

Off-Campus Interim Courses

Off-campus Interim courses are central to St. Olaf's global mission. Such courses are designed to capitalize on opportunities unique to the locations where they are taught and to integrate classroom instruction and experiential learning activities into a well-conceived whole. When appropriate for academic and other reasons, affiliations with local academic institutions are encouraged.

Proposals for off-campus Interim courses shall demonstrate the centrality of the course to the college curriculum. Furthermore, they shall provide a rationale for conducting the course off-campus by explaining the significance of the location(s) to the overall educational experience. The proposal and Off-Campus Supplement together shall provide a clear picture of the careful integration of course content and on-site living and learning opportunities.

When preparing an off-campus Interim proposal, please keep in mind the following guidelines developed by the IOS and IDOCS. By following them closely, you will facilitate IDOCS review of your course. IDOCS may request additional information about your course during the review process or request revisions prior to approval.

The Interim Instructor may teach only the approved course during the program. He/she may not modify the focus or level of the approved course. He/she may not supervise independent study/independent research projects.

New Proposals (including the Off-Campus Supplement and Budget) are due in the Office of the Registrar on November 12 of the academic year prior to the year proposed for the course. Letters of Intent for offering a repeat interim course are due in the International and Off-Campus Studies Office by November 19.

A. General guidelines

1. An interim course that has not been offered during the last four years is considered to be a new course. Faculty adapting an on-campus course to an off-campus interim must submit a new course proposal with a course number different from that of the on-campus course.
2. Each course shall have a well defined focus, whether disciplinary or interdisciplinary.
3. Pre-requisites shall be appropriate to course goals.
4. Instructors shall be mindful of how courses fit into departmental or interdisciplinary programs and of how they relate to existing programs in the same geographic area. Faculty members are encouraged to speak to area studies programs and their department chair in advance of submitting a proposal.
5. Instructors shall be mindful also of the intended audience(s), whether majors, non-majors, or both.
6. Instructors who intend their courses to satisfy general education or departmental requirements are encouraged to consult GEC (General Education Committee) and departmental guidelines before submitting proposals and to refer to those guidelines in their proposals.

7. The Interim proposal should provide an accurate and complete summary of all activities associated with the course, including any non-traditional or experiential activities. (*See Appendix O & P*)

B. Academic guidelines

1. Courses shall have academic integrity and coherence. The relationship between course content and the course location(s) should be articulated clearly. Instructors should give careful thought to the integration of course readings, lectures, site visits, and independent study and research, and methods of evaluation.
2. Courses shall normally combine experiential learning with more traditional academic learning.
3. The type and amount of work required of students shall be appropriate to the focus and level of the course and compatible with living and traveling conditions. The amount of assigned reading should be similar to what is required in on-campus Interim courses. Students need to know in advance how they are to procure assigned reading materials (by purchase before departure, purchase on site, or the use of libraries). When students are expected to carry out research projects, faculty should ensure that libraries or other research facilities are available and adequate. If English is not the language of the location of the course, careful thought should be given to how students will carry out their course work and interact with local populations.
4. Courses shall have at least twenty class days (not including travel to and from Minneapolis/St. Paul). The time devoted to classroom or course-related-activities shall be at least as much as for on-campus Interim courses, and normally significantly more. Faculty should submit a preliminary daily schedule for both students and faculty that outlines how mornings, afternoons and evenings will be spent.
5. Means of evaluation shall be clearly stated, realistic, adequate and comparable to those used on campus.

C. Itinerary

1. In preparing the itinerary, faculty should balance the academic integrity of the course, the logistics and cost of travel. Faculty are encouraged to consider carefully the number of sites they propose to visit, their geographical proximity to each other, and the time that will be spent traveling between them.
2. Instructors must make a good case for the amount of travel they propose.
3. It is expected that the duration of an off-campus Interim will be 26 days.

D. Course title and draft catalog statement

1. The course title shall reflect the disciplinary or interdisciplinary focus of the course as well as the place in which it is taught.
2. The draft catalog statement shall describe the main theme or focus of the course, its elements (such as readings, lectures, site visits, independent research), and the itinerary. Information about the student work load and assessment should not be included in the catalog statement. Detailed guidelines are available from IOS.

E. Course enrollment

A suggestion for a minimum and maximum number of participants should be prepared and accompanied with a rationale for those numbers. Generally speaking, off-campus interim courses taught by a single instructor enroll between 15 and 28 students.

F. Review of new course proposals

To propose a new off-campus Interim course, faculty need to complete a new course proposal packet along with an International & Off-Campus Studies supplement available from the department chair. Proposals (including tentative program budgets) are due at the Dean's office on November 10 of the academic year prior to the year proposed for the course. A new course proposal (first time offered) requires initial approval of IDOCS for one year.

Department chairs are encouraged to arrange 3-1-2 or equivalent teaching loads for all faculty proposing off-campus Interim courses. A member of the faculty will then be able to replace a canceled off-campus Interim course with another course, either during Interim or during Semester II.

G. Interim classes proposed for a second offering (within four years of the original offering):

The second time an interim course is proposed, a letter of intent including signatures of appropriate department chairs and associate deans should be submitted to IOS by November 19 along with the following items:

- Copy of the original proposal

- Major, concentration and GEC approvals

- Copy of the actual syllabus, itinerary and budget used

- A report on the first offering of the class, including a detailed plan for the changes in itinerary, budget, course syllabus and any other arrangements. If changes in the course warrant, copies of new GEC applications should be attached.

(Note: If you are offering a course for the first time in January 2005, the letter of intent should be submitted on November 19 and the other documents by February 15.)

After an interim course is approved for the second offering, it is considered an "on-going interim" (see Section H).

Department chairs are encouraged to arrange 3-1-2 or equivalent teaching loads for all faculty proposing off-campus Interim courses. A member of the faculty will then be able to replace a canceled off-campus Interim course with another course, either during Interim or during Semester II.

H. Review of on-going interims

Instructors proposing off-campus interim courses already approved by IDOCS as on-going and conducted within the previous three years (by themselves or by someone in the same department) need not submit a new course proposal for review by IDOCS. Instead, they should send a letter of intent along with a copy of the most recent course syllabus to IOS by November 19. This letter is indication of the department's intent to offer the course again

and should describe any changes instructors intend to make in the course (such as a change in course title, shift in content, the overall structure, sites visited, student work load, grading policy) and a revised budget. This letter is to be signed by the instructor and by the department chair. Signature of the department chair confirms approval of the interim by the department. IDOCS will coordinate review of off-campus Interim courses with the Office of the Dean of the College.

Department chairs are encouraged to arrange 3-1-2 or equivalent teaching loads for all faculty proposing off-campus Interim courses. A member of the faculty will then be able to replace a canceled off-campus Interim course with another course, either during Interim or during Semester II.

I. Faculty eligibility

Any faculty member, with approval of the department chair, may propose an off-campus Interim course to be taught during the second year or a subsequent year on the St. Olaf faculty. Only the person proposing an Interim course shall teach the course. An Interim course instructor shall be familiar with the country(ies) included in the itinerary. Retired faculty members are eligible to serve as off-campus instructors.

J. Teaching load

Normally, interim courses are taught by an individual faculty member. A team-taught course may be possible contingent upon:

1. Approval of department(s) and Associate Dean(s) with regard to teaching loads. Consideration should be given to on-campus guidelines regarding student enrollment for team-taught courses).
2. Instructional costs not being added to the program costs for either faculty member.
3. The course proposal should address items 1 and 2

K. Off-campus mentoring program

To provide opportunities for St. Olaf College faculty to gain experience in leading off-campus programs, January interims enrolling 20 or more students may include a second faculty member (mentee) who would accompany the interim group and serve as assistant to the faculty instructor (mentor).

The following guidelines apply:

1. The mentee must not be scheduled to teach during the January interim. Serving as a mentee does not count as teaching a course, so the mentee will normally have a 3-0-3 teaching load.
2. A faculty member who wishes to be considered for the mentoring program must make his/her request (in writing) to the Director of International and Off-Campus Studies. The faculty member should *not* contact January off-campus interim instructors directly. The Director of the Office of International and Off-Campus Studies will conduct the discussions with the possible mentors.

A proposal for mentee involvement in a future off-campus study program *following* the mentoring program

The signatures of the mentee's Department Chair and Associate Dean signifying approval of the mentee involvement in the Mentoring Program

3. The faculty instructor (mentor) must have taught at least one off-campus program prior to the start of the mentoring program.
4. All direct program costs (including travel, accommodations, 2 meals per day) for the mentee will be covered by the development fund of International and Off-Campus Studies.
5. A faculty mentee is expected to devote his or her entire effort to the program. Accordingly, family members may not accompany a mentee.
6. Applications should be submitted one year prior to the start of the interim period for which the mentee is applying.

L. Student eligibility

Students who are sophomores, juniors, or seniors in good academic standing may apply for participation in off-campus Interim courses. First-year students in good academic standing may apply for participation only in foreign language Interim courses. Interims focused on 1st year student participants may be offered during the interim period with the understanding that 1/2 of the interim period would be spent on campus and the other 1/2 off campus. Each course instructor shall establish selection criteria for his/her own off-campus Interim course and describe them in application materials. Applications and acceptance deadlines will be provided by IOS by early April and instructors are asked to make every effort to comply with them.

Regular students must register to take the Off-Campus Interim course for credit. Approved Continuing Education students must register for the course but are allowed to audit.

M. Health, safety, and communication (See #4, Off-Campus Supplement form.)

In the interest of the health and safety of participants in off-campus Interim courses, these conditions shall be observed:

1. Interim courses shall only be offered in countries with which the United States has official relations and for which no Department of State Travel Warning has been issued.
2. Instructors shall arrange for means to contact the St. Olaf campus either at or near the site(s) of proposed courses, and shall have a clear communication link to the campus. Regardless of the location(s) of an Interim course, instructors are encouraged to be prepared to respond to health and safety problems, whether emergency or routine in nature.
3. All Interim courses must comply with St. Olaf College policies about the rental and use of motor vehicles.
4. All home-stays shall be arranged in accordance with IOS best practice guidelines.
5. All private carriers hired to provide required group transportation scheduled during interim must provide certification of appropriate insurance coverage.

N. Budgets, fees and accounts

1. Instructors shall develop budgets in cooperation with IOS. Instructor's salary and benefits are met through the operating budget of the college. Participating students pay a fee for all other Interim expenses.
2. Program budgets are to be submitted with the new course proposal or with the letter of intent. Budgets for off-campus Interim courses that have been taught before shall be updated by the faculty, in cooperation with the staff of IOS, during the month of February.
3. It is expected that off-campus interims will operate at the cost stated in the off-campus interims brochure published in April.
4. Pre-course cost adjustments will be made, prior to December 1, if changes in airfare and/or exchange rates result in a difference of greater than 5%. This adjustment can either reduce or increase the cost of an interim.
5. Post-course refunds to students will be processed according to the following policy:

If the fund balance (amount remaining at St. Olaf and the amount returned by the instructor) at the end of an Interim is \$100 per student or greater, the full amount will be refunded to the student. If the fund balance (amount remaining at St. Olaf and the amount returned by the instructor) at the end of the Interim is less than \$100 per student, the full amount will be directed to IOS to cover deficits in other Interim budgets and to support Interim program development. This policy encourages Interim instructors to return unused funds to campus rather than handing them out on site; it reduces the expectation of students of a hand-out at the end of Interim; and it eliminates the need for IOS to process small amounts of money.

O. Final report

At the conclusion of the Interim, IOS will ask students to complete a questionnaire concerning organizational and logistical aspects of the course. IDOCS uses the results in reviewing subsequent Interim proposals.

In addition to the IOS questionnaire, Interim instructors must submit the following:

1. A final financial report to the Director of IOS by February 15, or earlier.
2. A narrative report to the Director of IOS and to the instructor's Department Chair by March 1, or earlier. See "Guidelines for Faculty Narrative Interim Reports" available in the IOS Office.

In the case of an interim being offered for a second time, as per section F, the narrative report and the financial report must be submitted by February 15.

Faculty are strongly encouraged to have students evaluate the academic component of the course. This may be done by utilizing the online student feedback system operated by ARP. Information about course content and the impact of the Interim experience on students' program of study and cross-cultural learning and understanding contributes to the ongoing St. Olaf assessment program and can be included in the narrative report. See Appendix Q.

P. Non-participants accompanying off-campus interims

Persons who are not registered for the interim course are prohibited from participating unless approval is obtained from the Director of IOS.

Fees payable to St. Olaf College will be determined by the Director of IOS for all individuals accompanying an off-campus interim who are not registered students, registered through the Office of Continuing Education or participating through prior college arrangements.

Q. On all St. Olaf College faculty-led off-campus interims, International and Off-Campus Studies will guarantee the presence of support personnel. The choice of personnel will be made by IOS liaisons and the Director of International and Off-Campus Studies. The variables involved in determining appropriate support for an individual interim program include but are not limited to the following:

1. Presence of on-site support personnel
2. Appropriateness of a support individual from the St. Olaf Community*
3. Possibility of a faculty mentee assigned to a particular interim
4. Potential impact on the program fee
5. Availability of an upper class student who has already taken the off-campus course who could register for an independent study or internship with the understanding that the student's participation will not add to the accompanying faculty member's workload
6. Relevant qualifications of affiliated members of the St. Olaf community, for example; familiarity with the program, gender, relationship to the instructor, and language ability
7. Availability of another faculty member willing to participate who WILL NOT receive teaching load credit for the program

In each case, the costs for support personnel will be covered by IOS development funds, increased program fee, or other funding sources. Responsibilities for support personnel will be articulated in a written statement at the time of the appointment. Support positions will not be salaried.

The IOS office reserves the right to make all final decisions concerning appointments of off-campus interim support personnel.

*For the purpose of this policy, members of the St. Olaf College Community are defined as staff, administrator, faculty, student, spouse, alumni.