



CODE OF ETHICS FOR EDUCATION ABROAD

Third Edition

THE
FORUM
ON EDUCATION
ABROAD

© 2020 The Forum on Education Abroad. All rights reserved.

ISBN: 978-1-952376-08-5

DOI: doi.org/10.36366/G.978-1-952376-08-5

The Forum on Education Abroad

PO Box 1773

Carlisle, PA, USA 17013

The Forum on Education Abroad is hosted by Dickinson College.

www.forumea.org

1. INTRODUCTION

This document, published by The Forum on Education Abroad, is designed to guide ethical decision-making and assist organizations as they seek to provide education abroad experiences and services in accord with the highest ethical standards. The Shared Values and Principles of Professional Practice outlined below are essential to the fair and just administration of education abroad programs and the welfare of the learners that we serve.

The Forum on Education Abroad is recognized by the US Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the Standards Development Organization (SDO) for the field of education abroad. This document serves as a normative reference to the [*Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad \(6th edition\)*](#).

Please refer to the [*Standards of Good Practice, section 3*](#), for definitions of frequently used and field-specific terms.

2. SHARED VALUES

A. RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARNERS

We deliver impactful, accessible, and intellectually and personally meaningful programs that strive to meet the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad*.

We endeavor to share with learners the value and significance of international education and experience, and the impact that it can have on them and those with whom they interact. We encourage learners to maximize international learning and engagement through meaningful and respectful communication with other people and other cultures, and to reflect on and articulate the value and meaning of their experiences.

We recognize the importance of establishing clear expectations and communicating them to learners based on these shared values. We know that empowered and informed learners make responsible decisions, take accountability for their actions, and understand the limits of responsibility.

B. TRUTHFULNESS AND TRANSPARENCY

We communicate openly and honestly with all stakeholders, and our interactions with learners and stakeholders are founded in trust. We uphold accuracy and transparency of decision-making, policies, procedures, program promotion, and partnerships. Service to our learners is central to our decision-making and we avoid conflicts of interest that are counter to this goal.

C. EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

We seek out opportunities to engage with diverse populations and perspectives, and do so with patience, understanding, humility, and respect, modelling the behavior we aim to cultivate in our learners. We endeavor to expand access to education abroad, and to create an environment of inclusivity that is open, respectful, and safe for all. We strive for equity in our treatment of all. We do not accept intolerance, and we work to eliminate inequities within our organizations and communities.

D. RECIPROCITY AND RESPECT FOR OTHERS

Reciprocity must be valued as we consider the consequences of our activity on a global scale with respect to the environment, economies, communities, and cultures. We are sensitive to dynamics of power and privilege and the impact of our actions in the communities in which we operate and with whom we engage.

We work to ensure that our interactions and interrelationships with the communities in which we operate, whether in-country or virtually, are mutually beneficial. Our work with learners, host communities, and internal stakeholders at our institutions and external partners is grounded in reciprocity.

3. PRINCIPLES OF PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

A. EDUCATIONAL QUALITY

Our educational content, assessment, and policies foster an environment which prioritizes student learning and academic excellence.

B. ADVOCACY

We advocate for the value of enhanced global perspectives and intercultural understanding through global learning. Wherever possible, we promote The Forum's mission, which is to "cultivate educators who champion high quality education abroad experiences that ignite curiosity, impact lives, and contribute to a better world."

C. HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

We are committed to the personal safety, health, and well-being of our participants and local partners. We assess risks and endeavor to establish and maintain programs that support the emotional, intellectual, and physical safety of our participants. We orient our participants and provide them with detailed information about health and safety risks in host environments as well as available support services. We have plans and training to respond to emergencies that may impact our participants.

D. PRICING AND AFFORDABILITY

We work to the best of our ability to develop and operate global learning opportunities that provide accessible, affordable opportunities while maintaining quality of offerings and learner support. Our pricing is transparent, and financial policies are clear, equitable, and consistently implemented. We retain provisions for handling emergencies and sufficient financial resources to meet the obligations of each program.

E. PARTNERSHIPS

We pursue business relationships that are mutually beneficial and respectful of each other's goals, principles, and values. We endeavor to establish partnerships that are fair, just, and equitable, and are sensitive to power differentials between organizations. Our interactions with partners are collegial, transparent, mindful of intellectual property rights, avoid conflicts of interest, and put learners first.

F. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

We respect and protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants, personnel, partners, and stakeholders in our work in compliance with applicable privacy laws and policies. We communicate limitations of confidentiality promptly and clearly.

G. RESPECT FOR LOCAL LAWS AND CULTURE

We operate our programs with respect to local customs and cultural norms, and ensure that all participants in those programs are informed and similarly respectful. We acknowledge our collective responsibility to conduct education abroad programs in accordance with governing laws. We aspire to ethical behavior above and beyond what is required by law.

H. SUSTAINABILITY

We seek to wed sustainable environmental practices with our academic and programmatic goals. In doing so, we acknowledge that sustainable actions are reached through informed and balanced decision-making and can have positive effects on relationships, the economic welfare of all, cultural traditions, and the global environment. We consider the impact of our work on the environment as well as the economics and culture of host communities.

I. ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

We take accountability for our actions, decisions, and for their consequences. We are accountable to our learners for the education they receive. We continuously make improvements to our programming and practices to benefit participants, stakeholders, and the communities in which we operate.

FOUR QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING IN EDUCATION ABROAD

- Is it in the best interests of the learners, their growth and well-being?
- Is it truthful, fair, transparent?
- Is it equitable and inclusive?
- Is it grounded in reciprocity? Do the host communities agree?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[Guidance on Program Site Visits](#)

[Guidance on Conflicts of Interest](#)

[Guidelines for Community Engagement, Service-Learning, and Volunteer Experiences Abroad](#)

[Guidelines for Good Business Partnerships](#)

[Guidelines for Internships Abroad](#)

[Guidelines for Undergraduate Research, Field Studies, and Independent Study Projects Abroad](#)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Forum thanks the Code of Ethics Working Group for their contribution to the preparation of these Guidelines:

Brian Brubaker, The Pennsylvania State University, chair

Mark Eckman, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Elizabeth Frohlich, The Forum on Education Abroad

Julie Leitman, Academic Programs International (API)

Gina Lopardo, Seattle University

Kate Manni, The Pennsylvania State University

Mary Ogburn, AUIP (American Universities International Programs Ltd.)

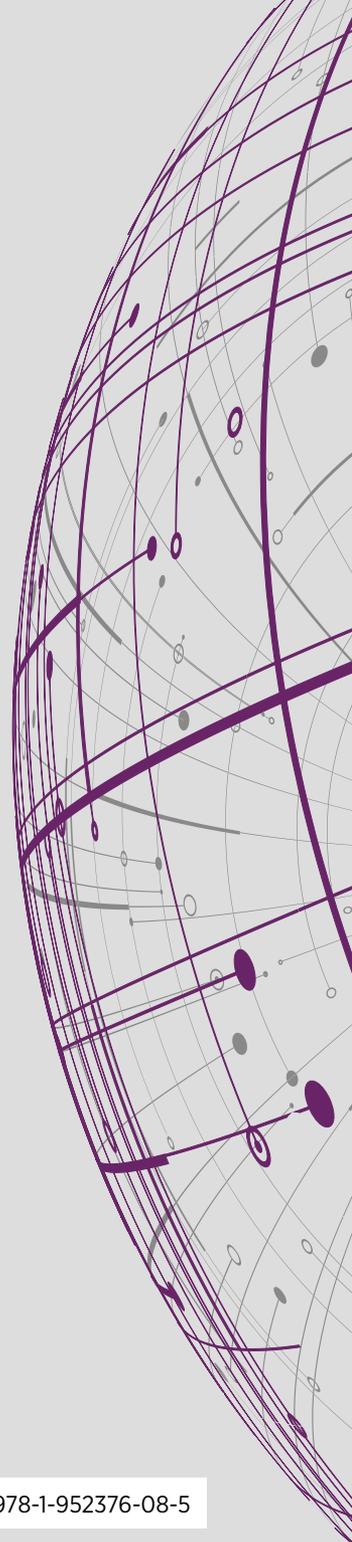
Anthony Ogden, Gateway International Group

David Shallenberger, SIT Graduate Institute

Michael Steinberg, IES Abroad

Sarah Westmoreland, University of Colorado Boulder

The Forum also thanks the members of our community who shared their feedback and suggestions during the public comment period.



ISBN: 978-1-952376-08-5