

FIELD SCHOOLS ABROAD

Guide for Field Schools Abroad

CONCORDIA INTERNATIONAL

2023-2024

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<http://www.concordia.ca/offices/ci.html>

[Field School Proposal Form:](#)

Current and Past Field Schools:

<http://www.concordia.ca/students/exchanges/field-schools.html>

Global Affairs Canada Travel Advisories:

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>

Bank of Canada Daily Currency Converter:

<http://www.bankofcanada.ca/rates/exchange/daily-converter/>

SECTION I: DEFINING A FIELD SCHOOL ABROAD

A field school is typically either a faculty-led course taught abroad (normally during the summer term) or a summer school offered by a Concordia partner university abroad. For both, experiential learning plays an important role by providing both teaching and a learning-experience abroad related to course contents. While several models and examples of field schools at Concordia exist, they typically match one of the following examples:

- **A Concordia course taught by a Concordia faculty member abroad.**
 - Example: Azrieli Institute's summer in Jerusalem Program 2018. Professor Csaba Nikolenyi has taught POLI 487 taught by at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

- **Courses taken for transfer credit at a partner university's summer school.**
 - Example: ESSCA School of Management Paris, a bilateral exchange partner, offers a summer program in which business students enroll in two ESSCA courses worth the equivalent of 6 Concordia (transfer) credits.

- **Courses taught at a host institution with a Concordia professor's supervision.**

Example: Concordia in China and Spain Summer Language Field Schools. Students take 9 credits of Chinese or Spanish language courses taught at the Communication University of China / Universidad Santiago de Compostela. Concordia professors accompany the students, provide additional support and coordinate with faculty at the host institution to make sure students are placed in courses according to their Concordia language level, are progressing accordingly and their final work is graded based on host institution feedback and their own assessments of students' progress.

- **Non-credited workshops/activities abroad led by a Concordia professor.**
 - Example : Genova Summer Lab program. Dr. Luca Caminati (Film Studies) selected 11 Graduate students to participate in Università di Genova's Visual Lab Summer School 2018.

SECTION II: Roles

A. Lead Professor – The Lead Professor is the Concordia professor responsible for initiating, teaching and leading the field school abroad and assumes the following general responsibilities:

- Initiating the field school by identifying a viable, relevant and complimentary reason and course requiring hands-on experience abroad. S/he is responsible for proposing field schools to Department Chair and Faculty's Associate Dean of Academics and obtaining normal necessary approvals for offering the course/field school abroad as part of her or his assigned workload.
- Submits a [Field School Proposal Form](#) by the given deadline (early September to mid-October for the following summer term, please check the Concordia International website for the current date).
- If approved by Department and Faculty, works with Concordia International on program coordination (host institution agreements, dates, accommodations, services required, reservations, and billing) and participant selection, admissions, pre-departure and post-program follow-up.
- Coordinates with Department(s) to have the course listed on rosters and/or cross-listed with any other departments (as applicable).
- Attends student information sessions and pre-departure orientations.
- Supervises students on-site and is available 24/7 through the field school in case of emergency.
- Provides Concordia International with regular updates from abroad and reports on incidents and any actions taken in response to them.
- Teaches the course, grades assignments and submits final marks.
- Produces a post-program retrospective report and meets with Concordia International to discuss program's successes and difficulties.

B. Department – The Resident Director's Department (department chair, department administrators, program assistants, etc.) is still responsible for providing academic oversight of the course and supervision of the faculty member throughout duration of field school, the same as for other courses it offers. General responsibilities are similar to those for course on campus and often include:

- Evaluates program proposal in coordination with Faculty and Concordia International.
- Approves the field school as part of the professor's workload or provides other compensation as appropriate for teaching the

- Courses (Concordia International is not an academic department and does not offer courses).
- Builds program courses in SIS (if necessary).
- Assists students with registering for field school courses.
- Responds to applicable students' registration/academic-related inquiries.
- Assists professor with posting grades.

C. Concordia International – Concordia international is responsible for facilitating field schools abroad by organizing the approval process between the professor, Department and Faculty; coordinating the recruitment, selection, admission and pre-departure orientation components; and then confirming final arrangements, agreements and payments with the host institutions and/or other service providers. Concordia International's responsibilities include:

- Responds to general inquiries from the community about field school abroad.
- Supports the field school abroad proposal process.
- Works with Concordia professor to coordinate program logistics.
- Liaises with field school host institutions and other service providers for obtaining quotes, determining costs, concluding any required agreements/contracts. Confirming participants and overseeing billing and payments.
- Administers the [Quebec Mobility Bursary](#) approval and disbursements for eligible participants.
- Oversees the recruitments and enrolment processes in collaboration with the professor.
- Creates field school website and other promotional materials as needed.
- Hosts information sessions and pre-departure orientations.
- Serves as the primary Concordia contact for students and professors while abroad, liaises with other units as required.
- Organizes post-program follow-up.

SECTION III: ESTABLISHING A FIELD SCHOOL AND TIMELINE

When establishing a field school, the fundamental starting points are identifying why teaching the course abroad is appropriate pedagogically and how it is an essential part of this particular type of learning experience. Equally important is the feasibility of the field school. Are there any notable [Government of Canada Travel Advisories](#) or other safety concerns? Can novice travelers easily and safely access the site? Are the costs in line with student travel budgets? Is the host institution able to provide basic accommodation needs? Is appropriate transportation readily available? If not, can the host institution arrange for suitable, alternative services? Do the activities and agenda match the academic objectives of the field school, or are they extra-curricular and driving up costs? Is there a sizable student audience at Concordia in order to get the minimum number of participants needed for the class? Will the timing disrupt other plans?

When exploring field school, please keep the above-mentioned questions in mind. The Field Schools Coordinator at Concordia International is also available to meet with professors, departments and others to review logistics during the proposal, enrolment, delivery and post-program phases. One of the key factors to the success of many field schools is adequate planning and preparation time. Below are the steps Concordia international has identified throughout the life cycle of a field school.

STEP 1: Identifying the Purpose and a Host Institution (prior to September)

- Professor identifies an opportunity and need for a course involving learning abroad.
- Professor member discusses offering the courses with department chair.
- Professor discusses feasibility for offering such a course with identified host institution.
- Professor consults with Concordia International and begins proposal phase.

STEP 2: Program Proposal (September-October)

- Professor submits a [field school abroad proposal form](#) available on the Concordia International [website](#).
- The deadline for submitting proposals is typically during the first weeks of October for the following summer and is on the Concordia International website.
- Concordia International will review proposals with the relevant Department Chair and Associate Dean, Academics.
- Concordia International will communicate results to the professor.
- If approved, Concordia International and professor will move to the next step “Program Development.”

STEP 3: Program Development (October - November)

- Concordia International and professor meet to coordinate a plan for moving forward.
- Concordia international will contact the identified host institution and/or service providers to request quotes, payment instructions and to conclude any contracts or agreements required.
- Concordia International will create a budget and calculate the amount of [Quebec Mobility Bursary](#) program participants can receive.

STEP 4: Recruitment and Enrolment (December, January and February)

- Concordia International develops a website, promotional materials and recruitment plan for the field school (reach out to sector communications advisors).
- Concordia International and professor schedules at least 2-3 information sessions for students to learn about the field school and ask questions.
- Students apply (typically end of February/start of March)
- Concordia International collects applications, sends to professor and consult together.
- Concordia International emits decisions; coordinates, sends and collects legal waiver; provides students with instructions for paying a program deposit to confirm participation; sends any other applicable notices; and schedules first pre-departure orientation.

STEP 5: Pre-Departure Preparation (March – April)

- Concordia International recommends having two pre-departure orientations: one for logistics and a second more sociable one aimed at developing group dynamics.
- During the first orientation, Concordia International will address the following:
 - Program and housing dates
 - Any specific travel instructions
 - Health, safety and insurance
 - Costs and bursary
 - Withdrawing from program
 - Passports and visas
- And, the professor typically addresses the following:
 - Academic requirements and expectations
 - Behavioural expectations
 - Class attendance and notification of absences
 - Cultural norms and differences of host destination

- Department builds program courses in Student Information System and prompts students to register
- Concordia International sends Student Accounts field school course fees (added to students' normal tuition fees bills for the corresponding semester)
- Concordia International transmits bursary amounts and recipients to Financial Aid and Awards and Payroll
- Concordia International communicates final participant numbers to host institution and/or any service providers; requests final invoices; begins processing payments with Financial Services; and helps professor make travel arrangements
- Concordia International verifies that participants have paid the program fee by deadline

STEP 6: In-Country Supervision (May, June or July)

- Professor monitors student arrivals and notifies Concordia International when everyone has arrived or of any problems.
- Professor may organize an in-country, arrival orientation with host institution (recommended).
- Professor performs any teaching/instructing duties and/or coordinates their delivery with host institution.
- Professor provides a brief weekly update/heck-in with Concordia International.
- Professor notifies Concordia International immediately of any incidents and actions taken.
- Professor remains available to students 24/7 in the event of an emergency.

STEP 7: Post-Program Follow-up (September, October, November)

- In addition to the normal course evaluations, the University sends to students, Concordia International will also send them a field school questionnaire asking for feedback about their experience.
- Professor submits grades (if applicable) and a report to Concordia International.
- Concordia International will share professor and student feedback with the relevant Department and Faculty.
- Professor submits any expense reports needed for out-of-pocket expenses or services paid on site as listed in the field school budget.
- Concordia International and professor coordinate any post program meetings, presentations, vernissages, etc. (**Strongly recommended**).

SECTION IV: TIPS AND DIRECTIVES

How can I get an approval to teach a course abroad?

You must discuss it first with your department chair to decide if it matches departmental finances, objectives, needs and how it will fit into your workload. If favorable, proceed with the formal proposal outlined in this guide. Some Faculties may have other or specific processes for requesting to lead a field school abroad. Concordia International does not approve professors to teach any courses and is in auxiliary service for coordinating the field school after it has been approved.

Can part-time Faculty and/or lecturers lead a field school?

Most field schools are led by tenure-track professors. Nothing prohibits lecturers or part-time faculty from leading field schools; however, they must have prior approval from their departments and have to determine how the course will fit into their teaching loads. Field schools should not be used as way to guarantee future employment.

Who pays for my expenses?

The lead professor's expenses are included in the program fee students pay. Expenses typically include transportation, housing and per diem for meals not offered as part of the program or services provided. Other incidental expenses can also be included, but must be included in the program budget or represent an emergency to be approved.

How much bursary support can my students expect to receive?

The Quebec Mobility Bursary is a government-sponsored financial aid program with rules to support students studying abroad as part of a Quebec university degree program. It is not Concordia funding over which the University has complete control or oversight. The amount of funds we receive each year are generous, but limited all the same. According to current resources at the time this guide is being reviewed, the number of students participating in study abroad at this time and current government regulations – Concordia International estimates can provide each student with approximately \$50 for each day a field school lasts from departure to return date.

Some Faculties or programs may have other funding for field schools (mostly originating from private donors). Just be aware that the Quebec Mobility Bursary cannot be combined with other bursaries or scholarships designated for the field school abroad and must be reduced by the amount of any other funding received.

Who buys the students plane tickets?

Students purchase their own airfare and/or other transportation required to/from the field school abroad.

What do program fees include?

Program fee inclusions/exclusions vary. They typically include any host institution fees, accommodations, some meals, excursion expenses and local transportation costs in addition to

the lead professor's expenses.

Can I rent a car or have the students rent cars for program transportation?

We advise against faculty members renting cars to transport students due to liability and also insurance concerns. Under no circumstances should students be asked to rent and/or drive cars for or during field schools. Concordia's liability insurance will not cover accident related to students renting or driving cars and is not applicable to employees renting vehicles outside Canada and the United States.

Does Concordia International get our visas?

If a visa is needed, then it is the responsibility of the traveler to obtain directly from the government of the country being visited. No one else can apply for it for you; however, there are a variety of private businesses who will coordinate the process for you for a fee. You are strongly encouraged to check with your host institution if a visa is needed and if so what is required before deciding on making a proposal. Concordia International will also ask them this question, determine what is needed, coordinate with the host institution for any required supporting documents and inform the students as part of the pre-departure process.

NB Being able to enter a country without a visa for tourism or business visit is not the same as studying or teaching in a specific country. Visas may still be required for these activities for any amount of time in the host country. These are not matters to be overlooked or put to the test as students are often denied entry to their host countries for not having the proper documents.

What happens if a student gets sick or has behavioral issues?

In the event of an illness or injury, you should often seek medical attention first. Knowing where to go in the event of sickness or a medical emergency is very important. You should address this question with our host institution or service providers on arrival and make sure students are aware as well should you not be available. 911 is not universal and only available in Canada and the US.

Once the student is stable, contact Concordia International or the University's 24-hour emergency number with a description of the incident, actions taken, current state of the student, location of the students and if any family members or emergency contacts have been notified already. Concordia International will work with the relevant university officials for a responsive action if required.

For behavioral issues, please also notify Concordia International as soon as possible with a summary of the incident, the effect it is having on the program and any actions taken. Even if the issue is a minor one, we still encourage reporting it this way in case patterns develop. Concordia International will work with the relevant university officials for a responsive action if required.

Who is responsible for and oversees the financial aspects of a field school?

With the exception of how professors are compensated for teaching, Concordia International oversees the rest of the financial aspects related to the program (program budget, deposits, billing, payments, etc.).

You cannot spend more than what is in your budget, so planning accordingly is essential as adding items after the program fee has been announced is not possible. To cover bank transaction charges, unexpected expenses and emergencies, Concordia does charge a 15% overhead fee on field school expenses. Any remaining funds are used for general field school emergencies and future program development.

When is the best time to lead a field school?

Most take place during the summer term, in May and just after winter semester ends. Some take place in June and July as well. Field schools taking place in May tend to get better enrolments, and those taking place during the middle of the summer often face enrolment challenges. However, there is no set time period for field schools. The reading week in February could be used for an excursion abroad as part of a normal winter semester courses for example.

For how long must field schools be?

There is no set time, but most three-credit ones last between 2-3 weeks. Be sure to take into consideration travel time, time difference and required contacted hours for three credits. Field schools offering more credit often last longer.

What are characteristics of successful field schools?

To start, just like successful courses, they require planning and a detailed syllabus and itinerary explaining requirements, expectations and assignments. As mentioned, May seems to be a successful month for offering them. Most importantly though, successful field schools tend to be simple ones with applied experiences relating to the lead professor's research expertise; they do not involve a lot of movement within the country; and do not involve a lot of extra-curricular touristic activities, but do have free time built into their schedules.