



ESSENTIAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

College Study Abroad

At Dragons, we challenge our participants intellectually, emotionally, and physically because we believe growth and discovery are often found outside of comfort zones. Our job is to create opportunities for meaningful challenge while professionally and transparently managing the risks of travel.

There are inherent and other risks in travel that we cannot control. Studying and traveling in foreign countries, at high altitudes, in wilderness areas or mountainous terrain, presents real risks. Unpredictable changes in weather conditions, political instability, or recreational or travel activities such as trekking, backpacking, bike riding, or taking local transportation involve hazards that can lead to injury. Evacuations can be difficult and can be complicated by severe weather, poor roads or other unforeseen circumstances that are beyond our control. On some of our programs, we may be several days from competent emergency medical care.

Participants should understand the risks and hazards, and be willing to take personal responsibility for their well-being. Programs are both physically and emotionally challenging and students should expect to have limited access to Western-style mental or physical health care.

The Essential Eligibility Criteria listed in this document are applicable for all students. A qualified person is one who can meet the criteria for participation outlined below with or without reasonable accommodations. Meeting these criteria is intended to support participants, staff, and community safety and to minimize risk. If you have concerns about your ability to meet certain criteria, please speak with a member of the Dragons Admin to determine if reasonable accommodations can be made.

SAFETY & JUDGEMENT

Participants must be able to:

1. Effectively and proactively notify field staff or other participants of personal distress, emotional stress, safety or health concerns, or other needs for assistance.
2. Perceive, understand, and follow instructions or directives which are verbally given to individuals or the group. Be able to successfully execute appropriate and perhaps unfamiliar, techniques to avoid hazards and/or manage risks. These directions may be given before the hazard or risk is encountered or may need to be given during exposure to the hazard/risk and out of necessity and practicality are often given verbally.
3. Perform necessary self-care in a remote and foreign environment, including maintaining adequate nutrition and hydration, appropriate and responsible dress for varied weather and cultures, personal hygiene, and managing known medical conditions.

4. Work cooperatively as a member of a group and support a team approach, despite potentially challenging circumstances. This may require flexibility and the ability to compromise on an interpersonal or group level.
5. Identify, understand, recognize, and react to risks inherent to living and traveling in a foreign country, including those previously explained or identified by field staff or other participants. These risks may include, but are not limited to, public transportation, busy streets, navigation in major cities and remote areas, crime and other threats to personal safety, loose rock and unstable surfaces, seasonal flooding, moving water (fast or slow) such as rivers, creeks, surf, or tides; and potentially hazardous animals and insects.
6. Recognize and understand the hazards and risks posed by other participants, which include, but are not limited to, fatigue, state of mind, and actions that may influence judgment and decision-making.
7. Act reliably around hazards to minimize risk, even when not directly supervised.
8. Effectively alert and warn others of potential or impending dangers such as human hazards, aggressive animals, or other environmental hazards.
9. Remain alert and focused for several hours at a time while traveling through open water, wilderness, and other remote terrains.
10. Stay alert and to focus attention for up to several hours at a time while living and sometimes traveling in remote environments, attending classes, or receiving instructions. Be able to respond appropriately to stress or crisis such as when encountering unpredictable human factors (sometimes regarding health and safety) of a foreign country, severe weather, or a medical emergency.
11. Wear or use all required safety gear, such as approved personal flotation devices, work gloves, closed-toed shoes, etc.
12. If taking prescription medications or requiring the need to take medications in-country, be able to maintain proper dosage by self-medicating without assistance from field staff (except possibly in emergency situations).

LEADERSHIP AND EXPEDITION BEHAVIOR

Participants must be able to:

13. Work effectively as a member of a group, host family, and service placement despite potentially stressful and difficult conditions. This may require problem-solving on an intrapersonal or interpersonal level, as well as a willingness and ability to accept differences.
14. Contribute to a positive and safe learning environment—no verbally or physically inappropriate behavior towards others is tolerated for any reason.
15. Be willing to abide by the homestay and service placement rules and expectations, as well as those of Dragons field staff.
16. Willingly and equitably share responsibility with other group members.
17. Effectively communicate ideas and concerns on an individual and cohort level.
18. Have the cognitive ability to learn necessary skills given normal time limitations of the program.
19. Lift and carry personal or group gear required for specific activities, for example, a backpack weighing 40 pounds for up to 8 hours during trekking.

CULTURAL & LIVING ABROAD ADJUSTMENTS

Participants must be able to:

20. Be open and willing to interact with new and unfamiliar cultures.
21. Tolerate changes in diet, group living, changes in itinerary, unfamiliar surroundings, homesickness, long days filled with mentally and physically challenging activities, and a routine much different than your routine at home.
22. Tolerate living and traveling outdoors with wind, insects, and wildlife for multiple days at varying elevations.
23. Tolerate being several hours or up to a day away from medical facilities.
24. Navigate and travel with the group or independently using local transportation.
25. Take personal responsibility for belongings, program equipment, and behavior.
26. Navigate and travel in environments abroad which often have limited mobility accommodations, such as streets without sidewalks, cobblestone, dirt, or otherwise uneven streets, multiple flights of stairs without elevator options, and other limitations.