

# Policy on Unaffiliated Travelers

When traveling with University students during official program dates, program leaders are responsible for academic and student support, and are expected to be available to students 24/7.

University leadership and OSA discourage program leaders to be accompanied at any point by any **unaffiliated traveler** on an education abroad program. Nevertheless, under special circumstances, a program leader may request to do so with the understanding that the University takes no responsibility for unaffiliated travelers. For such an exception, the program leader must seek approval from the department head and dean based on the context and parameters noted below. Approval is subject to a final review by the Associate Vice President for International Programs and the Director of Study Abroad. The following must be met:

- The program is structured to allow for the separation of personal and professional life. Equally important, the presence of the unaffiliated traveler(s) does not interfere in any way with the academic program and program leader's responsibilities.

Unaffiliated travelers eligible for consideration and approval are limited to the program leader's partner/spouse and/or minor dependent(s), per the definitions and parameters noted below:

- **A Partner/Spouse** is defined as a program leader's spouse or partner. An unaffiliated traveler partner/spouse must have no responsibilities on behalf of the University (e.g. taking roll, managing program funds, counseling students, etc.).
- **Minor Child/Children:** A leader's minor dependent child/children may accompany the leader if the following conditions are met:
  1. A non-leader adult serving as caretaker for any child under the age of 16 must be present for the full duration of the program. If the caretaker is not the leader's spouse or partner, the leader may ask another adult to serve as the designated caretaker. Program participants should never be asked to care for a leader's child/children, given the potential conflict of interest.
  2. A co-leader may not also be the designated caretaker.

## **Unaffiliated Traveler: Financial, Administrative, and Legal Considerations:**

The University does not provide any financial and administrative support, nor does it assume any responsibility or liability for unaffiliated travelers on MSU programs. The program leader is responsible for ensuring that an unaffiliated traveler understands and complies with all University policies, including those prohibiting harassment, discrimination and sexual misconduct, as well as host country laws. The leader will assume full responsibility for the conduct of the unaffiliated traveler. In addition, State statute prohibits the use of University funds to pay for expenses of unaffiliated travelers.

- **Approval:** If an unaffiliated traveler(s) plans to accompany the leader, the program leader must inform OSA of these plans during the program proposal process. The leader must outline how the separation of personal and professional life will be maintained. The program leader is also responsible for describing how the traveler will not interfere in any way with the academic program and program leader's responsibilities.

- **Payments:** Program leaders are responsible for making all travel arrangements for unaffiliated travelers (partner/spouse, children, and caretaker). Any expenses incurred by the addition of an unaffiliated traveler shall not be paid by the participating students, and unaffiliated travelers should pay a portion of all shared group expenses. Travel advance funds may not be used to pay the expenses of unaffiliated travelers.
- **Accident/Sickness & Evacuation Insurance:** Partner/spouse, children, and caretaker must enroll and purchase travel accident insurance coverage equal to or exceeding the coverage [provided by the University](#). To meet this requirement and ensure a coordinated response in the event of an emergency for both an employee and their partner/spouse, children, and caretaker, it is highly recommended that travel accident insurance be purchased from the University's travel accident insurance provider. Payment is the responsibility of the employee.
- **Lodging:** Unaffiliated travelers may share lodging accommodations with the leader, if such sharing is allowed by the lodging provider and does not interfere with the leader's responsibilities. Program funds can only cover the cost of housing for the individual leader (for example, a single hotel room or a studio apartment).
- **Release of liability:** All leaders and unaffiliated adult travelers will be required to sign a Waiver and Release Agreement for Unaffiliated Travelers.

#### **Partner/Spouse with Formal Leadership Role**

As appropriate, a partner or spouse who is an MSU employee, may serve as a co-leader with a formal affiliation to the program.

- If a partner/spouse serves as a co-leader, this must be **specified in the program proposal**.
- **Partners/spouses who are both MSU employees** may co-lead with chair/dean approval, in which case both employees will be expected to assume the full responsibilities associated with program leadership and sign the Faculty-led Proposal Agreement.

#### **Travel Party**

The travel party associated with a faculty-led study abroad program, should consist of only students enrolled in the course and registered through the Office of Study Abroad, program leaders, approved partner/spouse, minor children, or caretakers.