



Onsite Program Director/Assistant Director Expectations, Eligibility, and Selection Criteria

The CCSA onsite team includes an **onsite program director** and, on larger programs, an **onsite assistant director**. This team collaborates closely together, as well as with the program faculty and the CCSA staff, to engage participants in a meaningful, multicultural experience. The leadership provided and tone set by this team are the bedrock of the program's success.

The onsite team and faculty collaborate in facilitating the student learning experience and student development through the abroad experience. The context of the education abroad experience allows leaders to engage students in ways not possible in a traditional classroom setting.

The primary responsibilities of the onsite team are:

- Support participant needs, prioritizing health and safety
- Create a positive and supportive community of scholars
- Engage students in learning outside the classroom
- Ensure smooth onsite management of the program
- Represent the member institution on the program
- Build the presence of CCSA at the member institution, including recruiting faculty and students
- Learn about education abroad and CCSA and contribute ideas supporting continual improvement

EXPECTATIONS

Expectations for Onsite Program Directors and Onsite Assistant Directors

Before the Program

The onsite team is key to the program's success. This begins many months before departure, and is focused on two responsibilities as the onsite program director and assistant director build a collaboration for program leadership.

1 – *Recruiting*. Whereas faculty are the primary recruiters for their specific courses, everyone contributes to enrollment success across the program. The onsite team, CCSA campus reps, and faculty create a presence on each campus, and often beyond. Sometimes, the onsite team member is the only individual closely connected to their specific CCSA program on their campus; in this situation, it is even more important for them to perform an active recruiting role.

A strength of CCSA courses is that they tend to be small (approx. 10-15 students), allowing for a good amount of flexibility and individualization in the way faculty teach. In order for this model to be financially sustainable, courses must not fall below this threshold. The ability of CCSA to provide quality educational experiences to students who need us the most – now and in the future – depends on each member of our community contributing to enrollment success.

Program directors and assistant directors can also be powerful faculty recruiters, and can make the difference between a program with a minimal number of courses and a healthy number.

2 – Preparing for the Program. As departure gets closer, the onsite team collaborates with the CCSA staff to ensure the necessary elements are in place for a smooth program. In particular, the onsite team should be familiar with all policies and procedures that address onsite program management, should have onsite orientation prepared, and should be familiar with the host site. Returning directors or assistant directors should ensure they are familiar with any relevant changes.

The onsite team must participate in CCSA preparation and training (P&T). Zoom sessions are held about nine months before departure, and an in-person P&T is held about two months before departure. At these sessions, in addition to meeting and interacting with each other and program faculty, the onsite team receives training for dealing with crises and emergency situations of various types.

The onsite program director typically arrives two days before students to prepare for the group's arrival. Assistant directors may arrive early or may travel with students, according to the needs of the program.

During the Program

The primary responsibility of the onsite team is overseeing the safety and health of all program participants. The smooth running of the program is the prime concern for the team. Funds dispersed to program directors for incidental costs must be managed in a fiscally responsible manner. Onsite directors and assistant directors collaborate to ensure 24/7 duty coverage. They are often called on during meals, in public spaces, and occasionally overnight. They may be called upon to respond to emergencies, answer questions or just generally assist program participants. Even when "off-duty," team members may be asked to address an emergency.

Another important responsibility of the onsite team is fomenting group dynamics to enable a community of scholars to emerge. Countless opportunities are available in this area, and can include learning about the host city on arrival day, resolving conflicts among roommates, helping turn a stressful situation into a learning moment, and inviting participants to interpret their experience from multiple perspectives.

After the Program

The onsite program team compiles reports, reconciles funds, and ensures materials and equipment are sent back to the CCSA office. At least one member of the team stays onsite an extra day to wrap up any necessary tasks as well as to ensure all the participants were able to depart.

In any case where a participant must stay onsite after the program end date (flight delay, illness, etc.), one member of the admin team must be prepared to stay until the participant departs.

Eligibility

To serve as an onsite program director or assistant director, an individual must:

- Be faculty or staff at a current CCSA member institution.
- Have support of home department or office.
- Provide approval of the CCSA campus representative.

Education abroad office staff are particularly encouraged to apply, with the recommendation of the home campus CCSA representative.

Onsite directors and assistant directors must be able to meet the physical rigors of the program, which always includes a lot of walking, but may also include outdoor adventure (such as Belize and Australia) or additional walking or standing (for example, hills or a long distance to the nearest bus). They must also be able to occasionally function on little sleep.

At the discretion of the CCSA Board of Trustees Executive Committee, other candidates may be considered.

Selection Criteria

Any current member of the CCSA Board of Trustees or CCSA campus representative is encouraged to apply and generally is given priority.

In selecting the onsite team, the following factors are considered.

- **Experience and knowledge.**
 - The director must have demonstrated appropriate skills and leadership as a previous CCSA administrator, and preferably has experience with that specific program and/or location.
 - The assistant director has some, but not necessarily all, of the following experience: a previous study abroad onsite administrator or faculty; familiarity with the location; knowledge of best practices in education abroad; expertise in student management; expertise in crisis response.
- **Previous performance.** Returning onsite team members must demonstrate prior success in meeting the role's expectations, including, but not limited to, program management, financial responsibility, crisis response, communication, creating a positive environment, and recruiting students.
- **The need to train future directors.** On larger programs, CCSA tries to send at least one assistant who may have less experience. These individuals are often either a past program faculty member or a recommended study abroad staff.
- **Member institution needs and recommendations.** CCSA strives to be a good partner and to provide opportunities not only for students, but for faculty and staff. Recognizing that some member study abroad staff have limited options for professional development abroad, CCSA looks to support those institutions by making onsite program director and assistant director opportunities available. When CCSA can use an onsite role to help a member institution meet their goals, we strive to.
- **Member institution balance.**
- **Gender balance.**
- **Level of experience of the program faculty.** In programs with a high percentage of faculty new to CCSA, the onsite team serves in a mentor capacity regarding program and student management as well as cross-cultural learning.

- **Specialty program needs.** Some programs recruit heavily from a single member school, and the program design often has unique needs. In this case, CCSA works closely with the faculty member in selecting an administrator, and that may be done separately from the general call for CCSA program administrators.
- **Availability and flexibility of volunteers.** Sometimes all the applicants are interested in/available for the same program(s). When necessary, CCSA looks for those who are able and willing to serve in alternate programs.
- **Commitment and previous participation from applicant's home institution.** Institutions that regularly show commitment to CCSA's success via student enrollments, providing faculty and administrators, or other contributions, will be highly considered.

Benefits

Serving as an onsite team member for CCSA is rigorous, demanding, and rewarding. The following are included with this opportunity:

- Airfare
- All onsite transportation
- Lodging and breakfast (or breakfast stipend) onsite
- Modest per diem
- Modest phone reimbursement
- A few cultural activities
- International insurance (medical, evacuation, and trip delay)
- Ability to bring a companion at reduced cost

In addition, serving as an onsite program director helps build skills and connections that improve your ability to manage projects and people. For assistant directors, in particular, this is a unique professional development opportunity designed to provide mentorship, support career growth, and build your network.

CCSA administrators serve as volunteers, not employees of CCSA, and receive no salary from CCSA for performing these services. However, they are covered under CCSA's liability insurance.

CCSA and member institutions benefit from the increased understanding and shared goals of providing quality educational programs for member institution students and professional opportunities for faculty and staff.