

Addressing Student Conduct Concerns

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	2
Key Expectations for Faculty Leaders.....	2
1. Initial Response: Meeting with the Student.....	2
2. Formal Written Warning.....	3
3. Escalation: Program Dismissal (if necessary).....	3
Initial Meeting Follow Up (Email Template).....	4
Official Warning Letter (Email Template).....	5
Template: Student Agreement and Expectations for Success.....	7
Purpose.....	7
Student Expectations.....	7
Program-Specific Expectations [if applicable – otherwise, remove].....	8
Student Acknowledgement.....	8

Introduction

Note that the recommended actions in this document relate to student conduct concerns where the immediate health and safety of program participants is not directly threatened.

If student conduct involves **direct threats to themselves or others**, involves suspected **sexual harassment or assault**, involves **suspected discrimination**, or is **severe in nature**:

- First **ensure the safety** of all participants to the extent is possible
- then **assess whether local authorities should be called (police, ambulance)**
- then call **Education Abroad Urgent Issues phone: +1-814-424-3927**

Key Expectations for Faculty Leaders

- **Act promptly and consistently** when addressing concerns.
- **Document every step** thoroughly.
- Maintain **professional, respectful communication** at all times.
- Consider having a witness present for conversations with the student(s).
- **Contact Education Abroad for guidance at any stage** - whether addressing a minor concern or considering dismissal. Early consultation helps ensure consistency with University policy and appropriate handling of complex situations.
- Depending on the nature of these student conduct incidents, providing enhanced support for other student participants may be necessary (e.g., flexible schedule or due dates, opportunities to debrief privately or in small groups, access to mental health support, etc.)
- Creating and adapting a student agreement or program contract (*see template on page 7*) prior to departure or during your onsite orientation, will help students to understand their expectations for behavior and success. This will also aid discussions about expected conduct for follow-up.



1. Initial Response: Meeting with the Student

When a conduct concern is identified:

- **Schedule a meeting** with the student as soon as possible; we recommend including a witness such as the other program leader.
- Clearly **describe the observed behavior or incident**, focusing on facts and observations.
 - Example: *I noticed when you arrived to class today, your speech was slurred and you smelled like alcohol. I believe you were drunk.*
- Provide the student with an opportunity to **share their perspective**.
 - Example: *Tell me what happened; why did you take that action?*
- Reinforce **program expectations**, Penn State policies, and any relevant local laws or cultural considerations.
 - Example: *Students should arrive on time and ready to work. Alcohol use is not permitted in advance of official program activities.*
- Clarify the **potential consequences** if the behavior continues.
 - Example: *Please write a brief note of apology to our local host, who also noticed your behavior and was concerned. If we notice repeated behavior, we will consult with Penn State Education Abroad regarding additional consequences (i.e. implementing a curfew or other limitations).*

After the meeting

- Prepare a **written summary** documenting:
 - Date, time, and location of the meeting
 - Description of the concern/incident
 - Key points discussed
 - Any immediate consequences or potential future consequences
 - Expectations moving forward
- Share this summary with the student and **retain a copy for your records**.
- **Notify Education Abroad** and provide a copy of the summary.
- Template for the initial meeting follow up

2. Formal Written Warning

If behavior persists, is serious, or warrants escalation:

- Issue a **formal written warning letter** to the student, written in consultation with Penn State Education Abroad and approved by EA prior to sending.
- The letter should include:
 - A **clear description of the conduct violation(s)**
 - Reference to **previous discussions or warnings**, if applicable
 - Specific **expectations for immediate behavior change**
 - A list of **explicit outcomes if expectations are not met**, examples of which may include:
 - Reporting the incident(s) to Penn State Office of Student Accountability and Conflict Response (OSACR)
 - Further disciplinary action (i.e., regular check-ins with leader, adjustment in housing assignment, implementation of a curfew, alcohol restrictions, cultural training)
 - Program dismissal
- Provide the letter to the student and review it with them, ensuring understanding.
- **Share the letter with Education Abroad** and consult about next steps.
- Template for the student warning

3. Escalation: Program Dismissal (if necessary)

If the student's behavior continues to violate expectations, poses a risk to themselves or others, or significantly disrupts the program.

- Consult **immediately with Education Abroad** before taking action.
- A decision of program dismissal can typically only be made in consultation with Education Abroad and the VP for Student Affairs or their delegate. A program leader cannot and should not make that determination independently.
- If dismissal is warranted:
 - Education Abroad will determine who will inform the student in a **clear and direct conversation**, followed by written confirmation.
 - Education Abroad will consult with you on the **logistics of dismissal** (housing, travel, academic implications, financial responsibility).
 - Emphasize that dismissed students are typically responsible for **all costs associated with early departure**.
- Continue to **document all communications and actions taken**.

Initial Meeting Follow Up (Email Template)

Subject: Follow-Up: Student Meeting Regarding Program Expectations

Dear [Student Name],

This message is to document our meeting regarding a concern that arose during the [Program Name].

- Date: [Insert Date]
- Time: [Insert Time]
- Location: [Insert Location (e.g., program site, hotel meeting room, etc.)]

Description of Concern/Incident

[Provide a clear, factual, and objective description of the concern or incident. Include relevant context such as date, location, and individuals involved. Avoid subjective language; focus on observable behaviors and reported facts.]

Key Points Discussed

During our meeting, we discussed the following:

- [Summary of student's account or perspective, if shared]
- [Relevant program expectations, policies, or codes of conduct referenced (e.g., Penn State Code of Conduct, program guidelines)]
- [Impact of the behavior on the group, program, or host environment, if applicable]
- [Any clarifications provided by the program leadership team]

Expectations Moving Forward

To remain in good standing with the program, you are expected to:

- [Specific behavioral expectations or requirements]
- [Compliance with all program policies and host country laws]
- [Any additional accountability steps (e.g., check-ins, restrictions, documentation, etc.)]

Please note that failure to meet these expectations may result in further action, which could include escalation to Penn State Education Abroad and/or additional disciplinary measures. Please reply to this email with your understanding and acknowledgement of these expectations moving forward. If you have questions or need clarification on any of the above, please reach out.

Sincerely,

[Program Leader Name]

[Title/Role]

[CC: Program Co-Leader(s)]

[Penn State Education Abroad (if appropriate)]

Official Warning Letter (Email Template)

Subject: Official Written Warning – Education Abroad Program

Dear [Student Name],

This letter serves as an **official written warning** regarding your conduct during the [Program Name]. This communication has been developed in consultation with Penn State Education Abroad [and other relevant offices, host institutions, people, if applicable].

Summary of Conduct Violation(s)

On [date(s)], the following concern(s) were documented:

[Provide a clear, factual, and objective description of the incident(s), including location, time, and behaviors observed or reported. Avoid subjective or emotional language. Focus on verifiable facts.]

This behavior is inconsistent with expectations outlined in the program guidelines and Penn State policies.

Reference to Prior Discussions (if applicable)

This issue was previously addressed on [date(s)] during a meeting held at [location], where the following concerns were discussed:

- [Brief summary of prior conversation or verbal warning]
- [Any commitments made by the student at that time]

Despite these discussions, the concerning behavior has continued and/or escalated.

Relevant Policies and Expectations

Your conduct is expected to align with the following:

- [Penn State Education Abroad Policies](#)
- [Penn State Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Program specific rules or follow-up from initial meeting]

You are responsible for understanding and adhering to these policies as a condition of participation in the program.

Immediate Expectations for Behavior Change

Effective immediately, you are expected to:

- [Clearly state specific behavior changes required]
- [Follow all program leader directives and program guidelines]
- [Comply with local laws and host institution expectations]
- [Participate in any required check-ins or corrective measures]

Failure to demonstrate immediate and sustained improvement will result in further action.

Potential Outcomes if Expectations Are Not Met

If these expectations are not met, the following actions may be taken:

- Reporting the incident(s) to the [Penn State Office of Student Accountability and Conflict Response \(OSACR\)](#)
- Implementation of additional program-specific conditions, such as:
 - Required regular check-ins with program leadership



- o Adjustments to housing arrangements
 - o Curfew requirements
 - o Alcohol restrictions
 - o Required cultural awareness or conduct-focused training
- **Program dismissal**, which may include removal from program activities and/or return home at the student's expense

Acknowledgment and Next Steps

This letter will be reviewed with you in person to ensure your understanding of the concerns and expectations moving forward. You will have the opportunity to ask questions during that meeting. Your continued participation in the program is contingent upon your full compliance with the expectations outlined in this warning email.

Sincerely,

[Program Leader Name]

[Title/Role]

[Program Name]

Penn State Education Abroad

Student Acknowledgment Section:

I acknowledge receipt of this written warning and understand the expectations and potential consequences outlined above.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Template: Student Agreement and Expectations for Success

Note for Program Leaders

This template is designed to align with Penn State's published Education Abroad Policies and Student Code of Conduct, while also allowing space for program-specific expectations on attendance, communication, behavior, logistics, and academic participation. Program leaders may wish to have the final version reviewed by their academic unit and/or Penn State Global before distribution to students.

Purpose

This agreement outlines expectations for students participating in a Penn State faculty-led study abroad program. Students remain subject to Penn State policies, must participate in required program activities, must follow host-institution or provider rules, and must comply with applicable local laws while abroad.

Student Expectations

By signing this contract, I acknowledge that my participation in this faculty-led study abroad program requires expectations to contribute to a safe, respectful, academically engaged, and well-functioning program environment. I understand that, while abroad, I continue to represent myself, Penn State, and the program community, and I agree to comply with the expectations below as a condition of participation in this program.

1. Compliance with Policies

- I will follow the [Penn State Student Code of Conduct](#), all [Penn State Education Abroad Policies](#), program-specific instructions, host-institution or provider rules, and local laws.
- I understand that conduct concerns may be referred to Penn State for review and may result in restrictions, disciplinary action, or dismissal from the program.
- If I am dismissed from or leave the program early for personal or conduct-related reasons, I may be responsible for resulting travel and other costs, subject to applicable University policies.

2. Respectful Conduct

- I will treat fellow students, faculty leaders, staff, guides, host families, partners, and community members with professionalism, courtesy, and respect.
- I will not engage in behavior that disrupts the program, interferes with the rights of others to participate, creates a health or safety hazard, constitutes harassment, threatening behavior, retaliation, unwanted contact, physical violence, or unwanted physical contact, or otherwise violates the Student Code of Conduct.
- I will respect program property, housing, classrooms, transportation, cultural sites, and the property of roommates, classmates, host families, and community members. I understand that I may be financially responsible for damage, loss, theft, or misuse caused by my actions.

3. On-Site Presence and Participation

- I will attend and participate in all required classes, orientations, excursions, meetings, field activities, and other scheduled program events.
- I will arrive on time, remain on site for required activities, complete assigned coursework, and stay in the program through the official end date unless I receive emergency approval for an early departure.
- I understand that absence, chronic lateness, failure to engage, or refusal to participate may affect my grade, standing in the program, and/or continued eligibility to participate.

4. Communication

- I will maintain reliable communication with the program leader(s) before departure and while abroad.
- I will regularly check my Penn State email, designated group chats, and any required program communication platform.



- I will provide accurate contact, travel, and emergency information and promptly report delays, illness, safety concerns, emergencies, or conduct incidents that affect me or others.

5. Safety and Independent Conduct

- I will follow health, safety, and emergency instructions issued by Penn State, program leaders, host institutions, providers, and local authorities.
- I will not engage in alcohol-, drug-, or other risk-related behavior that violates Penn State policy, host rules, or local law, or that puts me or others at risk.
- If the program permits independent time, I will follow all rules related to guests, housing, curfews, check-ins, transportation, and independent travel.
- I understand that family members or guests may not accompany students during the education abroad program and may not impact my participation in required program activities.

Program-Specific Expectations [if applicable – otherwise, remove]

In addition to University-wide requirements, I agree to comply with the following program-specific expectations established by the faculty leader(s):

- [Example: *No overnight guests permitted in your program housing i.e. no guests should be allowed in program provided student housing after 9:00 pm local time*]
- [Example: *Students are not permitted to travel outside the host city within the program dates*]
- [Example: *Communication with host families – ensure you are letting your host family know when you will be missing a meal or expected host event*]
- [Example: *Alcohol is not permitted in program provided housing or within host family accommodations*]
- [Example: *Do not leave your tent after dark without proper safety equipment*]

Student Acknowledgement

By signing below, I acknowledge that:

- I have read this Student Agreement and Expectations for Success and I understand that participation in this faculty-led study abroad program requires compliance with Penn State policies, Education Abroad policies, and program-specific expectations.
- I understand that failure to meet these expectations may result in disciplinary action and/or removal from the program.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Program: _____