

THIRD PARTY PROGRAM PROVIDERS

Faculty-Led Group Study Abroad Kansas State University

What is a Third-Party Program Provider?

In the field of study abroad, the term “Third Party Program Provider” refers to an entity which administers study abroad programs open to students from many various post-secondary institutions. These entities may be for-profit or not-for-profit companies, consortium comprised of several universities, or universities that market their study abroad programs nationally. More and more study abroad companies are collaborating with universities on the design of customized faculty-led programs. These Third Party Program Providers draw on their experience and in-country staff, business contacts, and facilities (classrooms, residence halls, etc.) to assist with program design, logistics, and marketing as well as health and safety risk management.

What Types Services Do Third Party Program Providers Offer?

Examples of services Third Party Program Providers may offer include:

- Assist with program design and development
- Assist with marketing and recruitment
- Arrange program logistics such as renting classroom space, securing housing, arranging in-country travel, organizing field trips, excursions, etc.
- Conduct pre-departure and/or on-site orientation for students.
- Provide an on-site support staff
- Implement health and safety measures on-site and operate 24-hour emergency call service
- Provide risk management services related to currency fluctuation, safety risks, emergency protocols and resources, etc.
- Assist with transfer credit and transcripts
- Visa advising service
- Assist students in finding alternative funding sources.
- Provide re-entry services for students

When is the Assistance of a Third Party Program Provider Needed?

While faculty often utilize existing personal or departmental contacts abroad to develop a program, sometimes faculty wish to develop a program in a location where such contacts do not exist. In such cases, Third Party Program Providers can do more than just help with logistics; they can assist with program development and curriculum planning and provide local knowledge and resources.

Third Party Program Providers most often offer assistance in the cities and countries where they already have study abroad programs in place. This allows them to use their existing infrastructure to support a university's faculty-led program. Third Party Program Providers also can provide many U.S. based services including program and budget development, publicity materials, web marketing, group airfare, and pre-departure orientations.

Advantages of Working with a Third Party Program Provider

Developing a program is a business-oriented process. K-State requires Faculty Leaders to negotiate and execute a written agreement or contract with each service provider (such as host institution, tour company, guest speakers, etc.).

There are several very important advantages of working with a Third Party Program Provider:

- One comprehensive contract with a single Third Party Program Provider can cover all aspects of the program, as opposed to needing multiple contracts, each with a different entity, to deal with various aspects of a program.
- Comprehensive logistical support for the program.
- Third Party Program Providers, particularly if they are based in the U.S., understand K-State's concerns related to health and safety and usually offer additional health insurance, risk management services, and health/safety training.

Does Working with a Third Party Program Provider Cost More?

The cost of working with a Third Party Program Provider will vary depending on what services are negotiated and how important the Faculty Leader considers additional support to be in the planning process and on-site. Assistance does not come for free, but working with a Third Party Program Provider may relieve the faculty member from devoting excessive time and office expenses to the program.

Where do I begin looking for a Third Party Program Provider?

Occasionally Third Party Program Providers who specialize in a certain academic field will advertise or present at professional conferences. Networking with colleagues at other universities also is a good way to learn about the reputation and success of Third Party Program Providers.

Examples of Third Party Program Providers:

- International Studies Abroad (ISA)
<http://www.studiesabroad.com>
- American Institute for Foreign Studies (AIFS)
<http://www.aifsabroad.com>
- Cultural Experiences Abroad (CEA)
<http://www.gowithcea.com>

- Academic Programs International (API)
<http://www.academicintl.com>
- Education Abroad Network (EAN)
<http://www.educationabroadnetwork.org>

I Know Which Third Party Program Provider I Would Like To Work With, What Should I Do Next?

- **Contracts:** The Faculty Leader is responsible for soliciting the proposed contract from the Third Party Program Provider. The Coordinator for Faculty Services, Accountant for Faculty-Led Programs, and the Director of Study Abroad are available to review contracts and offer suggestions as needed. The finalized contract is made between the Third Party Program Provider and the Faculty Leader, who acts as a representative of K-State.
- **Insurance:** All agencies that contract with K-State to provide student services must have liability insurance in case K-State and the Third Party Program Provider are involved in a lawsuit initiated by a student. In order to work with K-State, companies that provide overseas programming should carry at least \$1,000,000 of liability insurance. If you already have established a Third Party Program Provider who can help you with the logistics of your program, make sure that they carry liability insurance