

## **What to be aware of while completing items for Study Abroad Applications**

### **FIRST- THANK YOU for supporting study abroad!**

Student applications & all supporting materials are due in early December.  
Current deadline info: <https://willamette.edu/offices/oie/abroad/apply/index.html>

This is a completely online process for the students and recommenders. Refer to help documents developed faculty for information about completing the online forms, including technical information:

<https://willamette.edu/offices/oie/faculty-zone/index.html>

<https://willamette.edu/offices/oie/abroad/apply/tips/index.html>

**What to write about** (while also answering the specific questions on the form):

- o **Students should be telling you...** We advise students to initiate conversations with you early in the process, especially if they do not know you well. How a student approaches you can be helpful to you in assessing how willing the student is to take responsibility for reaching his/her own goals.
- o **Undeclared major:** Most applicants are sophomores and have not declared a major nor have they developed many distinct relationships with faculty. This is ok. Sometimes your conversation can fill in any gaps you need.
- o **GPA/grades:** Recommendations are especially important for students with cumulative GPAs close to (above or below) 3.00 and for students with conduct records. In their application students are asked to explain any circumstances for lower than 3.00 GPA and any conduct issues. Your input assists the committee. NOTE: Summer programs have minimum GPA requirement of 2.00.
- o **Observed behavior:** Often, simple observations about the student's usual attitude in class or at work, attendance, learning style, ability to adjust to unexpected events (both good and bad), etc. are helpful. This assists in placing accepted students into a program where they will succeed.
- o **So many to complete:** If you have many forms to complete, a few, concise comments are *much more useful* to the committee than generating a formulaic letter. "Cut and paste" remarks into recs for different students are recognized by the faculty committee. These remarks lose their usefulness as tools for evaluating distinctions between students.
- o **Declining a request to complete a form/recommendation:** You may decide you do not want to write a recommendation for a student for many reasons. We encourage you to discuss with the student about a possible alternative reference.
- o **How recommendations are used:** The complete application consists of a Faculty Recommendation and (sometimes) a Language Assessment. The questions for each are different in order to get a broad view on a student's overall readiness for a study abroad experience.
  - **Faculty/Language Forms** are to get information about a student's response to the academic environment.
  - **Personal Reference: Students list contact information for a Personal Reference.** This is most often an employer, coach, or performance director but they must be tied to an organized activity or job. These will be rarely used and only when the Committee needs more input for a specific application. If needed, the questions are about how a student interacts in a non-academic setting and observations on how well the student meets the challenges of the activity. If your *only* contact with a student was in a class, you should not be completing a Personal Recommendation.
- o **Academic Advisor Meeting Verification** (*kind of a Rec but not really*). In this form, the academic advisor is only providing yes/no answers that verify they discussed study abroad with the student. These are not open-ended questions. It is fine to also complete a Faculty Recommendation if the student requests that of you.

### **How recs work (Faculty Rec, Language Assessment, Academic Advisor Meeting Verification)**

- o As soon as the student enters your name in their application, you immediately receive an email with instructions and access links. There is a "one-step" process if you do not want to login to complete it.
- o When you access the recommendation online, you will see whether the student has agreed to the waiver. Where students AGREE to the waiver, the student will not have access to your responses.

### **Deadlines – you get some leeway that the students don't get**

- o On-time recommendations relieves anxiety for students who are anxious to know their application is completed.
- o As a Recommender, you have the ability to complete your item after the deadline, though this is not ideal.
- o **Students are not penalized** if recommendation items are completed late but... we appreciate on-time submissions.
- o Because the application is online, students can see whether items are missing at any time.

### **Resources for faculty**

- o If you are interested in how students are advised to navigate the application process or interested in the application contents, please visit [www.willamette.edu/offices/oie/abroad/index.html](http://www.willamette.edu/offices/oie/abroad/index.html)
- o You have the ability to VIEW all pending and completed recommendations that are yours. Use the Faculty help site for help accessing that information: <http://willamette.edu/offices/oie/faculty-zone/index.html>

**Questions? Contact International Education via email <oieadvising> or at 503-375-5493 (on campus x5493)**