

CSU Staff and Faculty-Led Programs Program Leader Companion and Dependent Guest Policy

Guidance

Colorado State University provides the following guidance for program leaders and staff members of education abroad experiences that are organized by OIP-Education Abroad. A program leader is a faculty or staff member, who travels with and has overall (even if not sole) responsibility for an education abroad experience organized or managed by CSU. This document provides guidance for cases where program leaders are accompanied by companions or dependents, and these companions or dependents do not have a role or responsibility in delivering the program.

Clarity of Responsibilities

As an institution, we recognize that it is important:

- OIP-Education Abroad provides all program leaders or program staff with a clear communication describing their roles and responsibilities.
- Program leaders disclose any concerns or impediments that might impact their ability to fulfill those roles and responsibilities.
- To delineate responsibilities (if any) companions or dependents may have for program participants or program execution.

Program Leader(s) Responsibility

Program leaders must recognize that leading an international program has inherent responsibilities that may not be present in the typical CSU employee or faculty position on campus; you may need to advise, discipline, manage group dynamics or help with personal problems or emergencies. This includes assuming responsibility throughout the education abroad experience for both program quality and the health and safety of all participants. Specific responsibilities might include facilitating coursework and related activities; arranging accommodations; coordinating travel arrangements; identifying and mitigating risks; accompanying program participants during program activities, or ensuring that appropriate arrangements are in place; and responding to emergencies. A program leader must be available 24/7 to participants and CSU EA Emergency Responders in case of emergency.

Special Considerations Related to Accompanying Dependents or Companions

CSU discourages program leaders of education abroad programs from bringing family members. It has been observed and reported that the presence of non-participants can distract the university representative from focusing on the educational purpose of the journey; send mixed signals to program participants, who may tend to see the experience as less than the high-impact educational opportunity it is intended to be; and/or cause program participants to make assumptions that their program fee is supporting non-CSU family members.

However, CSU recognizes sometimes a program leader has compelling reasons for a dependent or companion to accompany them on an education abroad experience. Because a program leader's primary

responsibility is to the quality, safety, and success of the student experience, the presence of such dependents or companions should be carefully considered and disclosed to OIP-Education Abroad. Some issues to consider related to accompanying companions or dependents include:

Program Impact:

- Consider how the presence of the dependent or companion may impact the program leader's ability to meet their responsibilities to students
- Consider how the presence of a dependent or companion impacts the student experience (e.g., are students unable to have open discussions because of the presence of minors?).
- Considerations that might be included when reviewing programmatic impact include: the length and location of the program; program content, and format; available accommodations; and modes of travel.

Role:

- In general, such companions and dependents should have no role in the program, do not represent CSU, and should not engage in CSU business (manage funds, instruct students, manage emergencies, etc.).
- If there is a formal role, the companion or dependent should be formally vetted, registered, and appointed as a program leader.
- There should be clarity and transparency for all involved about the role of any companions or accompanying dependents.
- It is the responsibility of the program leader to ensure the companion or dependent is properly prepared for all risks associated with international travel.
- The program leader takes full personal responsibility for their family members to ensure their safe experience and the program's integrity and academic focus during program activities.
- Program leader must ensure companions and dependents understand they are prohibited from participating in excursions that are part of the academic experience. Student funds pay for these excursions, often at subsidized rates, and it is important to prioritize the academic integrity of these activities.

Insurance Issues:

- It is the responsibility of the program leader to ensure that the companion or dependent has comprehensive international insurance for the duration of the program.

Background Checks:

- The presence of minors may impose requirements for criminal background checks on both program leaders and program participants.

Supervision of Minors:

- The program leader cannot serve as the primary caretaker for a minor while leading an education abroad program.
- The program leader must make appropriate arrangements for childcare and supervision of minors at the program site.

- Program participants should not be asked to supervise minors on a program.

Expenses:

- The presence of accompanying companions or dependents should not impact the cost of the program.
- Program leaders are responsible for all costs associated with their companions or dependents.
- Should CSU need to cancel the program for any reason the program leader is responsible for any lost funds incurred by their companion or dependent.

Transparency:

- Inform the OIP- Education abroad team of interest to bring a companion and/or dependent.
- Confirm with OIP-Education Abroad that the program provider allows guest participants to stay in the arranged accommodation.
- Make every effort to communicate to the other participants that the educational program is their first priority.

CSU recognizes that having family members or companions in-country may be desirable for a program leader or program staff member. This decision must be balanced against the challenges that can arise in managing a program abroad, sometimes in complex, challenging, or risky environments. An alternative to having family members accompany the educational program is to travel with family before or after the education abroad itinerary.

With the student experience in mind, the education abroad office has the authority to make final decisions regarding program leaders and are responsible for assessing the impact of companions or dependents on education abroad programs. If this assessment indicates that the presence of companions or dependents is disruptive to the education abroad program, OIP- Education Abroad may ask that the companions or dependents do not accompany the program.

We appreciate your partnership and understanding in co-creating these high impact learning opportunities for our students.