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

FIRST- THANK YOU for completing these forms & recommendations!

Student applications & all supporting materials are due Wednesday, December 4 at 4:00 pm in International Education.

Recommendations in the form of a letter are not required. It is completely appropriate to fill out the form ONLY. It is also okay to write a letter of recommendation in the format of a letter and submit it with the form. Make sure your letter addresses the questions on the form especially if you don’t make comments on the form.

What to write about (while also answering the specific questions on the form):
- **Students should be telling you...** We advise students to initiate conversations with you about their plans 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.
- **Undeclared major:** Most applicants are sophomores and have not declared a major nor have they developed many distinct relationships with faculty. If you have reservations because you don’t know much about a student, make whatever note you wish to indicate the level of your relationship.
- **GPA/grades:** Recommendation letters/forms are especially important for students with cumulative GPAs close to (above or below) 3.00 and for students with conduct records. Students are asked to explain any circumstances for lower than 3.00 GPA and any conduct issues as part of their application. Your input assists the committee.
- **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. can be helpful. Besides contributing to an overall picture of the student’s motivations, this assists in placing students, if accepted, in a program where they will succeed.
- **So many to complete:** If you have many forms to complete, making a few, concise comments on the form itself (or in an informal letter) are much more useful to the committee than generating a formulaic letter. Statements that are “cut and pasted” into letters for different students are recognized by the faculty committee and these letters lose their usefulness as tools for evaluating distinctions between students.
- **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.
- **How recommendations are used:** The complete application consists of different kinds of recommendations: Faculty, Personal, 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. Whichever form you are completing, please address the questions that are on EACH form.
  - **Faculty/Language Forms** are to get information about a student’s response to the academic environment.
  - **Personal Forms** are about how a student interacts in a non-academic setting, where someone has observed how well the student meets the challenges of whatever activity in which he/she is engaging. If your only contact with a student was in a class, you should not be completing this kind of form.
- **NEW FORM this year:** The old **Academic Advisor form** has been replaced with an Academic Advisor Meeting Verification. Instead of recommendation type questions, the academic advisor is only providing a signature that verifies they discussed study abroad with the student.

How should I send it to OIE?
- Make sure students have completed the WAIVER if there is one.
- Feel free to re-use envelopes – new envelopes aren’t necessary.
- It is ok to use one envelope for multiple recommendations even if they are for different students.
- Double sided letters are fine.
- DO staple all materials related to the SAME RECOMMENDATION together - waiver page/original form on top.
- Don’t staple different kinds of recs/forms together – they will get missed if they are attached to other forms.
- **We need hard copies.** If you can’t avoid doing an electronic version: it should be a SCANNED version complete with the signed waiver from the student. Send ONLY to the office email address: <oieadvising>. This address is monitored by more than one person.

Deadlines and Getting the Recommendations to us:
- Please send the recommendations directly to our office, i.e. don’t have the student turn them in.
- If you are within three days of the deadline, please hand deliver or call us at x5493 and we will come get recommendations from your departmental office. This eliminates questions about mis-delivery, lateness, etc.
- Students are not penalized if faculty recommendations, personal recommendations, and language assessments arrive within a few days of the deadline. We notify students, before and after the deadline, if we are missing materials.
- On-time recommendations reduce stress for students, our staff, and you.
- If you are interested in how students are advised to navigate the application process or interested in the application documents and instructions, please visit [www.willamette.edu/dept/oie/abroad](http://www.willamette.edu/dept/oie/abroad)

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