

## International Education Scholarship Policies and Procedures

This document outlines the policies and procedures for the University of Houston (UH) to administer the International Education Scholarship (IES).

### **A. Fund Usage**

The IES fund will be used as financial assistance to undergraduate and graduate UH students to participate in an approved learning abroad program. Learning abroad programs may include, but are not limited to, faculty-led programs, reciprocal exchange programs, third-party affiliated provider programs, internship opportunities, research collaboratives, academic conferences, and volunteer activities abroad. Extension programs, 2+2 programs, and similar academic programs where the student will be awarded a degree from another institution are not eligible for this scholarship.

- The application due in Fall is for Fall programs that have not yet started, Winter Break, Spring, or Summer programs only.
- The application due in Spring is for Spring programs that have not yet started, Summer and Fall programs only.

Applications for programs outside of the above schedule will not be considered.

Students may not receive IES funding for programs in Travel Advisory Level 4 locations as outlined by the U.S. Department of State or a CDC Travel Warning level 3, and they have to have authorization for programs in U.S. Department of State Travel Advisory Level 3 or CDC Travel Warning level 2 locations. For further information, please review the [Learning Abroad travel warning policy](#) and the [Department of State travel website](#). Students may not receive IES funding for international travel during any periods of restricted travel as set by the University of Houston.

### **B. IES Award Guidelines**

#### **1. General Eligibility Requirements**

- a. All UH undergraduate and post-baccalaureate students who have completed a minimum of 12 UH credit hours, have a minimum GPA of 2.5, and are in good academic standing are eligible to apply.
- b. All UH graduate students who have completed a minimum of 9 UH credit hours, have a minimum GPA of 3.0, and are in good academic standing are eligible to apply.
- c. Students are eligible to receive the IES only once as a student at UH.

#### **2. Application Procedure - To apply for an IES award, each applicant must:**

- a. **Application:** Complete and submit the International Education Scholarship application on the UH ViaTRM website. The application includes information about the student, details about the program abroad, a section to upload the IES essay, a section for the letter of recommendation, and a virtual student signature.
- b. **Essay:** Each student should submit an IES essay in the ViaTRM online application at the time of submission. The essay should be uploaded as a PDF file only. The essay should not

exceed two pages, typed, double-spaced and in 12pt standard font. The essay should answer the following prompt:

Why did you pick this specific program abroad, how does the program fit into your academics at UH, and how will it support your personal and professional goals?

- c. **Letter of Recommendation:** Ask one UH faculty or staff member to submit a letter of recommendation on behalf of the applicant using the online recommendation request in ViaTRM. Only letters submitted by the recommender in the ViaTRM system will be accepted. This letter of recommendation should include the following information about the applicant:

The applicant's level of academic achievement, why the recommender believes the applicant will be successful on the proposed program, and an evaluation of the applicant's strengths. This may include areas such as communication skills, common sense, independence, adaptability, and cultural awareness.

Students participating in a faculty-led program cannot receive a letter of recommendation from the faculty or staff member leading their program abroad. If multiple letters of reference are received, the IES Committee will review only the first letter that is received.

### 3. Compliance Policy

- a. Each awardee must participate in and complete the learning abroad program described at the time their IES application was submitted. Any changes will require the approval of Learning Abroad or re-application.
- b. Each applicant must use the awarded scholarship funds toward their approved learning abroad program.
- c. The IES award will be revoked if any part of the information provided in the IES application is found to be untrue and/or if the applicant does not complete the learning abroad program, even if the program is paid in full. Exceptions may be made for emergency situations at the discretion of the Director of Learning Abroad, the Associate Provost for UH Global, and/or the Learning Abroad Scholarship Committee.
- d. Each awardee will be **required** to volunteer at a Learning Abroad fair or other event after returning from their program for a total of two hours.
- e. The IES funding may be subject to tax and/or withholding in accordance with IRS regulations and it is the student's responsibility to pay taxes on scholarship awards.
- f. If a student has an outstanding balance on their UH account, their scholarship funds may be applied to that balance before a refund is issued.

### C. Selection Committee – Committee Guidelines

- a. The IES is reviewed by the Learning Abroad Scholarship Committee, which is appointed by the UH Faculty Senate and confirmed by the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost. The committee consists of UH faculty and staff members who serve a two-year term.

b. Members of the committee who score the IES are not permitted to review applications of students who will be participating in their learning abroad programs or for whom they have completed a reference letter.

c. Each application will be reviewed by two members of the selection committee.

d. The IES selection committee will evaluate each applicant based on 1) strength of essay as based on response to the essay prompt and accuracy in writing/writing style, 2) academic merit, 3) strength of letter of recommendation, 4) program length and cost, and 5) program type.

**D. Awards**

The IES is a competitive scholarship. Not all students who apply will receive an award. The total number of recipients and amount awarded to individual recipients will be based on the total funds available to Learning Abroad for each application cycle.