child is traveling internationally with only one parent or with another adult. A sample letter of consent to travel is available on the U.S. Department of State's [website](#). It is best practice to have the letter of consent signed by both parents and notarized. Additionally, as with other important travel documents, one or more original copies of the letter should be kept with the group leader abroad and with a trusted friend or family member in the traveler's home country. If there is no second parent with legal claims to the child (e.g., deceased or sole custody), any other relevant paperwork, such as a court decision, birth certificate naming only one parent, death certificate of the second parent, etc., can replace the letter from the second parent. Please note that failure to provide documentation of parental consent may result in detention of the accompanying adult(s) and minor until the circumstances pertaining to the child's travel are fully assessed. In some countries (e.g., Canada), entry at the border may be refused. Additional information regarding this topic is available on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's [website](#).
3. **Passport:** Minors under the age of 16 cannot apply for a passport by themselves. Rather, both parents/guardians must appear in person with the minor and provide consent, authorizing passport issuance to the minor. If one parent/guardian is unable to appear in person, then the DS-11 application must be accompanied by a signed, notarized *Form DS-3053: Statement of Consent* from the non-applying parent/guardian. Additional

Guidelines for Inclusion of Minors, Family Members and Unaffiliated Travelers

details regarding U.S. Department of State restrictions on issuance of passports to minors are available [online](#).

4. **Program Activities:** The University reserves the right to limit the participation by minors in program activities, including field trips.
5. **Special Approval:** The inclusion of accompanying minors must be approved by the Responsible Official before participating in University International Travel. Each request will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and may require additional conditions, documentation and/or approvals as determined by the Responsible Official.
6. **Special Registration:** All accompanying minors who hold U.S. citizenship must be registered in the U.S. Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#). Such registration may be done on an individual basis or in conjunction with the registration of a larger group. Accompanying minors who are not U.S. citizens should contact the Embassy or Consulate of their country of citizenship for assistance.
7. **Visas:** Depending on the location, minor children may be required to obtain special visas or stay permits

Additional Resources

- [Children's Passport Issuance Alert Program](#)
- [Preventing International Parental Child Abduction](#)