

THE FORUM ON
EDUCATION ABROAD
INCIDENT DATABASE PILOT PROJECT

PRELIMINARY REPORT

THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

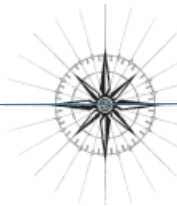
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forum on Education Abroad would like to recognize Bill Frederick's leadership and vision for the Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project.

The Forum thanks the following members of the Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot committee: Brian Brubaker (Dickinson College), Regine Lambrech (Columbia University), Natalie Mello (Worcester Polytechnic Institute), Christopher Powers (IIE), Adam Rubin (CIEE), Gary Rhodes (SAFETI), Arlene Snyder (Arcadia University College of Global Studies), and John Tansey (Dartmouth College).

The Forum is grateful to the pilot project participants and to Forum members for their support of this project.

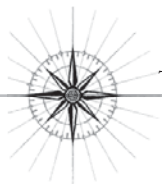
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PRELIMINARY REPORT
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March 2010

THE
FORUM
ON EDUCATION
ABROAD

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I. Introduction

Bill Frederick, School for Field Studies

In February, 2009 at the Forum's Fireside Dialogue, *Making the Case: Beyond the Basics of Risk Management*, in Portland, Oregon, a number of senior education abroad professionals gathered to review and discuss the state of the field with regards to managing risks. Among several conclusions was the conviction that education abroad needed an incident database.

Why an Incident Database?

Historically, the education abroad field has relied on the extensive experience of some of its most senior members to inform safety management. However, as has been discovered in many other fields, the subjectivity of individual experience that comprises conventional wisdom is often proved to be wide of the mark when contrasted with competent research and objective data. Data equals safety, and by making risk management choices and decisions based upon solid knowledge of what really happens in the field will afford us the opportunity to apply our safety resources in a more precise and effective manner. Once we can quantify the value of specific factors as causative or protective, we can then incorporate that knowledge into the way we structure our programs, our policies and procedures, and the education and training of our staff and students. Industrial studies utilizing incident data have shown a consistent relationship between minor safety-related incidents and near misses, incidents with minor property damage, incidents with minor physical injury and significant injuries/fatalities. Bird and Germain (1992) demonstrated the ratio of 600/30/10/1, i.e., for every 600 safety-related events with little or no consequence, there were 30 instances of minor property damage, 10 instances of physical injury and 1 instance of severe injury or death. Furthermore, if an industry or organization were to examine and address the causes of the minor incidents with the goal of reducing their occurrence, they would also necessarily reduce the occurrence of the more consequential events. This general approach to risk management has been adopted and proven effective by fields as diverse as the aerospace industry, medicine and the adventure education field.

Goals for the Pilot Project

As it set out to design the pilot, the project committee outlined several goals. First, the committee wanted to collect a significant set of data that would allow it to make some quantitative statements about safety events in education abroad based on numbers of student programming days, i.e., it wanted to find out something about what actually happens. Secondly, the committee wanted to learn about incident databases. Was the process effective at capturing the data? Was the process user friendly, easily understandable and conducive to guideline compliance? What are the right questions? How do we weight different potential contributing factors? How can we minimize the subjectivity of the terminology? How do we build a process that will yield meaningful data without making the process overly cumbersome? And, once we have the data, what does it tell us? Lastly, the committee wanted to reveal all the obstacles and challenges that it had not as yet foreseen but had assumed that we might encounter, and then put everything together to determine the next steps for creating the incident database that will best serve the education abroad field.



II. Implementing the Pilot Project

The Pilot Project began during the summer of 2009 with all Forum institutional members being informed about the opportunity to participate in the project. 31 applications were received and represented well the diversity of the Forum membership, including U.S. colleges and universities, provider organizations, and overseas host institutions. The lone rejected application was due to the institution not running its own programs, which was a requirement of pilot reporting model. During the course of the project one participant withdrew, bringing the total number of participants to 29 Forum institutional members.

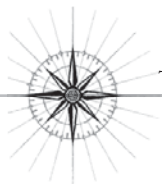
The Pilot Project Committee considered it essential to include the pilot participants in the decision about which categories to use for reporting. The committee and the participants decided to include the following variables in order to categorize the incidents: date; time; country; city; World Bank category of country; program length; program type; nature of incident; individuals involved; type of injury; primary illness symptoms; cause of illness; behavior/psychological event; type of activity/location of incident; contributing factors; and response actions.

The reporting process as well as the categories used tried to strike a balance between insuring an appropriate level of detail for reportable events and keeping the reporting process from being too cumbersome. Guidelines were sent to participants before the first reporting session in order to orient them to how the reporting would work. These provided specific, clear criteria for reporting, so that collected data would be consistently reported. The guidelines also defined some of the variables in the reporting form that may have had different meanings in other contexts, so that all pilot participants would be working from the same understanding of terms.

The committee studied methods employed for tracking incidents in the adventure education field and decided to adopt the unit of measure that has been successfully used; namely, the “student program day.” The participating organizations agreed that this unit, representing one student on a program for one day, was straightforward and easy to understand.

The committee recognized that education abroad programs include a number of program models and range of operational models. Students participate in education abroad in a broad diversity of ways, often situated in multi-layered relationships between their home institution, study abroad program provider, international university and other entities. Forum members (and the participants in this pilot project) come from each of these constituencies. This raised the question of how the incident database could ensure that a single incident was not reported multiple times, by being reported by each of the different entities that might be involved.

For the purposes of this pilot project, we determined that the most effective way to control for the complexity of relationships was to have only the entity that actually manages the day-to-day, on-site operations of the education abroad program to report incidents. This, we believe, prevented the potential of the double reporting of incidents.



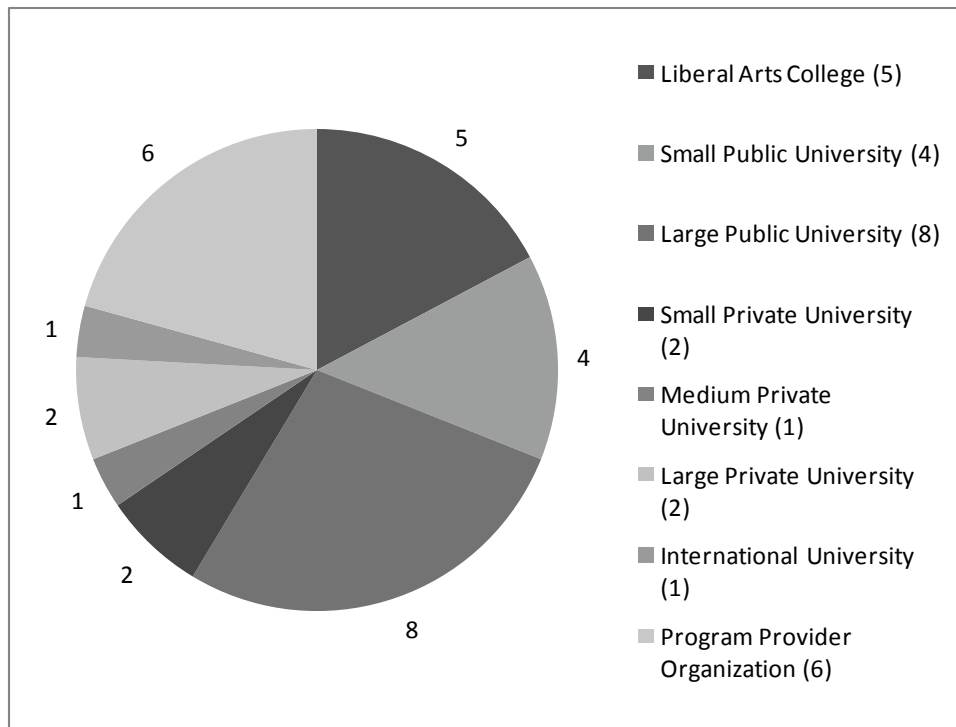
The Pilot Project reporting period extended from August 15, 2009 to January 31, 2010. There were 6 specific reporting sessions spread out over this nearly six-month period. For each reporting session, an e-mail message containing a hyperlink to a secure online reporting form was sent to the contact person at each participating institution. During the first 3 reporting sessions, the online form was open for 2 days; for the last 3 reportings, the online reporting window was extended to one week to better accommodate the schedules of people responsible for the reporting at each of the participating organizations.

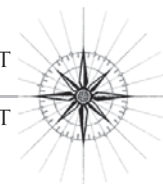
The committee wanted to guarantee complete anonymity in the reporting process and reassure the participating organizations that the data would not be associated in any way with particular programs or organizations. Therefore, the process of reporting information was anonymous, and incident data was not associated with a particular reporting organization. This insured the confidentiality of the project, and fostered an openness among the reporting institutions so that they would report the data accurately.

III. Participants and Programs of the Pilot Project

The Incident Database Pilot Project began with 30 participating institutions and organizations; one participant dropped out during the course of the project. The 29 remaining participants represent a broad range of the education abroad constituents that make up the Forum membership. Large universities were most represented in the project, with 10 participants, followed by small universities (6 participants) and program providers (6 participants). Five participating institutions represented liberal arts colleges. While there was only one institution located outside the United States represented, many of the other participants had students enrolled at overseas institutions.

Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Participating institutions and organizations

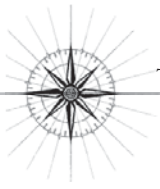




When participants applied to join the project, they provided baseline data about their programs. This information included the location and type of program, the duration of program in days, the number of students enrolled on the program, and housing options for the program. The pilot project participants operated a total of 391 programs, with a total of 861,600 student program days. The programs were located in 60 different countries.

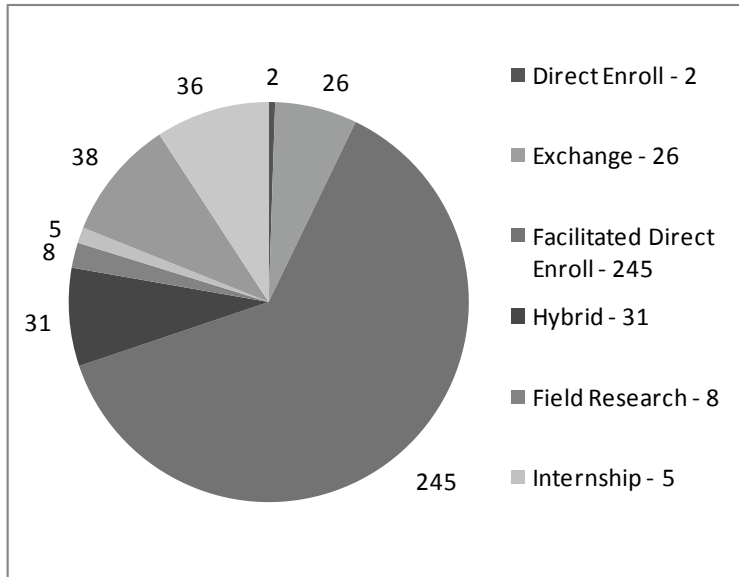
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Program location, distribution by country

Program Location: Country	Number of Programs in Pilot Project
France	51
Great Britain	45
Spain	24
Italy	21
China	20
Mexico	20
Finland	18
Germany	16
Australia	15
Japan	13
Netherlands	12
Korea	11
Austria	10
Sweden	10
Argentina	9
Ireland	7
Canada, New Zealand	6
Ghana, South Africa, Switzerland	5
Denmark, multi-country, Nicaragua, Thailand	4
Costa Rica, India, Panama, Puerto Rico, Russia	3
Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, French Antilles, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Malta, Morocco, Norway, Turkey	2



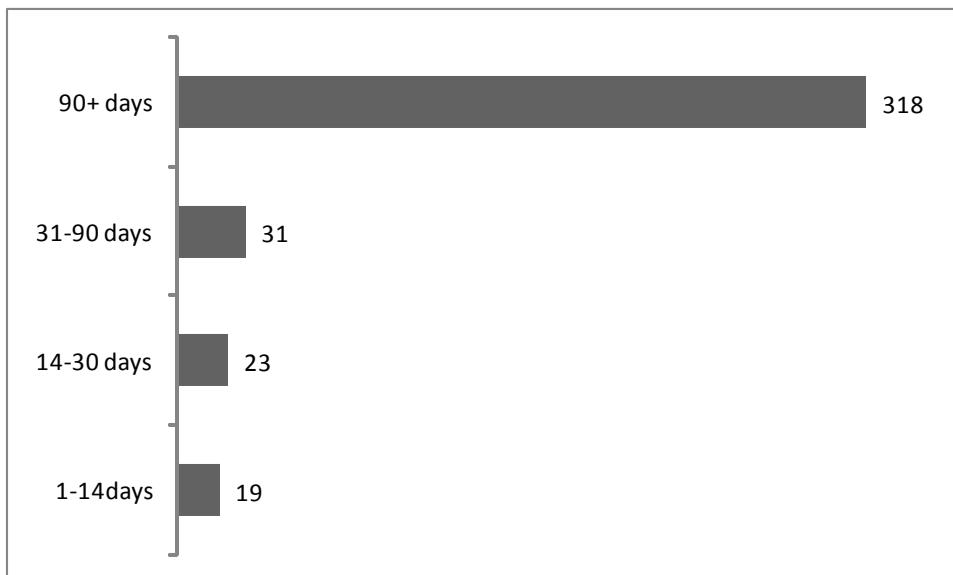
Pilot project participants identified the types of programs for which they would be reporting. The most represented type of program was the facilitated direct-enroll program (245 programs); however, it should be noted that the proportion seen in the chart below does not necessarily correlate to raw numbers of students on the various types of programs.

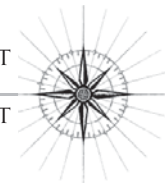
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Participating programs, by program type



Pilot project participants also identified the duration of programs for which they would be reporting. The baseline metric was the number of days a program would run overseas. Given the diversity of education abroad program models, one of the few measures that would be common across all programs was the number of days a program operated. The great majority of programs in the pilot project ran for 90 days or more, the length of a U.S. institutional semester. Some programs were full-year programs, for which incidents were reported only for the duration of the pilot project.

Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Participating programs, by program duration



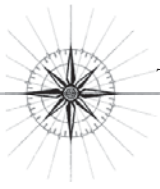


IV. Incidents Reported

For the purposes of consistency in reporting, participants were provided with the following definitions for types of incidents:

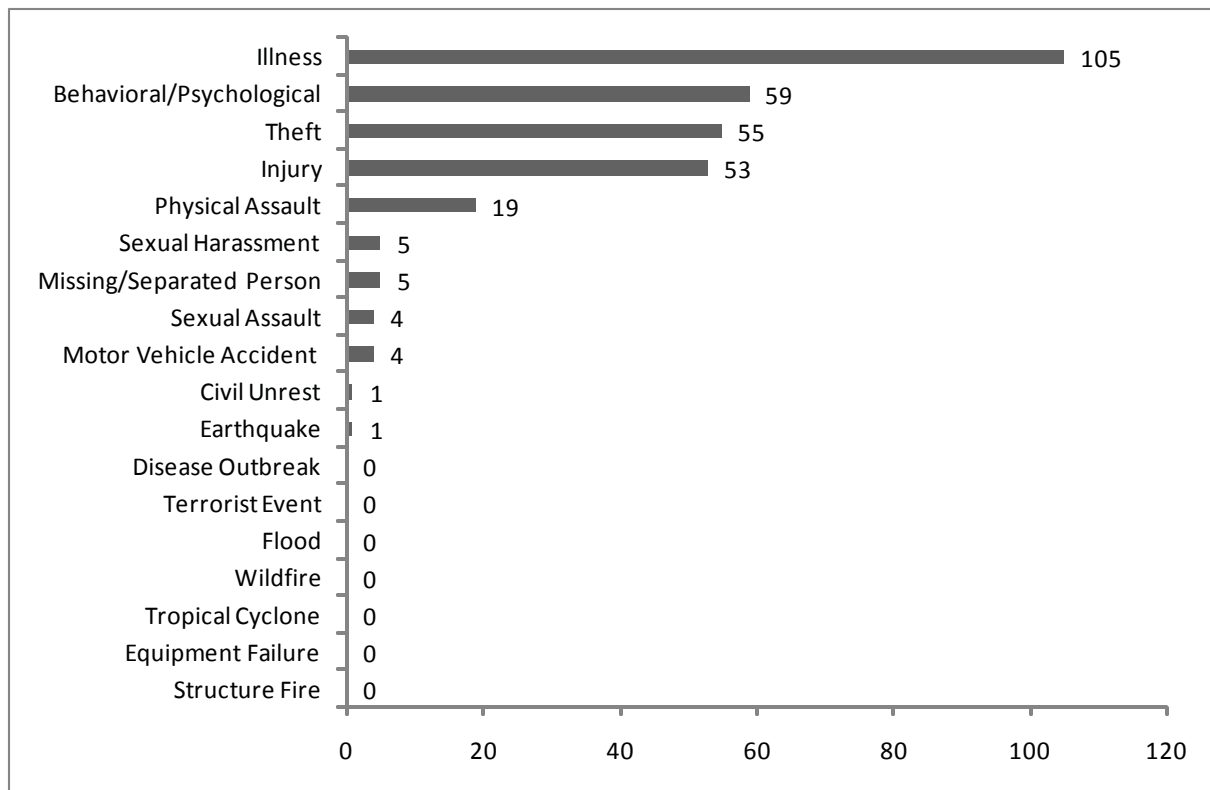
Definition of Incidents

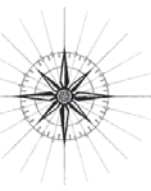
- Injury – An event that required professional medical attention beyond rudimentary first aid, or that resulted in an inability to participate in the program for a day or more. Not to include stubbed toes, minor splinters, minor muscle strains, etc.
- Illness – An event that required professional medical attention, or that resulted in an inability to participate in the program for a day or more. Not to include routine colds, sore throats, isolated low grade fevers, minor traveler’s diarrhea, etc.
- Physical Assault – Any event involving any staff or student where there was a physical attack (empty handed or with weapon) delivered with the likely intention of injury.
- Structure Fire – Any event where there was a fire in a building that housed students where the fire was not easily contained and controlled within several minutes.
- Theft – Any event whereby a student or staff had their property taken without their consent without violence or intimidation. To include passports, credit cards, money or valuables worth more than US \$100.
- Robbery – Any event whereby a student or staff had property seized from them via violence or intimidation.
- Equipment Failure – Any event where there was an equipment failure that did or had the potential to cause injury, i.e., the brakes on a vehicle fail; a boat motor dies without backup;
- Motor Vehicle Accident (pedestrian, motorbike, car, truck, etc) – Any event in which a staff or student was injured involving a motorized vehicle whether the injured person was the driver, a passenger or a pedestrian. Any event where someone was injured by program owned/hired vehicle. Any motor vehicle accident where over \$1000 of damage was done to a program vehicle.
- Missing/Separated Person – Any event in which a student or staff was missing/overdue for more than 12 hours without the program’s direct communication with them.
- Sexual Harassment – Any event whereby a staff or student felt that they had been victimized by unwanted and offensive sexual advances or sexually offensive remarks or acts.
- Sexual Assault – Sexual activity (defined as direct contact that involved genitals, breasts, mouth or anus) without the consent and against the will of the victim, with threat of force or harm. To include attempted rape and rape (defined as sexual intercourse) without the consent, and against the will of the victim. Sexual intercourse being defined as penetration of the penis and the vagina or anus.
- Behavioral/Psychological – Any event in which a student manifested an acute episode of behaviors associated with anxiety disorders, depressive disorders, eating disorders, etc. Any event in which a student showed evidence of suicide ideation, made a suicide gesture or attempted suicide. Any event in which a student behaved in a way that required disciplinary action. Any event in which a student was separated from the program owing to behavioral issues.
- Natural Disaster (Tropical Cyclone, Earthquake, Wildfire, Flood) – Any event that directly caused injury to staff or students, or caused damage in excess of \$1000. Any event that necessitated a significant change in program schedule, itinerary or location. Any event which resulted in the suspension of the program.
- Disease Outbreak - Any event which directly caused illness to staff or students. Any event that necessitated a significant change in program schedule, itinerary or location. Any event which resulted in the suspension of the program.
- Political Upheaval (War, Civil Unrest, Violent Protests, Riots, etc) - Any event that directly caused injury to staff or students. Any event that necessitated a significant change in program schedule, itinerary or location. Any event which resulted in the suspension of the program.
- Terrorist Event - Any event that directly caused injury to staff or students. Any event that necessitated a significant change in program schedule, itinerary or location. Any event that resulted in the suspension of the program.



Pilot project participants reported a total of 311 incidents. The figure below illustrates the types of incidents reported, and how many incidents were reported of each type. The most reported type of incident was illness (105 incident reports). Almost twice as many illness-based incidents were reported as incidents reported of the next three types. Behavioral/psychological events were the next most reported incidents (59 incident reports), with similar numbers of theft (55 incidents) and injury (53 incidents) incidents reported. 19 physical assaults were reported. The remaining types of incidents had significantly fewer incident reports.

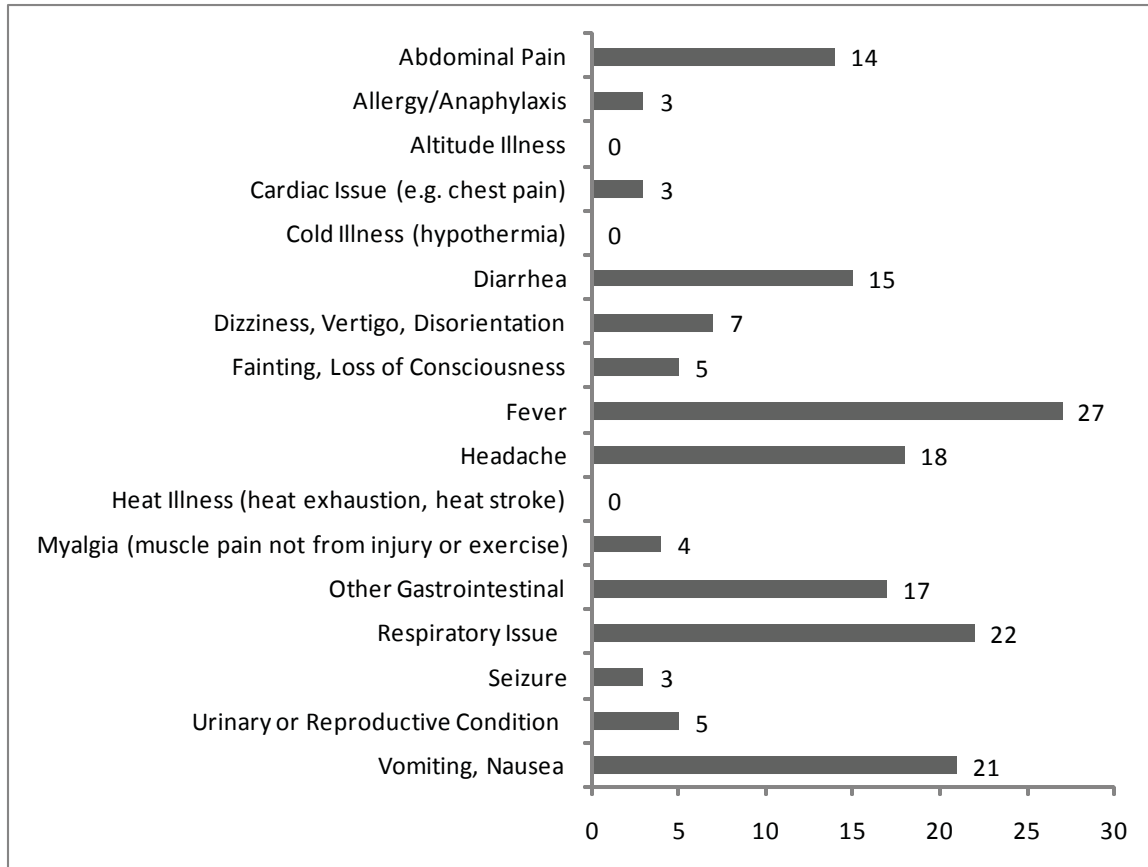
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Incidents reported, by nature of incident



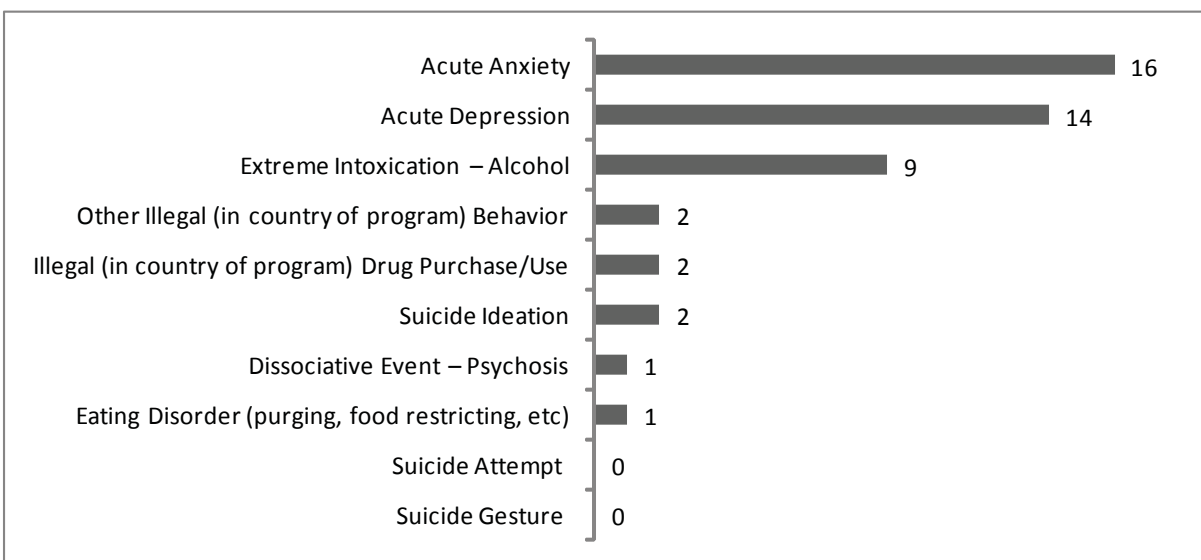


The following two figures show the nature of illnesses reported, and the types of behavioral/psychological events reported.

Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Illnesses reported, by type or primary symptom



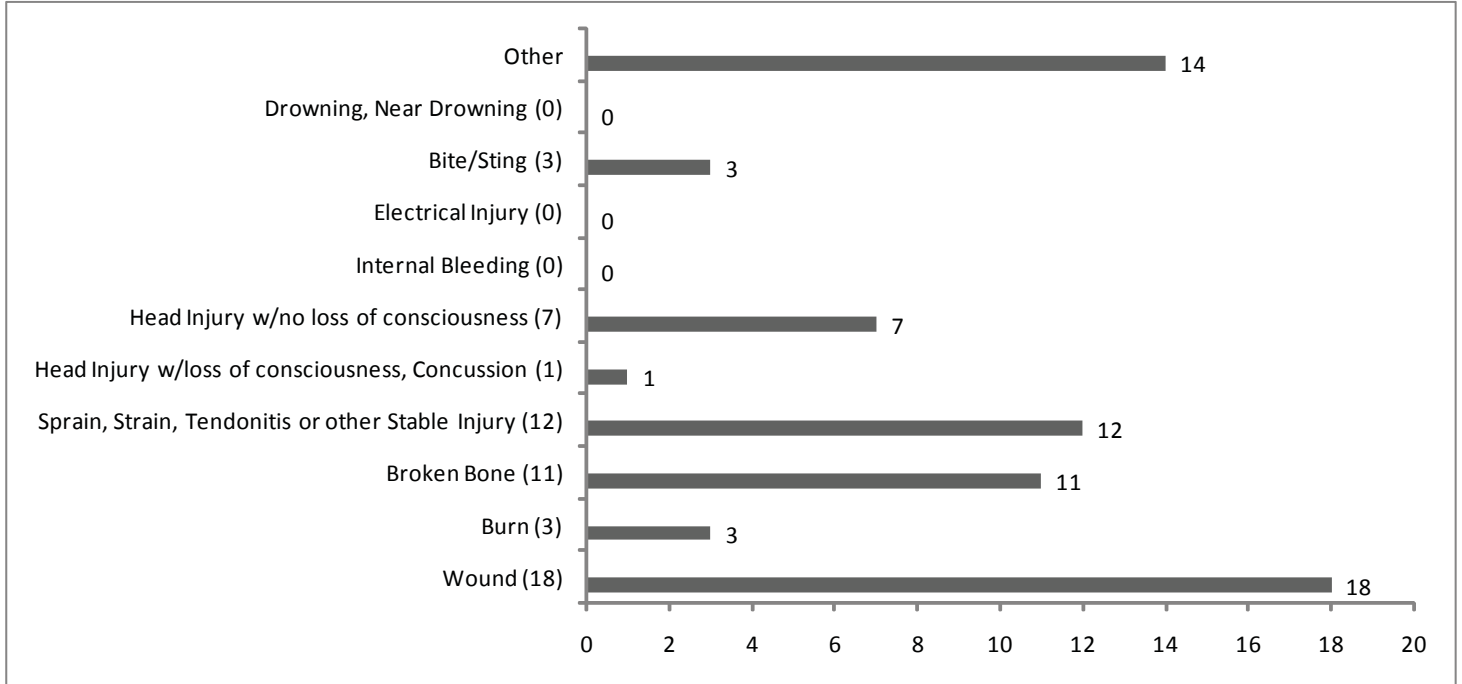
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Behavioral/psychological events reported, by type





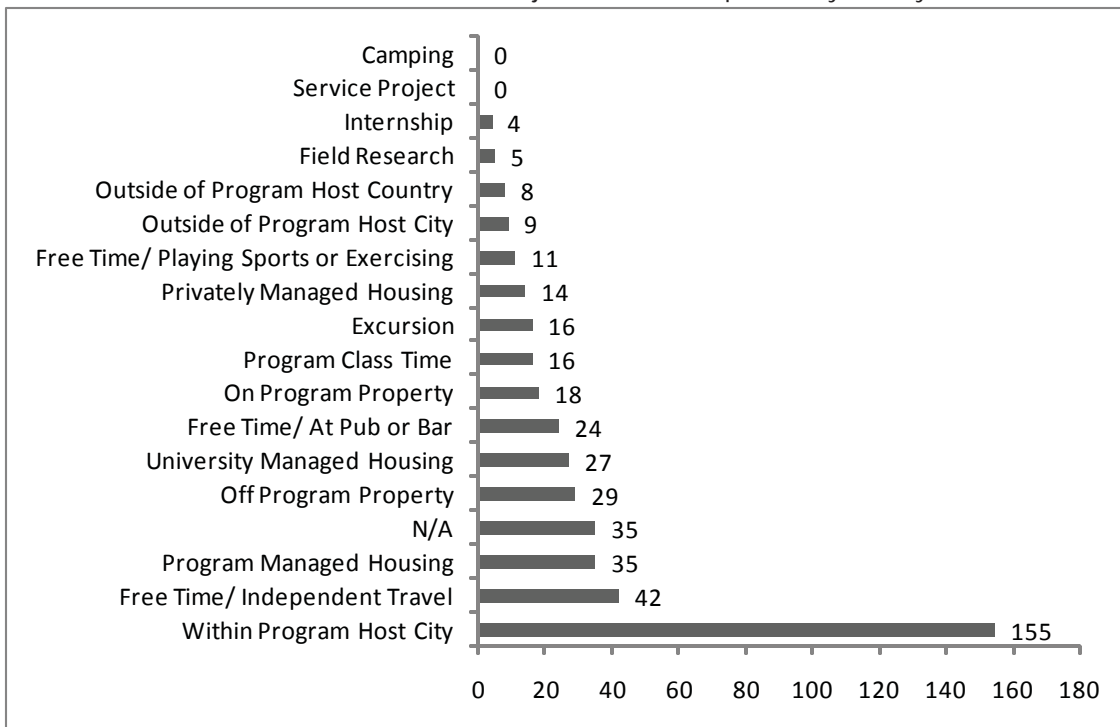
As seen in the figure below, the most commonly reported types of injuries were wounds, stable/weight-bearing injuries and broken bones.

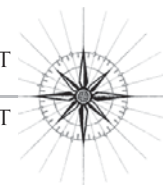
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Injuries reported, by type



The pilot project also sought to track where incidents occurred, and the location and type of activity in which the student was engaged at the time of incident. Most incidents were reported as occurring within the program's host city. The figure below shows a fairly even distribution of activities during which the incidents occurred, with free time at a pub or bar being the most-reported activity context for incidents.

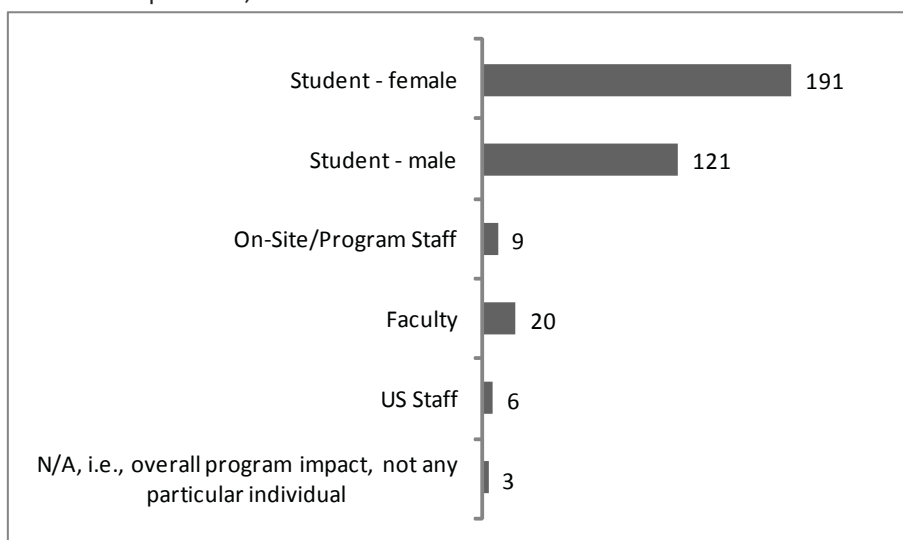
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Incidents reported, by activity or location at time of incident





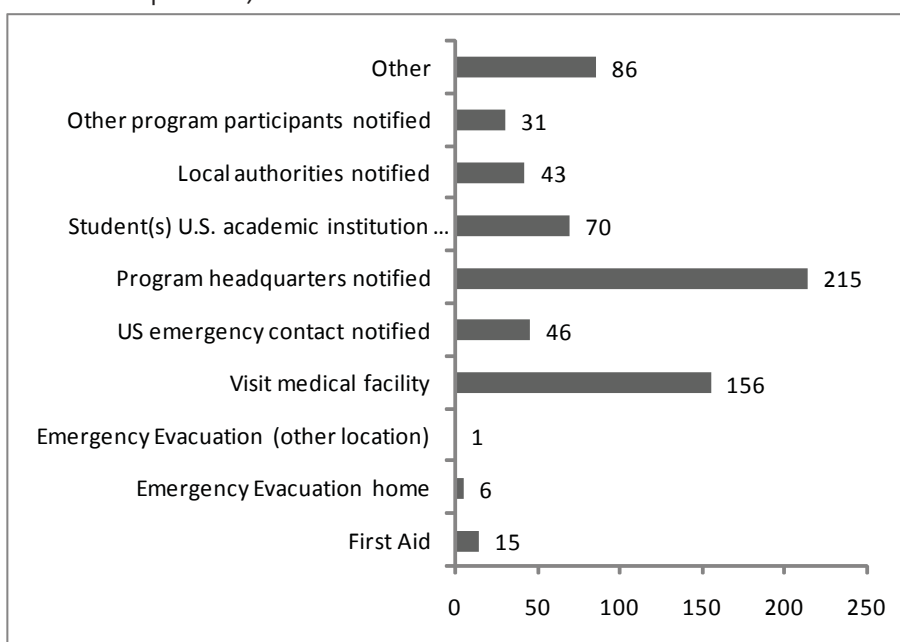
More female students than male students were impacted directly by the incidents reported, as shown in the figure below. The incidents reported generally effected individuals, and did not have overall program impact.

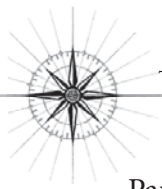
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Individuals directly impacted by incident (more than one answer possible)



The figure below shows that several actions were taken in response to each incident. With illness being the most reported type of incident, it follows that visits to medical facility were one of the most reported responses.

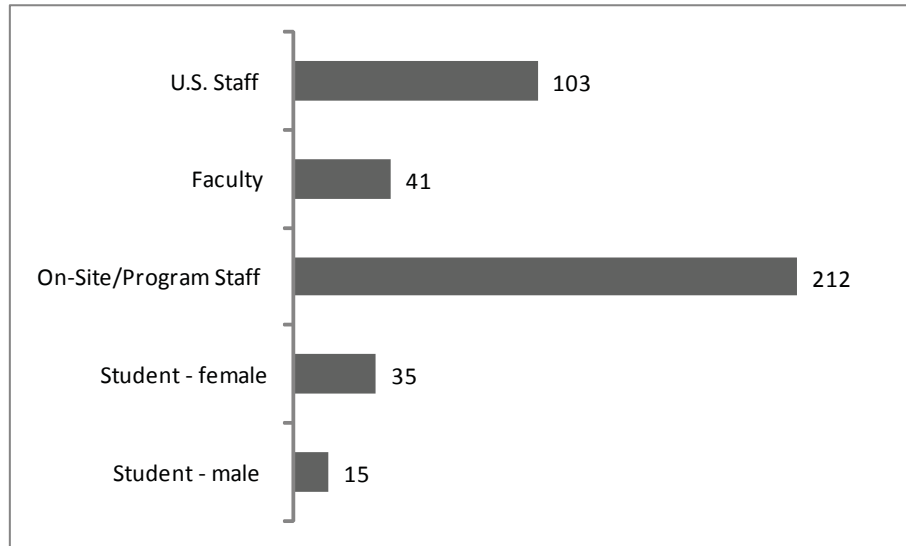
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Actions taken in response to incident (more than one answer possible)





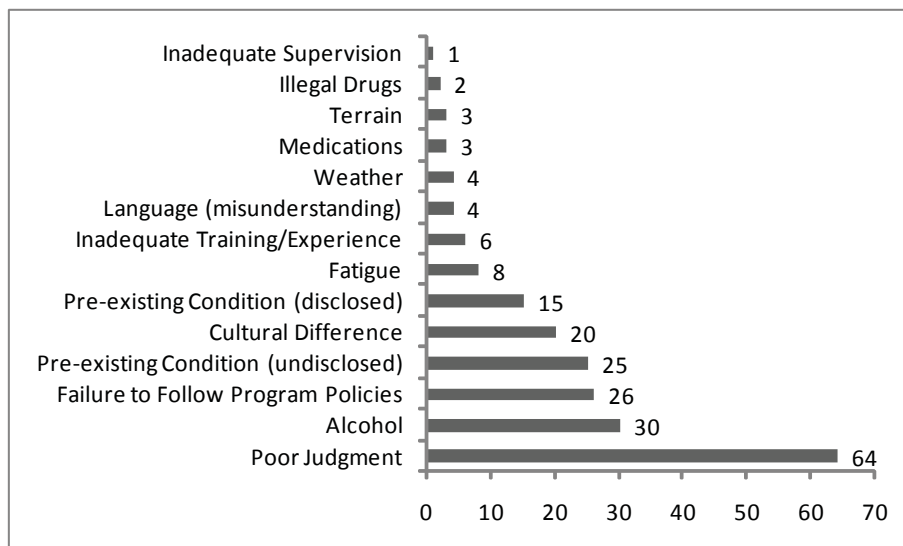
Participants were asked to indicate who assisted in responding to an incident. On-site program staff were most reported as assisting, and fewer students were reported as having assisted with the reported incidents.

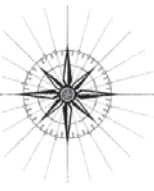
Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Program-related individuals assisting with incident response (more than one answer possible)



Participants were asked to indicate what they understood to be contributing factors in the incidents reported. Poor judgment was indicated most as a factor contributing to incidents. Alcohol consumption, failure to follow program policies, undisclosed pre-existing conditions and cultural difference were reported as factors, with similar rates.

Education Abroad Incident Database Pilot Project: Contributing factors for incidents





V. Next Steps

In the coming weeks, the Incident Database Pilot Project Committee will continue to evaluate both the project data and its processes in order to fully appreciate and understand the lessons learned. Critical to this process will be the discussions to be held at the Standards of Good Practice Institute in Charlotte, North Carolina on March 24, 2010, where attendees will provide feedback and offer their ideas.

Besides mining all that we can from the Pilot Project, a critical question to answer is whether, based on this initial experience, the Forum should continue this work and expand the incident database project to include as many Forum members as possible. If so, there are many questions to ask regarding the benefits and the challenges of continuing this work. Some of these are: How do we best achieve a reporting sample that is representative of the field at large for statistical validity? What additional parameters should be included for incident reporting? What type of access should there be to the incident database? Will it contain raw data or summary narrative reports? Should reporting be conducted on a continuous basis, annually, or bi-annually? How will the Forum continue to maintain anonymity in the reporting process?

As with all Forum initiatives, discussions about these and other questions will proceed in a very open, transparent way, with opportunities for member comment and input, as well as feedback from the field at large and the general public.

It is evident that there is great value in the data contained in this Incident Database Pilot Project Preliminary Report. It offers for the first time objective information on the range of incidents that occur on a wide variety of education abroad programs. It provides data well beyond anecdotes and opinion about what types of incidents occur and how frequently incidents occur. The Pilot Project signals also that the education abroad field can successfully work together to report this critical information in a rigorous, effective way that ultimately benefits the students who participate in education abroad programs.

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Asociacion Avivara	Consortium for North American Higher Education Collaboration	Institute of International Education
Associated Colleges of the Midwest	Cornell University	Institute for Shipboard Education
Association of American College and University Programs in Italy	Costa Rica Spanish Institute	Institute for Study Abroad, Butler University
Association of International Education Administrators	Council on International Educational Exchange	International Education Association of Australia
Association of Public and Land Grant Universities	Cultural Insurance Services International	International Partnership for Service Learning
Association of US Academic Programs in India	Curtin Institute of Technology	International Student Exchange Programs (ISEP)
Athena Study Abroad	Danish Institute for Study Abroad	International Studies Abroad
Augustana College	Dar Loughat	interstudy
Austin College	Dartmouth College	James Madison University
AustraLearn/AsiaLearn/EuroLearn	Davidson College	John Carroll University
Australian Education International	DePaul University	Johns Hopkins University
Azusa Pacific University	De Pauw University	Juniata College
Babson College	Dickinson College	Kalamazoo College
Baruch College	Dublin Business School	Lafayette College
Bates College	Dublin City University	Lehigh University
Baylor University	Duke University	Leiden University
Bellarmino University	Duquesne University	Lenoir-Rhyne University
Beloit College	Earlham College	Lewis & Clark College
Bentley University	East Carolina University	Linfield College
Bethel University	Eastern Illinois University	Living Routes
Boston College	Eckerd College	Loyola Marymount University
Boston University	Edge Hill University	Loyola University Chicago
Bowdoin College	Educational Directories Unlimited	Loyola University New Orleans
Bradley University	Educators Abroad	Lynchburg College
Brandeis University	Education Abroad Network	Lynn University
Brethren Colleges Abroad	Embassy of Spain-Trade Commission Miami	Macalester College
Brigham Young University	Emory University	Macquarie University
Brown University	European Association for International Education	Mary Baldwin College
Bryant University	European Study Abroad	Marymount Manhattan College
Bryn Mawr College	Fairfield University	Marquette University
California Colleges for International Education	Florida Atlantic University	Marymount University
California State University	Food for the Hungry	Meredith College
Campbellsville University	Fordham University	Messiah College
CAPA International Education	Foundation for International Education	Miami University of Ohio
Carleton College	Framingham State College	Michigan State University
Carroll College	Franklin & Marshall College	Middlebury College
CEA Global Education	Freie Universitat Berlin	Mount Holyoke College
Center for Cross-Cultural Study	Georgetown University	Muhlenberg College
	George Washington University	Murray State University

National University of Ireland, Maynooth	SUNY Brockport	University of New Orleans
National University of Ireland, Galway	SUNY New Paltz	University of New South Wales
New York University	SUNYPlattsburgh	University of Newcastle
North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University	State University of New York System	University of North Carolina, Asheville
North Carolina State University	Stetson University	University of North Carolina, Charlotte
Northeastern University	Stonehill College	University of North Texas
Northern Arizona University	Studio Art Centers International	University of Notre Dame
Northwestern University	Study Abroad Italy	The University of Oklahoma
Oberlin College	Studyabroad.com	University of Oregon
Occidental College	Susquehanna University	University of Pennsylvania
Ohio University	Sweet Briar College	University of Pittsburgh
Ohio State University	Swinburne University of Technology	University of Puget Sound
Ohio Wesleyan University	Symplcity Corporation	University of Queensland
Oklahoma State University	Syracuse University	University of Redlands
Old Dominion University	Tarleton State University	University of Richmond
Oregon University System	Tenon Tours	University of Rochester
Pacific University	Terra Dotta	University of Saint Thomas (MN)
Pacific Lutheran University	Texas Christian University	University of San Francisco
Pennsylvania State University	Texas Lutheran University	University of Scranton
Pepperdine University	Texas State University, San Marcos	University of South Alabama
Pitzer College	Texas Tech University	University of South Carolina
Platform 3000	Tompkins Cortland Community College	University of South Florida
Plymouth State University	Towson University	University of Southern California
Point Loma Nazarene University	Transylvania University	University of St. Thomas
Pomona College	The Triad Group	University of Tennessee
Portland State University	Trinity College	University of Texas, Austin
Presbyterian College	Trinity College, University of Dublin	University of the Pacific
Princeton University	Tufts University	University of the Sunshine Coast
Providence College	Tulane University	University of Tulsa
Purchase College, SUNY	Umbra Institute	University of Virginia
Purdue University	Union College	University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire
Ramapo College	United States-India Educational Foundation	University of Wisconsin, Madison
Rhodes College	Universita Cattolica del Sacro Cuore	University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee
Rice University	Universitat Pompeu Fabra	University of Wisconsin, Platteville
Rider University	University College Dublin	University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Rochester Institute of Technology	University of Arkansas	University of Wollongong
Roger Williams University	University of Alabama	University Studies Abroad Consortium
Rollins College	University of California Education Abroad Program	Ursinus College
Rutgers University	University of California, Riverside	UPCES/CERGE-EI, Charles University
Saint Louis University	University of Central Florida	Vanderbilt University
Saint Mary's College	University of Chicago	Vassar College
Saint Michael's College	University of Cincinnati	Villanova University
Samford University	University of Colorado	Wake Forest University
Santa Clara University	University of Colorado at Boulder	Warren Wilson College
Salve Regina University	University of Colorado at Denver	Washington and Jefferson College
Sarah Lawrence College	University of Connecticut	Washington and Lee University
The School for Field Studies	University of Dayton	Washington College
School for International Training	University of Denver	Washington State University
Scripps College	University of East Anglia	Washington University in St. Louis
Scuola Lorenzo de' Medici	University of Hartford	Webster University
SEA Education Association	University of Houston	Wellesley College
Seattle University	University of Illinois, Chicago	Wells College
Seminars International	University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	Wesleyan University
Siena School for the Liberal Arts	University of Iowa	Western Connecticut State University
Signature World Services	University of Kentucky	Western Oregon University
Smith College	University of Limerick	Wheaton College
South India Term Abroad	University of Louisville	Whitman College
Southern Illinois University	University of Maryland	Whittier College
Southern Methodist University	University of Massachusetts, Amherst	Whitworth University
Southwestern University	University of Melbourne	Willamette University
Spain Education Programs CXXI	University of Miami	Williams College
Spelman College	University of Michigan	Wofford College
St. Lawrence University	University of Minnesota, Twin Cities	Worcester Polytechnic Institute
St. Mary's College of Maryland	University of Mississippi	Xavier University
St. Norbert College	University of Missouri, Columbia	Yale University
St. Olaf College	University of Missouri, Kansas City	
	University of Nevada, Las Vegas	

ABOUT THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

The Forum on Education Abroad is the only organization whose exclusive purpose is to serve the field of education abroad. Incorporated in 2001, the Forum holds 501 (c)(3) nonprofit status and is recognized by the U.S. Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for education abroad.

Forum members include US colleges and universities, overseas institutions, consortia, agencies, and education abroad provider organizations. The Forum membership includes more than 400 institutions that together account for approximately 90 percent of U.S. students studying abroad.

The Forum develops and implements standards of good practice, promotes and supports research initiatives, and offers educational programs and resources to its members. The Forum's members, represented by the Forum Council and its goals committees, determine the scope and direction of these initiatives. The Forum's annual conference is known for its distinctive format that fosters thought-provoking dialogue, and promotes collegiality and the vibrant exchange of ideas.

THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Forum on Education Abroad is to promote high quality and effective education abroad programs on behalf of students at U.S. colleges and universities through providing opportunities for global discourse and information sharing among the educational institutions, faculty and staff, consortia, agencies and organizations that are its members.

By providing opportunities for discourse and information sharing, the Forum promotes high quality and effective programming through:

- Advocating standards of good practice,
- Promoting excellence in curricular development and academic design,
- Encouraging outcomes assessment and other research,
- Facilitating data collection, and
- Advocating education abroad at all levels.

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