

Master Agreement for Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

between

Contractor

and

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)

The following document serves as a service agreement (“Agreement”) between 7 Mares GmbH (“Contractor”) and Virginia Tech for the operation of customized faculty-led study abroad programs. In the interest of expanding educational opportunities and to provide a unique learning experience for graduate and undergraduate students, as well as promote collaboration between the two parties, Contractor and Virginia Tech agree to the following provisions:

Award: This Master Services Agreement (MSA) results from a public and competitive solicitation for services issued by Virginia Tech, followed by the subsequent proposal received from the Contractor. The following documents contain additional terms that are hereby incorporated by reference into the MSA in the following order of precedence:

- a. This executed master agreement for custom faculty-led study abroad programs
- b. Summary of Negotiations
- c. Contractor’s Proposal (dated July 26, 2024)
- d. Request for Proposal Addendum (dated July 16, 2024)
- e. Request for Proposal Document (dated June 7, 2024)

Program:

This Agreement is based on the principle of reciprocity and expresses the interest of both parties to cultivate educational experiences for Virginia Tech students and faculty through collaboration with the Contractor.

Academics:

The programs’ academic focus will depend upon the academic interests and expertise of individual faculty/staff involved. Contractor will provide the following academic services for the Program participants in an executed Addendum specifying the details of each program.

Fees:

The costs per person will be determined in advance of each customized program and specified in the executed Addendum.

The fee may include but is not limited to. The fee shall be subject to the agreement of both parties:

- a. Administrative Fee
- b. Orientation
- c. Accommodation
- d. Transportation
- e. Airport pick up on arrival day and transfer to the airport on departure day
- f. Meals
- g. Translator fees for project work
- h. All project materials and supplies

Unless notated otherwise in the Executed Addendum, all services and accommodations are to be selected, facilitated, and arranged by the Contractor in consultation with Virginia Tech.

Participant Registration:

Virginia Tech students will be nominated by the academic department to ensure students meet Virginia Tech's institutional requirements for study abroad. The final selection of all participants in the program from the Virginia Tech student body shall remain in the sole and absolute discretion of the specific department for which the program is designed for. All Virginia Tech students selected to participate shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Contractor as detailed within the Executed Addendum.

Payment Schedule:

Full program payment is due 30 days prior to the start of a program. The Contractor will issue an invoice to Virginia Tech a minimum of 60 days prior to the start of a program. Participants are responsible for remitting payment directly to the Contractor for the program fee and services rendered.

Insurance:

In order to participate in the program, all participants MUST acquire international medical and security insurance coverage. Virginia Tech will ensure that all participants have medical and security assistance coverage through the university-contracted vendor for the duration of the program dates.

Acts of God:

Neither party shall be responsible for failure to perform this Agreement if circumstances beyond their reasonable control, including, but not limited to: acts of God, governmental authority, terrorism, or war in or with the United States or the Program's location prevent such performance.

Participant Withdrawal Policy:

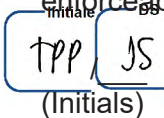
In the event that a participant wishes to withdraw from the program prior to the start of the program refund is at the discretion of the Contractor.

Terms of the Agreement:

From January 1, 2025 through December 31, 2026 with the option for four (4) two-year renewals. The Agreement shall become effective on the day representatives of both parties affix their signatures, and is subject to revision or modification by mutual written agreement.

Electronic Transactions:

If this paragraph is initialed by both parties, to the fullest extent permitted by Code of Virginia, Title 59.1, Chapter 42.1, the parties do hereby expressly authorize and consent to the use of electronic signatures as an additional method of signing and/or initialing this contract and agree electronic signatures (for example, the delivery of a PDF copy of the signature of either party via facsimile or electronic mail or signing electronically by utilizing an electronic signature service) are the same as manual executed handwritten signatures for the purposes of validity, enforceability and admissibility.


(Initials)

In witness hereof, the authorized representatives of Contractor and Virginia Tech hereby execute this Agreement on the dates set forth below.

For Contractor

DocuSigned by:

Tiago Cabral Pinto Pais

Date: 12/17/2024

Name Tiago Pinto Pais

Title CEO

For Virginia Tech

DocuSigned by:

John Spence

Date: 12/17/2024

Name John Spence

on behalf of
Director of Procurement

Negotiations Summary

1. **Virginia Tech question:** Do you agree that if your company is awarded a contract, any current engagements you are actively working on for the University shall be in accordance with the terms of the final contract?

Provider response: Yes, any current engagements with Virginia would be conform the terms of the final contract – they are being planned according to the RFP and the master contract it was present on it.

2. **Virginia Tech question:** Understanding that price is customized for each trip, will the University be receiving any discount structure compared to your standard list pricing you charge?

Provider response: Yes, considering that Virginia Tech has provided my company with different opportunities to develop study abroad programs, I will be pricing programs for VT with a 5 to 10% discount.

3. **Virginia Tech question:** Do you agree that your company shall, to the best of your ability, provide transparency in pricing for future engagements if requested?

Provider response: Yes, that is clear to my company and it will act accordingly.

4. **Virginia Tech question:** As part of Virginia Tech standard procedures, all awarded contracts will be publicly posted on an online contracts' portal. Is there any information included that would be used to identify or harm a person's identity, finances or personal information? If so, please provide a redacted copy of your proposal.

Provider response: No, all information provided in the proposal and/or until now may be disclosed.

5. **Virginia Tech question:** Are there any additional forms or documents that you will require to be incorporated into the contract documents? If so, please submit.

Provider response: No, there will be no need to incorporate any other form to the contract documents.

6. **Virginia Tech question:** Do you agree to provide invoices with payment due thirty (30) days after receipt of invoice or goods/services, whichever is later?

Provider response: Yes, my company accepts those terms of payment.

7. **Virginia Tech question:** Do you agree that you will be performing services as an Independent Contractor, Company, Corporation or other business entity and are not an employee of Virginia Tech or any other Commonwealth Entity?

Provider response: Yes, that is accurate and will be so.

8. **Virginia Tech question:** Do you further agree that Virginia Tech will not withhold any income taxes from its payments to contractors nor will it provide any employment benefits to the contractor or contractor's employees?

Provider response: Yes, that is clear to my company.

9. **Virginia Tech question:** Upon completion of the initial contract period, do you agree that the contract may be renewed by Virginia Tech upon written agreement of both parties for four (4) two-year periods, under the terms of the current contact?

Provider response: Yes, we aim to continue building a long-term relationship as a provider of study abroad programs to Virginia Tech and find the terms of the current contract are adequate to confirm the availability to extend it for four (4) two-year periods under agreement of both parties.

10. **Virginia Tech question:** Please identify the highest-level executive in your organization that is aware of this solicitation. Describe that person's commitment to assuring the highest quality service to Virginia Tech if your organization is awarded a contract.

Provider response: This solicitation is being handled by me, Tiago Pais, the CEO of the company. The highest quality level of service is of the utmost importance to us and signature to all the work we have done with and for Virginia Tech and will continue to be the absolute priority in future programs.

11. **Virginia Tech question:** Please describe your quickest turn-around time if emergency services are needed.

Provider response: The turn-around time for addressing a medical emergency during a study abroad trip depends on several critical factors. These include the student or faculty's proximity to healthcare facilities, the efficiency and quality of the local healthcare system, and the severity of the medical issue. In urban areas with well-established medical infrastructure, minor emergencies may be resolved within a few hours, while in more remote locations, accessing care could take longer. For severe emergencies, especially those requiring medical evacuation to another country or specialized care, the process can extend to several days.

Program leaders are provided with the references and contacts of English-speaking medical practices / doctors as well as of local at destinations of the study abroad trip in order to provide the quickest response possible. They also have the information of the closes consulate and embassy to contact in case of need for more serious situations. Program leaders will have access to funds to cover for any upfront payment for medical care should that be needed. For minor health emergencies, the turn-around time should be 1 to 4h considering waiting times at emergency rooms. For other health emergencies, the quickest turn-around time will be contingent on diagnosis and care needed, however the initial medical observation should take place within an hour.

12. **Virginia Tech question:** Do you acknowledge, agree and understand that Virginia Tech cannot guarantee a minimum amount of business if a contract is awarded to your company?

Provider response: Yes, we do acknowledge, agree and understand that Virginia Tech cannot guarantee a minimum amount of business if a contract is awarded to my company and are ready to work under that premise.

13. **Virginia Tech question:** Does the vendor acknowledge, agree, and understand that the terms and conditions of the RFP # 952642408 shall govern the contract if a contract is awarded to your company?

Provider response: My company, 7 Mares GmbH, acknowledges, agrees and understands that the RFP # 952642408 shall govern the contract if a contract is awarded.

14. **Virginia Tech question:** For purposes of interacting with HokieMart, please identify the person (name, phone number, email address, etc.) in your company that will serve as liaison for a) e-commerce, b) accounts receivable, c) emergency orders.

Provider response: To assure the most accurate and prompt response, that should be me: Tiago Pais, tiago@7mares.de, +49 151 40087268, Heimstr. 3 – 10965 Berlin, Germany.



● Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program Providers

July, 2024.



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Introduction

7 Mares GmbH is a company established by Tiago Pinto Pais in 2016 after a successful career in management consultancy and study-abroad programs. Tiago has long held a global vision of connecting and integrating different cultures, working for a variety of NGOs and charities, offering lectures in Maputo, Mozambique, and working closely with students on a range of study-abroad programs since 2006.

As a prominent program worker, Tiago has established himself as a trusted ambassador for students with an attitude that goes above and beyond regular study-abroad services and a comprehensive network of connections that continuously enhance program quality.

After working with a range of universities on study-abroad programs in Berlin, (including an external provider who has provided contracts with Virginia Tech), Tiago realized his new vision for 7 Mares GmbH. Having set up the company in the publishing and wine business, Tiago quickly mobilized to move into a field he found most gratifying; the study-abroad market. From hosting Erasmus participants in Lisbon to lecturing in Mozambique, Tiago has perfectly melded his passion for creating quality experiences with his astute and realistic entrepreneurial vigor.

As founder and CEO of 7 Mares, Tiago has progressively expanded his services and continued offering quality throughout his work. The ambition of the company is to continue creating exceptional experiences for students, leveraging Tiago's vast network across publishing, business, diplomacy and culture. Although currently a modest size, 7 Mares GmbH is focused on hiring as we naturally grow, with resources in place to expand our scope beyond Europe.

Part 1

A: Values

Promotion of Equality, Inclusion, and Access

We are committed to upholding the principles of equality, diversity, and inclusion while positively contributing to an inclusive environment in which everyone feels valued and respected. In line with this commitment, we have well-documented policies that guide our processes and procedures, fully complying with the Equality Act 2022 and other relevant legislation. We have strong experience in assisting students, especially in complex and highly emotive situations, ensuring that we create a supportive, welcoming, and non-judgmental environment.

Our strict non-discrimination policy provides our programs and employment opportunities to everyone, regardless of age, sex, disability, national origin, race, color, or religion. Equal opportunities are given to all staff and student participants, exercising a zero-tolerance approach to discrimination and ensuring a fair and inclusive environment. We strive to create an atmosphere where all employees and participants can achieve their full potential without facing discrimination, harassment, or victimization. Our comprehensive Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Policy, which aligns with the Equality Act 2022, governs all aspects of the learning environment.

We are an equal opportunities employer and student recruiter, continually reviewing our processes to ensure no employee or participant should be disadvantaged due to discriminatory or prejudicial beliefs. We provide a value-driven recruitment process ensuring that all candidates share our values before employment following the below procedures:

- Recruitment procedures are conducted objectively focusing on shared values and appropriateness of skills and experiences, without bias or discrimination.
- All advertisements will encourage a diverse range of applicants from various communities across varying platforms.
- All recruitment procedures and selection criteria are based on merit, competence, and ability and not on the grounds of protected characteristics.

To ensure that students are supported and pointed to adequate identity-based resources, our training program features equality, diversity, and environmental awareness, focusing on the following:

- Understanding equality, diversity, and inclusion conceptually and the significance of learning preferences.
- The needs of under-represented groups and those with financial need.
- Understanding how people's experiences of cultures differ according to diverse characteristics.
- Understanding the dangers of stereotyping.
- Environmental awareness.
- Sustainability.
- Health and safety in local communities.

We ensure that all staff participate in annual refresher training programs, including a revision of diversity and inclusion. Refresher training is vital across all modules and relevant particularly to diversity and inclusion, with social changes dictating a higher frequency of alteration in comparison to other policies implemented by the company.

Intercultural Learning, Global Awareness, and Anticolonial Action

Sensitivity to local identities and socioeconomic stability is at the core of our programs. Our CEO Tiago Pinto Pais speaks five languages and understands the nuances of each culture he works with. This appreciation allows us to take realistic steps when understanding positionality issues and providing true intercultural engagement. The cultural versatility that Tiago offers has been proven in previous work, from lecturing summer courses in Mozambique to his consistent work with Virginia Tech organizing summer and winter study-abroad programs. As a result of his extensive experience, Tiago has developed a strong network, which he will utilize on this contract.

Upon contract award, Tiago will donate to local NGOs to improve the lives of the communities he serves. We provide a collaborative spirit, understanding that the success of each program relies heavily on interaction, communication, mutual respect, and collective expertise in the local area. Our programs include reflective practices, and we develop engagement skills, which include local languages.

Developing robust processes of evaluation ensures that we incorporate intercultural learning and global awareness, throughout our programs, which entails a regimented program of consultation with leaders, teachers, management teams and practitioners via consultancy visits, audits of practice and provision, training, mentoring, coaching and pedagogic reviews.

Ethical Community Engagement

Part of our engagement with the community is achieved through research and analysis to identify local services and enterprises before project commencement. In this research, we assess which groups we will work with and determine the potential benefits of forming a partnership. We utilize an approach that safeguards those we work with while developing communication plans to ensure effective communication with local stakeholders.

Every facet of our program is carefully inspected as part of our risk assessment process. From planned academic and cultural excursions to student housing, each aspect of the program is managed by Contract Manager Tiago. He leads our team to ensure that local emergency contacts, including medical clinics, hospitals, and consulates, are identified in advance of placements being made. These are readily available to all participants and staff through digital and physical copies. In addition, all staff and students are trained on basic safety procedures and how to respond effectively in an emergency prior to an excursion.

Sustainability

Our programs are designed with sustainability, environmental justice, and climate action as a foundational quality. This ensures that we conform to UN Sustainable Development Goals within the program, and we provide options to offset study abroad travel emissions. Tiago plans and executes business visits, leveraging his experience as a management consultant to ensure sustainable practices and offset carbon emissions. Some of the initiatives we use include the following:

- Consider train options over flying and driving with a chartered bus to minimize emissions.
- Frequent walking and hiking promote a healthy lifestyle and explain how it belongs to the European lifestyle.
- Explain public transit systems and advocate its use rather than rideshare/taxi to illustrate sustainability action in European cities.
- Whenever possible, book transportation and other activities with the possibility of offsetting emissions.
- Avoid transportation costs. If the price difference is too great, we will not jeopardize the financial viability of the program.

Overall, Tiago comprehensively understands international education and business operations to ensure study programs are optimized with environmental action and sustainable development goals.

Financial Integrity

To ensure financial integrity and transparency, Tiago manages all financial matters using the Weclapp system. This system ensures that all financial activity is recorded allowing Tiago to carry out the following key functions:

- Keep track of income and expenses.
- Quickly set up custom reports for different purposes.
- Identify and rectify any patterns or irregularities.

To ensure that the overall project spend is accurately monitored and cost-effective, we communicate with providers through a variety of methods including email, phone and in-person meetings. Providing regular financial reports also offers complete transparency. This is conducted via monthly online meetings to ensure the provider is fully aware of the financial status of the account and can raise any concerns where necessary. We will prepare a monthly report for submission and upon request.

Global Virtual Collaboration

All our programs are aligned with collaborative online internal learning and virtual exchange. Our CEO, Tiago, holds the official Portuguese Certification of Pedagogic skills, showing his ability to collaborate effectively and understand the practice of learning in this context. Upon contract award, we will encourage collaborative internal learning by bringing together participants and stakeholders from an international variety of study-abroad programs. Programs such as the Erasmus will be brought into this network to discuss the experience and impact in personal life and professional careers of participating in such a program. This will allow us to build a up a set of contracts from employers in the US and other parts of the world who are able to discuss the impact of being exposed to international study-abroad programs.

Additionally, Tiago maintains technological devices such as Weclapp to internally manage our networks while continuously assessing online global resources to accompany our programs and excursions. This ensures we align with the best resources to provide the most value-orientated input.

B: Liability, Emergency Medical and Security Health Insurance Coverage

We recognize our duty under Section VI (b) of the RFP to obtain and maintain adequate insurance coverage for the duration of our tenure on this contract with Virginia Tech. We understand that this requirement also extends to any independent contractors under our immediate employ for the purposes of this contract and will therefore require them to meet the same insurance coverage requirements when providing services on our behalf. On award of the contract, 7 Mares GmbH will commit to ensuring that the following primary, non-contributory insurance policies are in place:

- **Workers' Compensation (Coverage: Statutory Virginia Limit)**
- **Commercial General Liability Insurance, covering premises & operations, personal & advertising injury, rented premises, and bodily injury with policy limits of at least:**
 - » \$1,000,000 per occurrence
 - » \$2,000,000 aggregate
 - » \$2,000,000 products/completed operations
- **Business Auto Liability Insurance, covering owned vehicles, non-owned vehicles, and hired vehicles with policy limits of at least:**
 - » \$1,000,000 per accident, combined single limit.
- **Umbrella Liability Insurance, providing coverage more than our Commercial General Liability Insurance and Business Auto Liability Insurance, with policy limits of at least:**
 - » \$5,000,000 per occurrence

To ensure ongoing transparency with Virginia Tech, we will commit to providing evidence of insurance coverage compliance with our contractual obligations at the outset of the agreement and on an annual basis thereafter (or as needed).

Emergency Action and Communications Plan

We are committed to maintaining a robust emergency action and communications plan that aligns with the highest standards of crisis and emergency management. Before commencing our services, we will develop a detailed emergency action plan to be shared with Virginia Tech and other relevant program leaders. This plan will outline procedures for various emergencies, including natural disasters, health emergencies, security threats and other unforeseeable events. It will include clear instructions on evacuation routes, emergency shelters, communication protocols, and roles and responsibilities of all parties involved.

As required in the RFP, we will establish a dedicated communication channel that operates 24/7 to ensure uninterrupted access to support. This channel will be managed by our Manager, Program Manager and Program Leader. They will remain available to provide real-time guidance and support, ensuring that Virginia Tech staff and students receive immediate assistance when needed. This team comprises individuals with extensive experience in handling emergencies in various contexts, including international settings. They are trained to provide accurate and timely advice on safety and security precautions, coordinate with local authorities where necessary and facilitate effective emergency responses.

Should evacuation become necessary, for example, our team will work closely with relevant Virginia Tech stakeholders and local authorities to coordinate safe and efficient evacuation procedures. This includes arranging transportation and ensuring all individuals are accounted for and safely relocated. Additionally, we will conduct regular training sessions and emergency drills for our staff, program leaders, and participants. These exercises will ensure that everyone is familiar with the emergency action plan and capable of responding effectively in an actual emergency.

Although we already have such a plan in place, we will, upon award of the contract, commit to meeting with representatives from Virginia Tech prior to service commencement to discuss our existing Emergency Action and Communications Plan. This will allow us to promptly make any adjustments necessary to ensure it fully aligns with Virginia Tech's specific requirements.

Review and Continuous Improvement

To ensure the ongoing efficacy of our emergency action and communications plan, we implement a process of regular updates and continuous improvement. This begins with implementing periodic drills, held at least once every year. For the purposes of this contract, we will involve Virginia Tech staff and students in these drills to ensure everyone is familiar with our emergency procedures. By simulating a wide variety of real-world situations, we can effectively identify potential weaknesses in our plans and make necessary adjustments. Additionally, these drills will help participants feel more prepared and confident in their ability to respond effectively in the case of an actual emergency.

We also recognize the value of stakeholder feedback when refining our emergency procedures. With this in mind, we have established a robust feedback mechanism that allows participants to provide input on the effectiveness of both our emergency drills and responses to real-life emergencies. After each drill and real-life incident, we distribute surveys and conduct debriefing sessions to gather insights from all individuals involved. We then review this feedback to identify common concerns, suggestions for improvement and any recurring issues.

Based on the feedback collected and the lessons learned from drills and actual incidents, we developed a continuous improvement plan outlining specific actions to address identified shortcomings and enhance our overall emergency response capabilities. For instance, if a drill reveals that team communication needs improvement, we will invest in better communication tools and training. If an incident highlights the need for faster evacuation routes, we will revize our plans to include more efficient paths and additional evacuation points. This will be reinforced through regular training sessions to keep all staff and participants updated on these improvements and ensure they are well-prepared to implement them.

By actively incorporating this feedback, we can ensure our plans are comprehensive but also practical and user-friendly.

On award of the contract, we will commit to reviewing and updating our emergency action and communication plans at least annually in collaboration with Virginia Tech representatives. This ongoing collaborative approach will ensure that our emergency procedures remain effective while aligning with Virginia Tech's requirements.

C: Program Support

On-Site Staff

7 Mares GmbH will continue to hire sufficient staff to meet the stipulated faculty-to-student ratio of 1:15. This will involve conducting thorough staffing capacity assessments on a 90-day basis, analyzing our current staffing levels with our forecasted workload to ensure we can consistently deliver the desired faculty ratio. These staff will be local staff, fluent in the host language and familiar enough with the area to provide adequate, ongoing support. Moreover, they will be trained in emergency response and first aid, ensuring they are well-prepared to offer support in emergencies. We will reinforce this by establishing a 24/7 support hotline staffed by bilingual professionals to provide immediate assistance. Additionally, where necessary, we will establish relationships with local cultural organizations to provide experienced guides, translators, and interpreters, facilitating cultural understanding and seamless communication.

Ground Transportation

To meet Virginia Tech's need for reliable airport transfers and local ground transportation, we will commit to developing and delivering safe transportation solutions at each program location.

To meet these needs, we will systematically vet all potential subcontractors to ensure they meet local licensing and registration standards. In doing so, we will ensure we only enter into partnerships with reputable transportation companies with a proven track record of compliance with local regulations. Each subcontractor will undergo a comprehensive evaluation process, including verification of licenses, safety records, and VT-approved insurance coverage. Additionally, we will conduct regular audits and inspections to ensure ongoing compliance.

Lodging

At 7 Mares GmbH, we have a robust system in place to for reliably sourcing and securing appropriate local accommodation under this contract. Our primary goal is also to provide safe and conveniently located lodging options that meet our client's (as well as our own) stringent standards. We have a proven track record of partnering with reputable hotel chains and well-reviewed local hotels that meet or exceed the three-star equivalent rating. Such establishments include the four-star Hotel Stefanie in Vienna, the four-star Hotel Stadt in Bolzano and the three-star H20 chain in Germany. These partnerships will be established through a rigorous selection process, ensuring that each facility meets the required standards in terms of location, licensing, and health and safety.

For student accommodations, we will offer flexible room arrangements, including double, triple, or quadruple occupancy rooms, depending on the location and availability, while providing faculty with single occupancy rooms to ensure their comfort and privacy. We aim to select hotels and hostels near city centers or sites relevant to the program, ultimately minimizing travel time and maximizing convenience for all participants. This strategic location selection will also enhance the overall experience by providing easy access to local amenities, cultural sites, and academic institutions and facilities.

We understand that some programs may request lodging in private homes with host families. We maintain a pool of fully vetted host families in each location to accommodate this. Each host family will undergo a thorough screening process to ensure they meet health and safety standards and can provide a welcoming and supportive environment for students. In doing so, we hope to foster cultural immersion and give students a unique opportunity to experience daily life in the host country.

We make sure that all accommodation options include wireless internet access to support the academic and personal needs of participants. Moreover, to ensure requisite standards are maintained, we conduct regular audits and inspections of all accommodation facilities, working closely with local authorities to ensure compliance with all local licensing, health, and safety requirements.

Site Visits, Excursions, and Activities

We have a proven track record of arranging site visits tailored to diverse educational objectives and program requirements. Through thorough planning and our strong local partnerships, we ensure that site visits, no matter the subject matter, are well-organized and enriching for all participants:

- **Cultural Visits:** We partner with local museums, historical sites, and cultural venues to offer guided tours and presentations by local experts, providing immersive cultural experiences and detailed insights.
- **Business Visits:** We coordinate with companies and industrial facilities to arrange presentations, factory tours, and interactive sessions that align with program themes and offer valuable industry insights.
- **Industrial Visits:** We connect with local industrial facilities and manufacturing plants to arrange tours and meetings, providing practical insights into production processes, technology, and industry practices relevant to the participants' fields of study.
- **Laboratory Visits:** We organize visits to research institutions and labs, facilitating hands-on demonstrations and discussions with researchers to expose students to advanced research and technologies while managing all necessary logistics and safety protocols.

Regardless of the nature of the visit, we work closely with local interpretation services, if necessary, to ensure that all participants can fully engage with and benefit from these experiences.

In addition to site visits, we have extensive experience providing and executing itineraries for local excursions and activities that support the learning outcomes of each program. Our approach involves:

- Collaborating with program leaders to identify key educational goals and designing activities that enhance these objectives.
- Engaging with local experts and organizations who offer enriching experiences that provide deeper insights into the region's culture, industry, and academic fields.
- Coordinating all logistical aspects of excursions and activities to ensure seamless integration into the program schedule.
- Collecting feedback from participants and program leaders to continually refine and improve our itineraries.

Meals

Prior to the program start date, we will gather dietary requirements from participants to accommodate all preferences and restrictions. Then, harnessing our vast local knowledge and connections across all locations, we will collaborate with local restaurants and catering services to arrange group meals that are affordable and align with dietary needs. Additionally, we provide students with recommendations for convenient and budget-friendly dining options, including nearby eateries and cafes that offer diverse and low-cost choices.

D: Communications

Dedicated Service Team

A dedicated service team will be provided to each program who will endeavor to create and maintain good relationships with the contract provider and all stakeholders to promote a collaborative working approach. The service team will consist of the Program Manager who will create open lines of communication between all parties to ensure that we fully understand their interests and concerns, allowing us to address them from program commencement.

Prior to implementation of the program, Communications Officer, Lizeth Soto Rivas, will be tasked with managing both internal and external communications, ensuring that timely and accurate information is disseminated to all parties involved, including students, parents, program staff, and local authorities. The Program Manager will develop a communication plan to ensure that we understand the preferred lines of communication for contact with Virginia Tech and stakeholders, which will include landline, cell phone, and email.

The Program Manager will organize program meetings, focusing on each stakeholder's values and needs to ensure alignment with the program's goals. Virtual and physical meetings will take place at the stakeholder's discretion, and the team will provide our contact information and complaints procedure and escalation processes. In addition, we will establish a dedicated communication channel that operates 24/7 to ensure uninterrupted access to support, overseen by Lizeth, which will remain available to provide real-time guidance and support, ensuring that Virginia Tech staff, stakeholders, and students receive immediate assistance when necessary.

In addition, we will work collaboratively with Virginia Tech to implement a comprehensive communication method that establishes a formal, open system for reporting. We will conduct contract meetings every semester, allowing us to identify the current state of our program delivery, identify any successes, and work to remedy any identified weaknesses. In addition, we will provide a copy of our project reviews to Virginia Tech, which will be submitted no later than 10 working days following a meeting and will include all relevant and approved progress, revisions, and adjustments to the program.

Emergency Contact Protocols

Communication plays a vital role in our emergency response procedures, which include emergency contact protocols that ensure that we maintain communication in when unforeseen events occur. Our business continuity plan is updated on every new contract, outlining the potential impact and likelihood of various risks as well as our remedial actions that ensure we are prepared for emergency events. Upon contract award, we will review and update our emergency protocols in collaboration with Virginia Tech representatives. This ongoing collaborative approach will ensure that our emergency procedures remain effective, while also aligning with Virginia Tech's particular requirements.

An emergency team will be provided to respond to our emergency protocols and procedures, which will be comprised of individuals with extensive experience in handling emergencies across various parts of business operations, including international settings. They are trained to provide accurate and timely advice on safety and security precautions, coordinate with local authorities where necessary and facilitate effective emergency responses.

To ensure that we have a line of effective communication in the event of an emergency, the service team will ensure that all local emergency contacts, including medical clinics, hospitals, and consulates, are identified in advance of the program and are kept readily available to all stakeholders and staff in the event of unforeseen events. In addition, all program participants are equipped with emergency communication tools, such as apps that provide instant updates and vital information at their fingertips.

The emergency team, headed by Tiago, will facilitate emergency contact protocols in the event of an unforeseeable event, sourcing the quickest emergency travel options where required and facilitating the booking processes to ensure minimum disruption to the program. Our 24/7 emergency communication channel will remain available throughout any event to provide real-time guidance and support, ensuring that Virginia Tech staff, stakeholders, and students are provided with updates throughout, with Tiago acting as the key point of contact.

Once an initial incident assessment is made, the team will notify our headquarters about the nature of the emergency, ensuring that additional resources and support can be mobilized promptly. The emergency team will provide regular updates to the University regarding all booking confirmations and payment information in the event of program alterations.



E: Pre-Departure/Upon Arrival Support

We provide students with country-specific expertise and guidance on pre-departure and again on arrival to ensure familiarization with the location. This will provide invaluable advice on the relationships we have with local cultural organizations. The orientation sessions are conducted by the Program Manager and Program Leader collaboratively and are designed to provide key information relating to the locality, support, and essential resources, including an outline of the following information:

- Familiarization with the locality including key resources, such as bank ATMs and meeting points.
- Itinerary briefing.
- Important logistics.
- Emergency response protocols.
- Support staff.
- Communications plan.
- Site-specific and cultural information.
- Health, safety, and security briefing.
- Introduction to guides, translators, and interpreters.
- Ground transportation.

The orientation sessions will take place online and will be provided by the Program Manager, who will ensure that everyone has been briefed prior to departure and on arrival. Students are provided with allocated dates to ensure that they can attend regardless of travel arrangements and are given the option of a virtual session should they not be able to attend the session in person. Students cannot participate in program activities without attending the orientation session.

F: Air Travel

Arrangements

We provide group bookings for all air travel to the program destination as part of our program offering but reserve the right for students to create their own travel arrangements. We book the most sustainable option when booking bulk flights to reduce our carbon footprint and encourage participants to do the same.

If participants have their own travel arrangements, the Program Manager will confirm that they are destined to meet the scheduled program dates within the necessary timeframe and have access to them via our communication plan. If ground transportation is required, we will maintain our commitment to developing and delivering safe transportation solutions at the program location by using a vehicle subcontracted from our vetted list of transport suppliers. To further increase sustainability and reduce our carbon footprint, we will organize participants who fly in to wait at the airport and assign pick-ups in lots.

In the event of delay, we will hold a regular briefing of the situation, covering any meals that may be required and configuring logistics that could be required as a result. This would also include other arrangements if the airline does not provide a prompt response. In addition, we will attend to the comfort and safety of all parties involved, trying to establish sitting arrangements while waiting.

All participants will be expected to attend the pre-departure and on-arrival orientation sessions prior to beginning the program activities.

G: Marketing & Recruitment

Alignment

We will align with Virginia Tech to market the programs and recruit students during the contract using their brand identity and style guide. We will ensure all our marketing materials advertising the programs have consistent branding aligned to both Virginia Tech's branding and core ethos. Primarily this will include amending company leaflets and virtual content to incorporate the Virginia Tech logo, alongside hosting a dedicated webpage on our website.

The design team can produce high-level designed information materials, from brochures and leaflets to PowerPoint presentations and will include amendments to and creation of the following where necessary:

- SEO / SEM
- Cross Channel Advertising
- Display Advertising
- Mobile Advertising
- Social Advertising (Includes Facebook / Instagram / LinkedIn / Snap Chat)
- Custom Landing Pages

We will develop regular and structured marketing meetings between key representatives to ensure that we build upon the brand image and generate new marketing concepts to increase the outreach, impact, and strength of all advertisements/marketing campaigns. In addition, we will be available to host online or offline meetings with prospective students to clarify the program.

H: Data Privacy Protections

Student Information

We are committed to ensuring a high level of data security for all student information we process and are compliant with statutory requirements under the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR), the U.S. Privacy Act of 1974, HIPAA, COPPA, and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act. All data processes and storage are overseen by our Data Protection Officer.

To ensure compliance with the statutes above, we utilize a data protection policy to provide all staff with guidance on how to ensure the safe storage, transfer, and management of personal information. This policy is provided to all staff members upon employment and refresher training is provided annually, and the Policy is updated annually in line with changes to relevant legislation and statutes.

All data is stored within a password-protected system, providing a centralized method of securely storing personal information. As a further security measure, the access system contains a login record showing all log in attempts, which user accessed information, time of attempted access, and what occurred during the activity, providing an audit trail.

All student participants are provided with an understanding of how we will process their data and their data rights and are asked to sign an online consent form prior to receiving any subject data to ensure consent. To assist in this, we provide contact details to our Data Protection Officer to ensure there they have a point of contact. In addition, all data subjects are made aware of their right to take back consent and remove their data from our system.

Our Weclapp system ensures that we remain compliant with statutes during the process and storage of subject data by providing a protected method of storage and retrieval, which can only be accessed by employees who have been given appropriate role-based access. This ensures that we comply with data subject rights, providing a system which allows for the access, rectification, and deletion of their personal data, whilst maintaining confidentiality.

All student records are maintained in the password-protected Weclapp system and are transferred using encrypted email, ensuring that at no stage are records made available to anyone who is not actively transferring or storing the data. To access records, all employees are required to use a linked system, which using their login details records when they accessed data and what records were edited/ viewed.

We implement regular testing, including GDPR compliance audits and data protection impact assessments (DPIAs), to ensure that our processes remain effective and that our practices align with GDPR requirements. In addition, negative and positive PEN tests are carried out annually or whenever we have experienced a significant security breach.

I: Program Cancellation and Return Policy

We will adhere to Virginia Tech's 60-day cancellation and return policy during the contract and have in place our own cancellation process and procedures in conjunction with our cancellation policy for student participants as follows:

- Notification of Withdrawal: Participants must notify the Program Manager in writing (email or formal letter) of their intention to withdraw from the program with the date of written notification considered the official withdrawal date.
- Pre-Departure Withdrawals: If a participant decides to withdraw before the program start date, they must provide notice as early as possible.
- On-Site Withdrawals: If a participant decides to withdraw after arriving at the study abroad location, they must address the program leader immediately.

In addition, all participants will receive a refund of 100% of uncommitted and unexpended program fees for any cancellation due to the Department of State or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issuing a travel advisory of health notice of Level 3 or higher.

Financial Consequences

A full refund minus the non-refundable deposit will be provided for any cancellation 60 days prior to departure. 30-59 days before departure will incur 50% of the program fee minus the non-refundable deposit. Less than 30 days before departure will incur no refund of the program fee, with only refundable deposits (if any) being returned. A refund will be provided for any cancellation that was made due to



No refund will be provided for on-site withdrawals once the participant has arrived at the study abroad location and participants will be responsible for any additional costs incurred due to their early departure.

Special Circumstances

In the case of a medical emergency that necessitates withdrawal, participants must provide documentation from a healthcare provider and refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Similarly, participants withdrawing due to personal, or family emergencies must provide appropriate documentation and refunds and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Responsibilities

Participants are responsible for understanding the financial and academic implications of withdrawal and must handle all costs related to their early departure from the program site. 7 Mares can support travel arrangements if required. The Program Leader will provide clear information about the withdrawal process and assist with documentation and provide support in emergency situations.

Appeals Process

Participants who believe they have extenuating circumstances warranting an exception to this policy may submit a written appeal to the Program Manager. Appeals must include a detailed explanation and any relevant supporting documentation. The Program Director, in consultation with appropriate administrative offices, will review and respond to appeals within 30 days.

J: Invoicing Requirements

As per the information given in the RFP, we will submit invoices for payment to the university exclusively in USD. We will ensure this is accurately done by using our Weclapp ERP system, programming in specific line-item descriptions from the Total Program Budget that match with each requested payment. Invoices will be remitted directly to the University's point of contact for the program.



Part 2

Program Offerings

At 7 Mares GmbH, we are enthusiastic about crafting immersive and transformative study abroad programs that cater exclusively to the needs of university students. Our mission is to facilitate a deep understanding of Europe's rich cultural, historical, and political landscape through meticulously designed educational journeys. Although relatively new to the sphere of study abroad programs, our roots are firmly planted in the extensive experience of our CEO, Tiago Pinto Pais, who has previously led such programs for prestigious institutions.

Specializing in European Exposure

Our primary focus lies on short-term faculty-led study abroad programs ranging from two to four weeks. These programs are especially structured to provide students with a comprehensive insight into various countries within Europe and adjacent areas. We understand the intrinsic value of firsthand exposure in learning. Thus, our programs are designed not just to tour but to delve deeply into what sets each country apart, as well as what binds them together.

Europe is a continent marked by its diverse political unions, economic structures, and a compelling history of both conflict and cooperation. Through our programs, students will have the unique opportunity to explore how countries that have once faced longstanding armed conflicts have navigated their paths towards establishing enduring peace and prosperity.

This is crucial for students specializing in European history, international relations, political science, and similar fields, providing them with a practical context to their academic studies.

Interactive Engagements with Leaders

Beyond the routine educational tours, 7 Mares GmbH stands out by offering an interactive and engaging learning model. We specialize in arranging meetings with prominent business and political leaders across Europe. These are not mere observational visits but are structured as dynamic interactive debates.

Students will interact directly with leaders during these sessions, asking questions and taking part in conversations that provide in-depth understanding of current European concerns. Their educational experience is improved, and it also helps them hone their public speaking and critical thinking skills. Our interactive discussions aim to provoke critical thinking among students regarding the roles and responsibilities of European leaders in defining Europe's future.

Leveraging Our Network

Our CEO, Tiago, has a wide network, greatly enhancing our program offerings' quality. Through his entrepreneurial endeavors and previous experiences as a management consultant and program leader working for Virginia Tech across four programs, he has developed a wide range of contacts in Europe's diverse sectors. We can set up private meetings and site visits through this network that are usually unattainable with regular instructional excursions.

These relationships enhance our programs and guarantee that every study abroad experience with 7 Mares GmbH is distinct and catered to the particular academic focus of the student body. Whether it is an excursion to a state-of-the-art technology firm, a meeting with EU legislators, or a lecture with a distinguished historian, our programs provide unrivaled access to prominent personalities and significant locations throughout Europe.

Commitment to Quality and Educational Excellence

7 Mares GmbH is dedicated to providing more than travel planning services. Our commitment is to make sure that every program is instructive, interesting, and beneficial for the students. In order to customize each program to the educational objectives and academic needs of the visiting group, our staff works closely with university instructors. This cooperative strategy guarantees that the study abroad program is a smooth continuation of the students' university education.

Cultural immersion is another focus of our programs. Students will take part in a range of cultural activities that will deepen their awareness and enjoyment of each nation's distinct cultural history. These activities will include traditional cooking classes and interactions with local communities.

Enhancing Academic and Personal Growth

7 Mares GmbH's main goals for its study abroad programs are to promote personal development in addition to education. Students' academic and personal lives are greatly enhanced when they venture outside of their comfortable academic settings and engage with new cultural and political surroundings. In today's international society, when cultural sensitivity and understanding of variety are just as vital as academic knowledge, exposure to this kind of environment is essential.

Our programs are carefully designed to guarantee ongoing and dynamic learning. Every schedule is filled with events that support the group's learning goals and provide lots of chances for introspection and self-discovery. This blended learning strategy promotes a better comprehension and retention of information by assisting students in applying what they have learned to real-world situations.

Tailored Experiences

At 7 Mares GmbH, we recognize that every academic group has particular requirements and areas of interest. This is why we choose to custom-build each itinerary based on in-depth conversations with Virginia Tech academic leaders rather than offering a program that is designed to satisfy all needs. We are able to create a program that is completely in line with the academic curriculum and the expectations of the students by having a thorough awareness of the precise learning outcomes that the faculty is looking for.

The logistical elements are also included in this customization. Our attention to detail guarantees a seamless and enriching program for everyone, whether it's picking lodgings that improve the learning experience, hiring knowledgeable local guides, or planning travel that maximizes exposure to educational sites without sacrificing safety and comfort.

Safety and Support

Understanding the concerns regarding overseas travel, particularly for students and faculty, safety remains a paramount priority in all our programs. Using a complete risk management plan, 7 Mares GmbH adheres to all local and international travel warnings, provides pre-departure briefings, and offers 24/7 local support. We work to establish a worry-free learning environment by being proactive and providing educators and students with the tools and information they need to be safe.

Moreover, our staff are well-trained in handling diverse situations that might arise during travel. From health-related issues to logistical adjustments, our team ensures that there is minimal disruption to the program and that every participant feels supported throughout their journey.

Cultural Immersion and Ethical Learning

Finally, our commitment extends to promoting responsible and ethical tourism. We believe that true learning happens through respectful engagement with local cultures. Our programs include interactions with local communities where students can learn from the locals themselves, understand their traditions, and see the impacts of historical and economic forces on their daily lives. This not only provides an authentic learning experience but also fosters respect and appreciation for global diversities.

Experience Delivering Similar Programs

Under the competent guidance of Tiago, our unique capability in managing extensive and demanding multi-country study abroad programs has been rigorously demonstrated. Tiago has effectively handled all logistical operations, including but not limited to business and cultural visits, group meals, transportation logistics, and accommodations for various programs spanning multiple cities and countries. His strategic planning and dynamic problem-solving have ensured seamless transitions between complex itineraries, often overcoming unforeseen challenges such as unexpected traffic delays or scheduling conflicts.

Commitment to Excellence and Customized Care

Tiago's dedication extends beyond mere organizational responsibilities. His role as a local guide and leader during these programs involved conducting guided tours, providing insightful commentary, and bringing a personal touch to the travel experiences. Such roles demand not only a profound knowledge of the destinations but also an extraordinary level of commitment to participant satisfaction and well-being. This was notably illustrated in an instance in Berlin, where he adjusted accommodation plans on the fly to cater to a student's personal needs, thus ensuring the comfort and welfare of all participants.

Moreover, Tiago's exceptional interpersonal skills have considerably enhanced the program experience, fostering a positive and engaging environment for students and faculty alike. His ability to introduce new and culturally enriching elements to the itinerary has consistently added substantial value to the study abroad programs, making each journey unique and memorable.



Broadening Horizons: Planning for Future Programs

Building upon past successes, Tiago has collaborated closely with Virginia Tech faculty in designing an upcoming four-week study abroad program set in the United Kingdom and Ireland, slated for launch in 2025. This endeavor highlights our forward-planning capabilities and our readiness to innovate and expand upon existing successful frameworks. For this upcoming program, Tiago has leveraged his extensive network across Europe to arrange for local guides and ensure all programmatic needs are met with the same level of excellence and detail-oriented care.

Collaboration and Reliability

Tiago's work has not only exemplified individual excellence but has also fostered a spirit of collaboration among the faculty and staff involved in these programs. His work has spanned interactions with four other Pamplin faculty and staff members, fostering a highly cooperative and productive work environment. This collaborative spirit is deeply ingrained in the ethos of 7 Mares GmbH, where we understand that the success of such elaborate programs relies heavily on teamwork, mutual respect, and collective expertise.

Our commitment, as shown through Tiago's leadership, has inspired trust and reliance among all stakeholders involved, affirming our company's capability in delivering high-quality educational and cultural experiences.

Company and Program Management Structure

At the very head of our dedicated services, the team is overseen by a designated Company Manager. This position is held by a leading executive at 7 Mares GmbH, responsible for overall program oversight and ensuring that the collaboration between Virginia Tech and our organization meets the highest standards of excellence and educational value.

As a direct link to Virginia Tech, each program is meticulously managed by an experienced Program Manager. This individual brings a robust background in educational program management, paired with a sophisticated understanding of international logistics and cultural integration. The main responsibilities of the Program Manager are to oversee daily operations, maintain partnerships with local organizations, and create the program in accordance with Virginia Tech's academic objectives. This individual acts as the primary point of contact for the faculty at Virginia Tech throughout the program's development and implementation stages.

Leadership on the Ground

Each study abroad program features a dedicated Program Leader who acts as the on-ground supervisor and mentor for the duration of the overseas venture. The Program Leader's key responsibilities encompass participating students' academic and personal well-being, fostering an environment of learning and cultural exchange. With extensive experience in managing international groups and a deep appreciation for the host countries' cultures, the Program Leader ensures that all participants receive a rich and educational experience.

Starting on the next page is an example of our service in action, with a detailed and stimulating itinerary created for students spanning Berlin, Vienna, Salzburg and Munich.

VT Winter in Germany and Austria Berlin | Vienna | Salzburg | Munich |

Day 1

Washington Dulles to Berlin



Fly from Washington Dulles (IAD) to Berlin, Germany

Day 2

Berlin



Morning

- Arrive in Berlin; travel into the city by private coach and place luggage at group hotel: H2 Hotel Berlin-Alexanderplatz (3*)
- Briefing & Orientation Session

Early Afternoon

Get a taste of Berlin with a delicious currywurst at the traditional, independently family-run Curry 61 for lunch!

Afternoon

Embark on a guided tour of Berlin - Part I with Tiago: This will include Museum Island (including city palace), the TV Tower, Bebelplatz (Nazi book burning) and the of Gendarmenmarkt (Protestantism and the fall of the Belrin Wall).

Early Evening

Go to Markthalle IX during Kreuzberg 36 neighbourhood walk.

Evening

Enjoy a group welcome dinner at a German restaurant with a modern twist in a sharing-based concept that will allow you to bond with your new friends.

Day 3

Friday,
December 29
Berlin



Early morning

Walking tour of Berlin - Part II: Brandenburg Gate, Potsdamer Platz, Hitler's bunker, Checkpoint Charlie, and more

Late Morning

Visit to Axel Springer, the largest media company in Europe, at their new building, which is an architectural masterpiece by Rem Koolhaas

Lunch

Get to know the unique story of Burgermeister and try the best burger in town!

Afternoon

Continue your journey of getting to know the press market in Germany: visit Berliner Zeitung, discuss West vs East Germany and take in stunning city views from their rooftop; tour the new headquarters in the historical building, now home to media startups

Evening

Get to know all about Christmas markets in Germany by visiting two (or more!) of the 90 taking place in Berlin!

Day 4

Day Trip to
Potsdam



- Transfer from Berlin to Potsdam via train
- Discover the Sanssouci Palace, the beloved summer retreat of Prussian King Friedrich the Great
- Explore downtown and free time for small group lunches on your own
- Discover the Dutch Quarter
- Visit the Cecilienhof Palace, site of the Potsdam conference and enjoy a pleasant stroll to the bridge of Spies
- Return to Berlin. Free time for small group activities

Day 5
Berlin



Morning

Visit the Deutschland Museum

The Deutschlandmuseum in Berlin invites you to travel back in time. Experience 2000 years of German history in an immersive experience exhibition!

Afternoon

Partake in a guided walking tour of the City West, including the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtnis-Kirche and the Kurfürstendamm

Evening

Festive New Year's Eve dinner at Hofbräuhaus Berlin

Day 6
Berlin



All Day

Free time to explore Berlin!

Day 7

Berlin to Vienna



Morning

Visit the Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen

Located about one hour outside of Berlin, Sachsenhausen was a Nazi concentration camp used from 1936 until April 1945, shortly before the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Evening/Night

Overnight train from Berlin to Vienna: discover why nightrains are back to being a sensation in Europe!

Day 8

Vienna



Morning

Visit the Memorial and Museum Sachsenhausen

Located about one hour outside of Berlin, Sachsenhausen was a Nazi concentration camp used from 1936 until April 1945, shortly before the defeat of Nazi Germany.

Early morning

Drop luggage off at Hotel Stefanie (4*), the oldest hotel in the heart of Vienna

Late Morning & Afternoon

Café crawl of two iconic coffee houses, Central and Sacher, then embark on a historic walking tour,

Evening

Free time to explore in small groups on your own

Day 9 Vienna



Morning

Explore Vienna's Museumsquartier and visit the Leopold Museum to become an expert in Austrian and European art

Afternoon

Guided visit to the Vienna State Opera and round table with one of its managers

Evening

Ice-skating at City Hall

Group dinner at Centimeter

Day 10 Vienna



Morning

Explore the Schloss Belvedere.

Originally constructed as a summer residence for Prince Eugene of Savoy, this institution of high culture houses exquisite Baroque palaces and the sophisticated Belvedere Museum,

Lunch

Group lunch at Brandauer Gerngross.

Afternoon

Participate in a winery tour and learn the relevance of this sector to Vienna's and Austria's economy.

Home to over 600 wine producers, Vienna has a reputation as one of the world's only cities with notable wine production facilities inside of its urban perimeters.

Evening

Small group dinners and free time to explore Vienna.

Day 11

Vienna to Salzburg



Morning

Board the train to Salzburg

Early afternoon

Arrive in Salzburg, drop off luggage at hotel Meininger (3*) and go explore the city of Mozart

Evening

Enjoy a live concert at the Mirabell Palace

Enjoy a magical evening at the Mirabell Palace Concert in Salzburg. This enchanting event blends the splendor of baroque architecture with the elegance of classical music.

Day 12

Salzburg



Morning

Learn about the history of Salzburg during a guided old-town walking tour

Lunch

Group lunch at Stieglkeller

Afternoon

Ride Salzburg's iconic gondola lift over the city for breathtaking views

Day 13

Salzburg to Munich



Morning

- Hotel check-out
- Guided tour of the Hallein Salt Mine, an emblem of prehistoric Celtic mining

Midday & Afternoon

Business lunch with Dominic Benning followed by a presentation and this discussion with this German-American manager who is a distinguished manager in the pharma industry

Evening

- Board the train from Salzburg to Munich
- Check into H2 Hotel München Olympia Park and free time

Day 14

Munich



Morning

Visit the Residenz Museum, which has been home to the Bavarian monarchs for centuries

Afternoon

Embark on a walking tour of Munich

Evening

Free time to explore on your own!

Day 15

**Wednesday,
January 10
Munich**



Morning

Visit Siemens Mobility and discuss with its management the revolution in transportation that we are all witnessing

Lunch

Group lunch at Steinheil 16

Afternoon

Experience the authentic Bavarian beer culture and become the brewmaster after learning all about all the process at a local brewery

Evening

Small group dinners on your own

Day 16

Munich



All Day

Tour of Neuschwanstein and Linderhof Castles

Experience the beauty and grandeur of two of Germany's most iconic castles, Neuschwanstein and Linderhof, on a tour that takes you through the breathtaking Bavarian Alps.

Evening

Free time to explore Munich

Day 17

Munich



Morning

University visit: learn how it is to study in Europe

Midday

Small group lunches on your own

Afternoon

Enjoy a guided visit of the BMW museum

Evening

Enjoy a festive farewell dinner with your classmates and program leaders at München 72!

Day 18

Munich to Washington, DC



Early Morning

Hotel checkout, transfer to airport

All Day

Fly from Munich, Germany to Washington, DC

Winter Program: Germany | Austria

Budget Exercise for Transparency:

Costs for:

- 15 Students.
- One Faculty.
- One Program Manager.
- One Program Leader.

Administrative Fee	\$20,000.00
Orientation	\$500.00
Accommodation	\$22,500.00
Transportation (including flights)	\$28,000.00
Airport Pickup on Arrival Day and Transfer to the Airport on Departure Day	\$1,000.00
Meals	\$6,000.00
Translator Fees for Project Work	\$0.00
All Project Materials and Supplies	\$500.00
Cultural Engagement and Class Activities (Cultural and Business Visits and Meetings)	\$10,000.00
Total Program Cost	\$88,500.00
Cost Per Paying Student	\$5,900.00

Part 3

Experience and Qualifications Overview

7 Mares GmbH has emerged as a committed provider in the realm of custom faculty-led study abroad programs, although our direct experience in this sector is relatively novel. At the heart of our operations is our CEO, Tiago Pinto Pais, whose rich background in managing extensive international programs equips us to offer unparalleled services. While our company may be new, Tiago's deep experience with Virginia Tech as a Program Leader is one of our core strengths. Tiago's leadership spanned two years over multiple seasons, facilitating programs across five countries and nine cities. His expertise not only includes the logistical execution of these educational journeys but also extends to curriculum relevance, ensuring each trip achieves its educational objectives.

Additionally, Tiago's management consultancy background has also given him the credentials to offer a service that appreciates robust financial management and efficient logistics. His time at Deloitte Consulting ensured this over the course of a four-year stint between 2006 and 2010, where he critically analyzed organizations and carried out process reengineering and procurement duties while evaluating operational performance.

Expert Incident Management

Our leadership's capability in handling unexpected situations is exemplified by a reference letter penned by Margie Deck, Assistant Professor of Practice at the Pamplin College of Business at Virginia Tech. In this letter, Margie details an incident during Winter 2024, when Tiago was working with Virginia Tech students.

One student, Eric, was informed of a family medical emergency while traveling by train in Germany, Tiago's swift and empathetic action was crucial. He assisted Eric in maneuvering the complex travel arrangements necessary to reach his brother in Frankfurt, demonstrating our commitment to student welfare beyond mere academic experiences. This included sourcing the quickest travel options and facilitating the booking processes to ensure no time was lost. Tiago's readiness to go the extra mile was further evidenced when he personally ensured Eric's smooth reintroduction to the program upon his return.

Multilingual Support and Medical Assistance

In another instance from Winter 2023, where language barriers could have immensely complicated a medical emergency, Tiago's presence proved indispensable. A student required immediate medical attention, and Tiago's fluency in multiple languages ensured that the necessary medical procedures were communicated effectively and that the student felt supported throughout the ordeal. This incident not only highlights our capability to manage crises but also underscores our proactive approach to safety and health, essential in study abroad programs.

Addressing Personal Safety and Confidence

Moreover, our adeptness in handling sensitive issues is clear from an episode in the same winter of 2023 at a German beer garden, where a student faced an unsettling situation of sexual harassment. Tiago's immediate response in managing the situation, providing reassurance and handling necessary communications, underlines our commitment to creating a safe and supportive environment for all participants, enabling them to reach out confidently in times of need.

Industry Recognition Our Company has Received

While 7 Mares GmbH has not yet been formally recognized with industry awards, our internal team boasts a broad spectrum of professional accolades and extensive experience in areas critical to delivering superior support and services in study abroad programs and security services. Our organization is built on a foundation of expertise and our personalized approach ensures that all programs are tailored to meet the specific needs of our clients.

Enhancing Study Abroad Programs with Expertise

Our CEO further enriches our company profile with his outstanding credentials and experience in international study programs. Tiago, having formerly led Virginia Tech's study abroad programs, successfully administered four different programs across five countries and nine cities. His role involved meticulous planning and execution of business visits, leveraging his previous experience as a management consultant.

His comprehensive understanding of both international educational environments and business operations uniquely positions 7 Mares GmbH to offer customized, impactful study abroad programs. Associate Professor Emeritus at Virginia Tech's Pamplin College of Business, Lance A Matheson, has offered praise on such efforts, commending Tiago's efforts in logistics, contingency, planning, attitude and etiquette.

Forum on Education Abroad Membership Details

7 Mares GmbH is currently in the process of becoming a member of the Forum on Education Abroad. Our application is pending approval, but we are fully committed to aligning our operations with the Forum's standards of excellence for education abroad. We believe this will be key for our growth and consolidation in the study-abroad market. This alignment evidences our resolve to enhance the quality and safety of the international education experiences we provide.

Ensuring Readiness and Compliance

While we await the formal materials associated with our pending Forum membership, we are proactively preparing our team by analyzing and integrating the Forum's guidelines into our operational models. This preparation ensures that once our membership is granted, there will be no delay in full compliance. We are also committed to continuous improvement and engagement with the Forum's resources and community to stay at the forefront of educational study abroad programming.

Additional Relevant Certifications within the Industry

The Leadership Edge

Leading 7 Mares GmbH is Tiago, whose significant experience with Virginia Tech's study abroad programs sets a strong foundation for our venture into this domain. His role as a Program Leader for multiple study abroad initiatives has endowed him with a firsthand understanding of the intricate requirements and challenges associated with such programs. Through this direct involvement, he has gained invaluable insights into designing and managing programs that are not only educational but also profoundly impactful on students' personal and professional development.

Academic Qualifications and Network Utilization

Tiago's educational background, highlighted by a Master's degree in Public Management from the University of Potsdam, complements his professional experiences beautifully, providing a theoretical framework for the public and administrative elements of program management. Moreover, his entrepreneurial ventures have helped cultivate a vast network of international contacts, which are instrumental in setting up logistics and collaborations essential for executing global study programs effectively. These connections are invaluable in curating unique and enriched experiences for students, which are tailored according to educational goals and geographical insights.

Our Approach to Certification

While 7 Mares GmbH currently does not hold specific certifications traditionally recognized in the study abroad program industry, the combination of Tiago's direct program leadership experience, his robust educational background, and the broad network enabled by his entrepreneurial ventures collectively form a solid bedrock that supports our offerings. We are committed to adhering to the highest standards of program creation and execution, ensuring that all operational aspects are managed with the utmost professionalism and attention to detail.



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Client List / Higher Education Client List

At 7 Mares GmbH, we pride ourselves on our bespoke approach to designing and delivering high-quality study abroad programs. While we are relatively new to the arena of study abroad programs, our foundational ethos and the expertise of our team set us apart. Our company is built around the unique vision of creating educational experiences that not only meet but exceed the standard norms and expectations of academic rigor and cultural immersion.

Our Experience with Virginia Tech

Our sole experience in the higher education sector to date has been with Virginia Tech, a prestigious institution known for its robust academic programs and commitment to expanding global opportunities for its students. This collaboration has been instrumental in shaping our understanding and capability in tailoring study abroad programs that align with the educational outcomes desired by a world-class university.

After working for a number of companies external to Virginia Tech who work on their study-abroad programs, Tiago has been able to work closely and understand the needs of the university's students. Using a vast network of connections and bringing his expertise in management consultancy, Tiago facilitated comprehensive learning environments and organized inspiring business connections that complemented educational growth for all students involved.

The success of these placements ultimately accumulated a level of trust in Virginia Tech's professors to recently offer full provider status to Tiago's company, 7 Mares GmbH. This monumental moment marks the beginning of what Tiago sees as a blossoming relationship that will be beneficial for all parties. Award of this contract will be a natural step in the development of this relationship – with longevity intended as part of our ambitions.

Diverse and Tailored Academic Experiments

Our programs are meticulously planned to provide immersive learning experiences. While working with Virginia Tech, the planning and execution included not just academic lectures but also organized business visits, which facilitated valuable industry connections and practical insights into global business operations. This hands-on approach is designed to bolster students' understanding and engagement with the subject matter in a global context.

Commitment to Excellence

Though our current portfolio in the higher education sector includes only Virginia Tech, this partnership has been a cornerstone in illustrating our capability and commitment. The success of our programs has been deeply appreciated by both the faculty and students of Virginia Tech, highlighting our bespoke approach, attention to detail, and the quality of academic pursuits.

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Education

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Potsdam, Germany

Master in Public Management:

The program was a partnership between the University of Potsdam and GIZ (German Organisation for International Cooperation); multidisciplinary and multicultural program (20 students from 18 nationalities, mostly African and Asian)

- Final grade of 1.3 (95%)
- Thesis on “Hidden Costs of Public Sector Reform: A Case Study on Public Sector Reforms’ Experience by Top Civil Servants at a Portuguese University”: dissertation and defence graded 1.0 (100%); paper presented at the 8th Portuguese Public Administration Congress
- Elected student representative in the Quality Assurance Group: conducted a review of the master program positioning and proposed a set of measures to increase its quality.

2002–2006 NOVA SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS

Lisbon, Portugal

Licenciatura Degree 1 in Management: final grade of 15 (91.15 percentile).

2005 HOGESCHOOL VAN AMSTERDAM

Amsterdam, The Netherlands

Half-year exchange program in International Business and Management Studies.

WORK EXPERIENCE: CAREER-ORIENTED

Since 2016 – 7 MARES GmbH – Managing Director

Berlin, Germany

Manages a company operating in different industries: wine, press, tourism and study abroad programs.

2011–2017 – CAIXA GERAL DE DEPÓSITOS – Associate

Berlin, Germany

- Responsible for the reporting of the € 4M operation; improved the efficiency of the reporting function through process reengineering;

1 Four-year degree, International Standard Classification of Education Level 6 – Bachelor or Equivalent.

- Member of the project that aims to develop business with German companies internationalising to Portuguese-speaking countries;
- Customer relationship management: interacted with customers in order to solve problems and develop business relationships.

2006–2010 – DELOITTE CONSULTING

Management Consultant in Strategy & Operations for Public Sector, Life Sciences & Health Care

Lisbon, Portugal

Participated in ten consulting projects for Portuguese public sector clients (e.g. Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice) and European institutions (e.g. European Commission), mostly focusing on public financial management. Projects covered a wide range of skills including: critical analysis of organisations, process reengineering, sourcing and procurement, and monitoring and evaluation of organisational performance. Trained civil servants and Deloitte professionals in public financial management.

WORK EXPERIENCE: OTHER

2016 – BERLINDA, NGO – President

Berlin, Germany

Directs a NGO with two major purposes: increasing awareness about Portuguese speaking culture in Berlin and support the Portuguese speaking community in Berlin

2008–2010 AHEAD, NGO – President

Lisbon, Portugal

- Coordinated two development aid programs, which promote the integration of disadvantaged populations through learning initiatives in Portugal and Mozambique;
- Negotiated partnerships with universities and charity associations in Mozambique, in order to establish cooperation programs at these institutions, as well as partnerships with Portuguese universities in order to promote volunteering in Portugal;
- Coordinated the strategic review of the organisation, defining future initiatives and improvements.

2006 UNIVERSIDADE EDUARDO MONDLANE – Teaching Instructor

Maputo, Mozambique

- Lectured two summer courses in corporate finance for Mozambican students;
- Instructor in a workshop on organisational behaviour.

2002 MADEILENA, Lda. – Summer Intern

Leiria, Portugal

- Performed accountancy and invoice payment control tasks.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Language skills:

- Portuguese – mother-tongue;
- English – fluent, holds the Cambridge Certificate of Proficiency in English / TOEFL score: 109 points;
- French – fluent comprehension, good speaking and intermediate writing skills;
- German – good comprehension, average speaking and basic writing skills;
- Spanish – very good understanding, intermediate speaking and writing skills

Pedagogic skills: Holds the Portuguese official certification of pedagogic skills.

Community: Volunteer worker in Portugal (support to students in a poor Lisbon neighbourhood), Mozambique (support to the work of the Missionaries of Charity) and Senegal (painting and furnishing of a maternity in a rural village).

Interests: Political and economic information; biking; hiking; travelling.



Business Information Technology

880 West Campus Drive
1007 Pamplin Hall
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
P: (540) 257-3759
Lance@vt.edu

July 16, 2024

Director of Procurement
Procurement (0333)
North End Center, Suite 2100
300 Turner Street, NW, Blacksburg, VA 24061

RE: Tiago Pais – Sete Mare – Study abroad provider recommendation

I am writing in support of Tiago Pais becoming a study abroad program provider. I have led more than 40 study abroad programs for the Pamplin College of Business since 2000. I have worked with a number of providers as well as organized programs myself. I know the level of effort and organization needed for a successful program.

I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. Tiago Pais for 2 years in my Business and Culture in Europe summer study abroad program. This 30-day program visits 11 cities in 5 countries. There are dozens of arrangements and reservations required for this program. Mr. Pais has managed all these requirements smoothly and efficiently.

More specifically he has arranged all our business visits, cultural visits, and group meals, served as our local on-the-ground guide/leader, conducted guided tours, and managed any problems which arose during these 4-week programs. He immediately contacted sites when traffic delays moving between cities meant we would miss a scheduled event. He recommended several new and interesting places and events which added value to the program. He led us quickly and directly to all our activities. He has gone above and beyond when we had to put a student into a single room, instead of a shared room, in Berlin for personal reasons. He generously volunteered to stay at his own Berlin apartment and allow the student to take his room at the group hotel.

Pamplin has a new program in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Tiago and I planned this 4-week program and will offer it in 2025. Another Pamplin faculty member will lead this program. He has worked with Tiago and me in Europe so knows the program will go well. Tiago will arrange a local guide for this program. He has connections throughout Europe to support all program needs.

He has worked with four other Pamplin faculty and staff in this program during these two years. We all appreciate his professionalism as well as his collegiality. We have come to rely on Tiago and his company, Sete Mare, for an excellent program. The students all enjoy him and the program much more due to his diligence and outgoing personality.

I know Tiago can organize a high-quality program and see to its execution. He is with us 24 hours a day for 30 days and is always ready for another busy day.

I hope you will make him a program provider.

Sincerely,

Lance A. Matheson

Lance A. Matheson
Associate Professor Emeritus



Department of Management (0233)
Pamplin Hall, Virginia Tech
880 West Campus Drive
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
Phone: 540/231-6353
www.management.pamplin.vt.edu

July 16, 2024

Global Education Office
Virginia Tech

Dear GEO team members,

I'm writing this letter in support of Tiago Pinto Pais and his company, 7 Mares, as a study abroad program provider. I have traveled with him as our guide on 3 different study abroad programs: winter 2023, winter 2024, and summer 2024. I've also led three other study abroad programs with different providers, and I will attest that Tiago is by far the best I've worked with.

Tiago has vast business connections throughout Europe and has arranged many different types of industry connections for our business visits. He is an entrepreneur who owns and manages three different businesses, so he understands the context within which we want to provide exposure to our students about business practices and culture abroad. He's also incredibly knowledgeable about history so he provides background and context for our cultural visits, which makes them even more interesting.

He is very thorough and attentive to details in all the logistics arrangements he provides for us. He's also very helpful planning activities during free time (beyond the program itinerary). Students regularly ask him what he recommends they do during free time or where to eat, and he always provides ideas based on his experience and follows up with details about ticket times, prices, which train to take, which stop to get off, etc. It's very obvious his focus is on ensuring we have an enjoyable experience.

Tiago goes "above and beyond" what I would expect or hope to receive from a program provider. I have several examples, but I would like to share three specific ones.

During Winter 2024, one of our students had a family emergency. We were on a train from one city to another in Germany, and Eric's mom texted to tell him that his brother had experienced a medical emergency and had been taken to a hospital in Frankfurt. She was in Spain and unable to get to Frankfurt quickly, so she asked if Eric could go to support his



PAMPLIN COLLEGE OF BUSINESS
MANAGEMENT
VIRGINIA TECH.

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brother. I didn't know anything about this until we arrived at the train station, but during the trip Tiago helped Eric figure out which train to take to the airport, which flight to take to get to Frankfurt, how to get from the airport in Frankfurt to the hospital, and helped Eric make all these arrangements. To top it off, Eric was able to return to the group a couple days later and Tiago went to the train station to pick him up. Tiago did all of this on his own!

Another incident happened in Winter 2023. A student experienced a medical issue and had to be taken to the emergency room. When we got to the emergency room, we discovered many of the staff didn't speak English, so Tiago stayed with the student and assisted with all necessary communication, which provided much comfort to the student and their family who was notified immediately, of course.

The last example I will share occurred during Winter 2023 when the group was at a German beer garden. A female student experienced sexual harassment by a German customer. The student immediately relayed to Tiago what had happened and he, again, handled all communication within the restaurant as well as provided support and comfort to the student. The fact that she reached out to Tiago first is a testament that students feel a connection with him and trust him.

The support that Tiago provides to our study abroad programs is invaluable. Not only does he make my job much easier, but he makes the students' experience an exceptional one!

Sincerely,

Margie Deck
Assistant Professor of Practice
Management Department
Pamplin College of Business
Virginia Tech

Part 4

Crisis Management

Ensuring Safety In Abroad Programs

Ensuring the safety and welfare of the students is one of 7 Mares GmbH's primary objectives during any faculty-led abroad program. Since traveling internationally can be unpredictable at times, it is important for our programs to have a rigorous risk assessment and management procedure in place.

Comprehensive Risk Assessment

Every facet of the program is carefully inspected as part of our risk assessment process, from the planned academic and cultural excursions to the student housing. The students' mental and physical health are taken into consideration. The incidents that occurred in the Winter of 2024 made the significance of this procedure abundantly clear. Our CEO, Tiago Pinto Pais, demonstrated resourcefulness and dedication in the face of trouble, proving how invaluable a strong risk assessment process is.

Risk Management Strategies

Once the risks are assessed, the next step is to create robust risk management strategies. We firmly believe that preparation and precaution are the keys to successfully handling uncertainties. This management process is a continual one, adjusting to new situations or challenges that might arise during the course of the program.

Handling Emergency Situations

Emergencies are inevitable while traveling. Hence, we keep a plan prepared for handling emergencies of varying degrees. During Winter 2024, when a student named Eric had to attend to a family emergency at Frankfurt, Tiago took action to ensure he reached there without any issues. It's this level of dedication, assurance, and hands-on approach that we employ at 7 Mares GmbH to manage emergency situations.

Communication and Language Barrier

Language barriers are a well-known challenge while traveling abroad, which increases the necessity of having effective communication strategies. In one of our programs of Winter 2023, Tiago showed the importance of this when he stayed with a student in an emergency room who faced problems communicating with the hospital staff because they didn't speak English. Being fluent in five languages including Portuguese, German, English, French and Spanish, Tiago has versatility in these situations, allowing him to effectively communicate in times of need.

Handling Sensitive Situations

We aim to create a safe and respectful environment for our students, both within the group and with the local populace. When a student experienced harassment in a beer garden in Winter of 2023, Tiago intervened by communicating with the restaurant staff and providing emotional support to the upset student.

Role Of The Program Leader

A key factor that impacts risk management and assessment is the person in charge of the program. Having a seasoned and empathetic leader can make a significant difference in maintaining safety and order. Tiago has many roles – from guide, negotiator, emergency responder, to confidant – and thus effectively mitigates risks by a considerable degree.

Emergency Response Procedures

At 7 Mares GmbH, we prioritize safety and conduciveness in all our faculty-led study abroad programs. Our preparedness to manage emergencies is paramount, understanding that the well-being of participants and staff is central to the success of our academic excursions. This document outlines our comprehensive approach to handling incidents that might arise during various study abroad engagements.

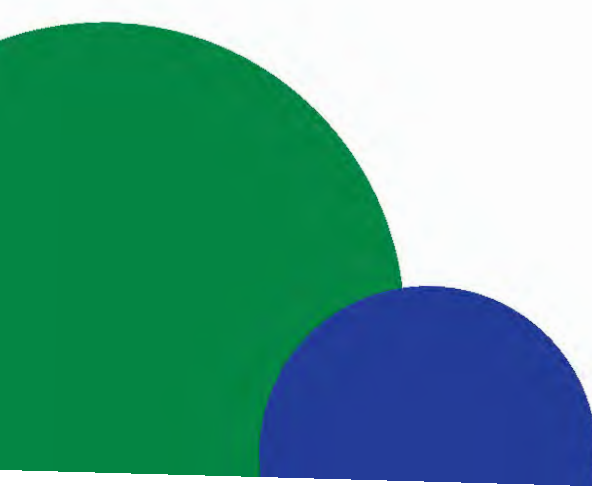
Emergency Response Procedures

Our emergency response plan has been carefully crafted to swiftly and effectively address any potential incidents during study abroad programs. The primary objective is to protect all participants and ensure as little disruption as possible to the program itself.

When an emergency situation occurs, our immediate response follows a structured protocol starting with the immediate assessment of the incident to determine its severity. This assessment is crucial as it dictates the subsequent steps, whether it involves minor first aid or more serious interventions requiring emergency services. Guided by the principle of 'safety first,' our on-site coordinators are trained to prioritize decisions that prevent harm or further harm to any individual involved in the incident.

Communication plays a vital role in our emergency response procedures. Once the initial incident assessment is made, our on-site coordinator is responsible for notifying our headquarters about the nature of the emergency. This connection to our central office ensures that additional resources and support can be mobilized promptly.

Our team ensures that local emergency contacts, including medical clinics, hospitals, and consulates, are identified in advance and kept readily available to all participants and staff through both digital and physical copies. We train our staff and students prior to the trip on basic safety procedures and how to respond effectively in an emergency.



Company Policies

Both our daily operations and our strategic choices are guided by a rigorous set of corporate policies that define 7 Mares GmbH. These guidelines are intended to guarantee ethical conduct, operational excellence, adherence to national and international legal requirements, and a constant focus on safety across all initiatives.

Participant Safety and Access Control: We ensure that only individuals with the proper authorization can access resources and data that are crucial to the operation of the program and the security of its participants. Prior to participant involvement, each program location is thoroughly screened in accordance with strict safety regulations.

Confidentiality and Privacy: We pledge to protect the privacy and confidentiality of all participant's personal information. We use cutting-edge security techniques to guard against unauthorized access as well as the disclosure of any data.

Non-Discrimination Policy: We have a strict non-discrimination policy at 7 Mares GmbH. We provide our programs and employment opportunities to everyone, regardless of age, sex, disability, national origin, race, color, or religion. Our dedication to inclusivity enhances our activities and fosters a friendly, encouraging atmosphere for all participants and staff.

Utilization of Technology

In the age of rapid information and communication technology evolution, 7 Mares GmbH leverages these advancements to enhance our program implementation and safety protocols. Our deployment of technology serves two main purposes: enhancing the quality and reach of our education programs and bolstering our ability to respond effectively in emergencies.

Educational Technology: We incorporate various educational tools that allow for a blended learning experience. These technologies range from virtual classrooms when on-site instruction is not feasible to specialized apps that allow for real-time communication between students and educators.

Emergency and Safety Technology: Crucially, we use technology to strengthen our response to emergencies. All our program participants are equipped with emergency communication tools, such as apps that provide instant updates and vital information at their fingertips.

Moreover, we have established protocols for maintaining the functionality of our technology tools. Regular updates and checks ensure devices and software function effectively, reducing the risk of malfunction during crucial moments.

Roles and Responsibilities

At 7 Mares GmbH, we recognize the paramount importance of addressing crises rapidly and efficiently to ensure the safety, security, and continuous operation of any study abroad programs we manage. The team we have appointed to lead our crisis management responsibilities is comprised of seasoned professionals, each bringing a unique set of skills and experiences that pertain directly to effective crisis resolution, strategic management, and operational continuity.

Head of Crisis Management

The leader of our crisis management team is Tiago, who serves as the Head of Crisis Management. In this crucial role, he is responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and continuous refinement of our Crisis Management Plan. With a robust background in international relations and emergency response, Tiago coordinates all activities related to crisis management, from risk assessment to recovery, and liaisons with all stakeholders to ensure a unified and effective approach to any emergencies that may arise.

Medical Advisor

Given the importance of health and medical support in the context of study abroad programs, we will hire a medical consultant to brief any new Program Manager or Leader. This consultant will also be used to update regular Program Managers and Program Managers every second year. They will offer advice to our team on best practices for health screenings pre-departures, address potential health crises during the programs, and ensure that Managers are aware of how to source appropriate health facilities in each locale we operate in.

Communication Officer

Clear communication is essential during any crisis, and this is where Lizeth Soto Rivas, our Communications Officer, comes in. Tasked with managing both internal and external communications, Lizeth ensures that timely and accurate information is disseminated to all parties involved, including students, parents, program staff, and local authorities. This role particularly focuses on maintaining open lines of communication at all times and establishing protocols for crisis-related communications which safeguard against misinformation and ensure transparency throughout the resolution process.



Part 5

We can confirm that any required insurance coverage will be in place upon award of the contract. Within VI. B (b), it states that 'providers shall not require additional insurance coverage beyond what is outlined in ATTACHMENT A, Section 7 – INSURANCE. Yet the RFP also states that 'all participants must acquire international medical and security insurance coverage. Virginia Tech will ensure that all participants have medical and security assistance coverage through the university-contracted vendor for the duration of the program dates.'

Regardless of this, we will ensure that we have applicable insurance coverage that meets VT's requirements, as we have done in our previous work with them and in compliance with ATTACHMENT A, Section 7 – INSURANCE.

Part 6

A: Scheduling

7 Mares will assign a highly experienced and skilled mobilization team weeks ahead of the expected contract commencement date, as per specification. This will be scheduled by CEO, Tiago Pinto Pais, who has led previous mobilization teams, completing work consistently within the stipulated timescale without any delay or disruption.

Tiago has provided services to Virginia Tech previously on a study-abroad program. Additionally, he has worked with companies external to the university who have ran previous programs. Throughout his time fulfilling these services, Tiago has ensured that all scheduling responsibilities were conducted professionally. In his work with Virginia Tech, he used his network of European connections to arrange a for a variety of industry connections to attend sessions on business practices and culture abroad. Tiago was noted by Pamplin College of Business' Assistant Professor of Practice, Margie Deck, as being "very thoughtful and attentive to details in all of the logistics arrangements he provides for us."

Tiago Pinto Pais, CEO

Scheduling will be overseen by Tiago whose significant experience with Virginia Tech's study abroad program sets a strong foundation for our mobilization and service delivery efforts. His role as CEO for multiple study abroad initiatives has given him an experienced understanding of the intricate requirements and challenges associated with scheduling, coordinating, and leading development teams.

His extensive experience in management consulting and knowledge of this field ensures that he will appropriately manage and oversee our dedicated service teams for each project, ensuring that scheduling is adhered to.

He has gained invaluable insights into planning, mobilizing, and implementing preliminary contract activities through his direct involvement. Tiago will provide his leadership and guidance throughout the mobilization process and service delivery, ensuring that we meet all legislative and professional requirements. Tiago will also be responsible for liaising with Virginia Tech and our internal teams throughout contract set up, such as marketing and emergency teams. Our Enterprise Resource Planning software, Weclapp, allows us to plan efficiently, programming journeys and controlling scheduling in a centralized manner.

In addition, Tiago will overview our process in identifying staffing and location-specific needs as the company grows. He will manage the recruitment process from advertisement to onboarding during mobilization. Additionally, he will provide specialist information and guidance on our equality and diversity policies and practices and will be responsible for identifying and undertaking all training requirements for the provision of the contract. They will also lead staff inductions for any newly hired staff, monitoring operational activities, and providing timely advice and support for recruitment, training, and stakeholder management needs.

Lizeth Soto Rivas, Communications Officer

Communications Officer Lizeth will be responsible for establishing and maintaining internal and external communications, developing communication plans with stakeholders, as well as scheduling meetings and reporting schedules. Lizeth will ensure that the schedule is disseminated to all relevant stakeholders with timely and accurate information, which will include students, parents, program staff, and local authorities. This role will also ensure the development of protocols for crisis-related communications, which safeguard against misinformation and ensure transparency throughout the resolution process.

Emergency Protocols

As part of the mobilization team, Tiago will lead our crisis management team as Head of Crisis Management, providing the schedule with alternative arrangements in the event of an emergency or crisis. In this crucial role, Tiago will be responsible for overseeing the development, implementation, and continuous refinement of our Crisis Management Plan in conjunction with all Program Managers. With a robust background in international relations and emergency response, Tiago will coordinate the crisis management team during all mobilization activities, from risk assessment to recovery, and liaise with all stakeholders to ensure a unified and effective approach to any emergencies that may arise.

B: Planning and Scheduling Tools

As required by Section IV (D) of the RFP, we have a dedicated service team in place, tasked with working with our CEO, Program Manager, and Program Leader to coordinate and facilitate, among other things, initial planning calls, pre-departure logistics and orientation, on-site services and post-program debriefings. These initial scheduling and planning activities are significantly streamlined by our use of the following digital tools:

Trello

Trello is a versatile project management tool that facilitates cross-team coordination, making it a core component of our program setup and execution process. The visual nature of Trello's boards, lists, and cards allows for the real-time task and milestone tracking, with dedicated boards for such program aspects as "Pre-Departure" and "On-Site Activities." Moreover, its collaborative features allow team members to assign tasks, comment, and attach documents directly to cards, streamlining the management of complex logistical tasks by enabling end-to-end collaboration.

Google Drive

We rely heavily on Google Drive as our dedicated tool for securely storing and sharing program-related documents, ensuring immediate, remote access to key program documents such as itineraries and emergency plans. Much like Trello, Google Drive supports real-time collaboration, allowing multiple team members to work on the same document simultaneously. The software's robust access controls (e.g. restricted permissions, access revocation, view-only, etc.) ensure that sensitive information remains secure.

Triplt

Triplt is a travel organization tool that compiles travel details, such as flights, accommodation and local transportation, into a single, easy-to-access itinerary. Our team uses it, for example, to provide real-time updates on changes like flight delays. The app's mobile accessibility ensures that team members have critical travel information at their immediate disposal, allowing for seamless coordination and prompt updates to travel plans when necessary.

GroupMe or WhatsApp

GroupMe and WhatsApp are our main communication tools, enabling instant, reliable communication with the team, students, and faculty. These apps support group chats for simultaneous updates, schedule changes, and emergency notifications. They provide a crucial direct communication line, allowing for swift responses to changes in plans, unforeseen circumstances, and emergencies.

Zoom

Vital for conducting virtual orientations and pre-departure briefings, Zoom is an invaluable tool for our operations. Using Zoom, we host live, interactive sessions to prepare students and faculty for their upcoming journeys. Features such as screen sharing, breakout rooms and Q&A sessions allow our team to deliver comprehensive briefings covering travel logistics, cultural expectations, safety protocols, etc. These virtual meetings serve as an opportunity for participants to ask questions, raise concerns, and interact with program leaders, ensuring they feel well-informed and prepared prior to departure. Additionally, the ability to record these sessions for subsequent viewing ensures that anyone unable to attend the live session can review the material later at their own convenience.

Excel

Microsoft Excel is crucial for our ongoing financial planning and execution, alongside our Weclapp ERP system. The key features we utilize in our day-to-day operations include:

- **Budget Templates:** We use customized budget templates to plan and track all program-related expenses, including travel cost, accommodation, meals and any scheduled excursions or activities.
- **Data Analysis:** Excel's robust data analysis tools allow us to monitor spending, forecast costs, and ensure we stay within our contractual budget.
- **Reporting:** Excel allows us to generate detailed financial reports that provide end-to-end transparency, both internally and to our partners.

By using Excel to create comprehensive financial plans, ensuring all program costs are accounted for and managed effectively. Its analytical tools help in making informed decisions and maintaining financial transparency and control throughout the program.

C: Lead Times

We will exercise a requirement of at least 90 days lead time to contract 7 Mares for a program. In this timescale, we will take a non-refundable deposit at the 75 days mark. 180 days is desired for more competitive pricing and, in this instance, a non-refundable will be required 120 days before the program begins.

Feedback for the assessment of viability changes will be done within five working days once contracted and once bookings are made.

Part 7

Participant Withdrawal Policy

Study Abroad Program Participant Withdrawal Policy

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the procedures and conditions under which participants may withdraw from the study abroad program. It also details the financial consequences of withdrawal. The academic consequences are of the responsibility of Virginia Tech to take.

2. Withdrawal Procedures

a. Notification of Withdrawal

- Participants must notify the Program Manager in writing (email or formal letter) of their intention to withdraw from the program.
- The date the written notification is received will be considered the official withdrawal date.

b. Pre-Departure Withdrawals

- If a participant decides to withdraw before the program start date, they must provide notice as early as possible.

c. On-Site Withdrawals

- If a participant decides to withdraw after arriving at the study abroad location, they must address the program leader immediately.

3. Financial Consequences

a. Pre-Departure Withdrawals

- 60+ days before departure: Full refund minus the non-refundable deposit.
- 30-59 days before departure: 50% of the program fee minus the non-refundable deposit.
- Less than 30 days before departure: No refund of the program fee. Only refundable deposits (if any) will be returned.

b. On-Site Withdrawals

- No refund will be provided once the participant has arrived at the study abroad location.
- Participants will be responsible for any additional costs incurred due to their early departure.

4. Special Circumstances

a. Medical Withdrawals

- In the case of a medical emergency that necessitates withdrawal, participants must provide documentation from a healthcare provider.
- Refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

b. Personal or Family Emergencies

- Participants withdrawing due to personal or family emergencies must provide appropriate documentation.
- Refunds and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

5. Responsibilities

a. Participant Responsibilities

- Participants are responsible for understanding the financial and academic implications of withdrawal.
- Participants must handle all costs related to their early departure from the program site. 7 Mares can support travel arrangements if asked to.

b. Program Responsibilities

- The Program Leader and will provide clear information about the withdrawal process.
- The Program Leader will assist with documentation and provide support in emergency situations.

6. Appeals Process

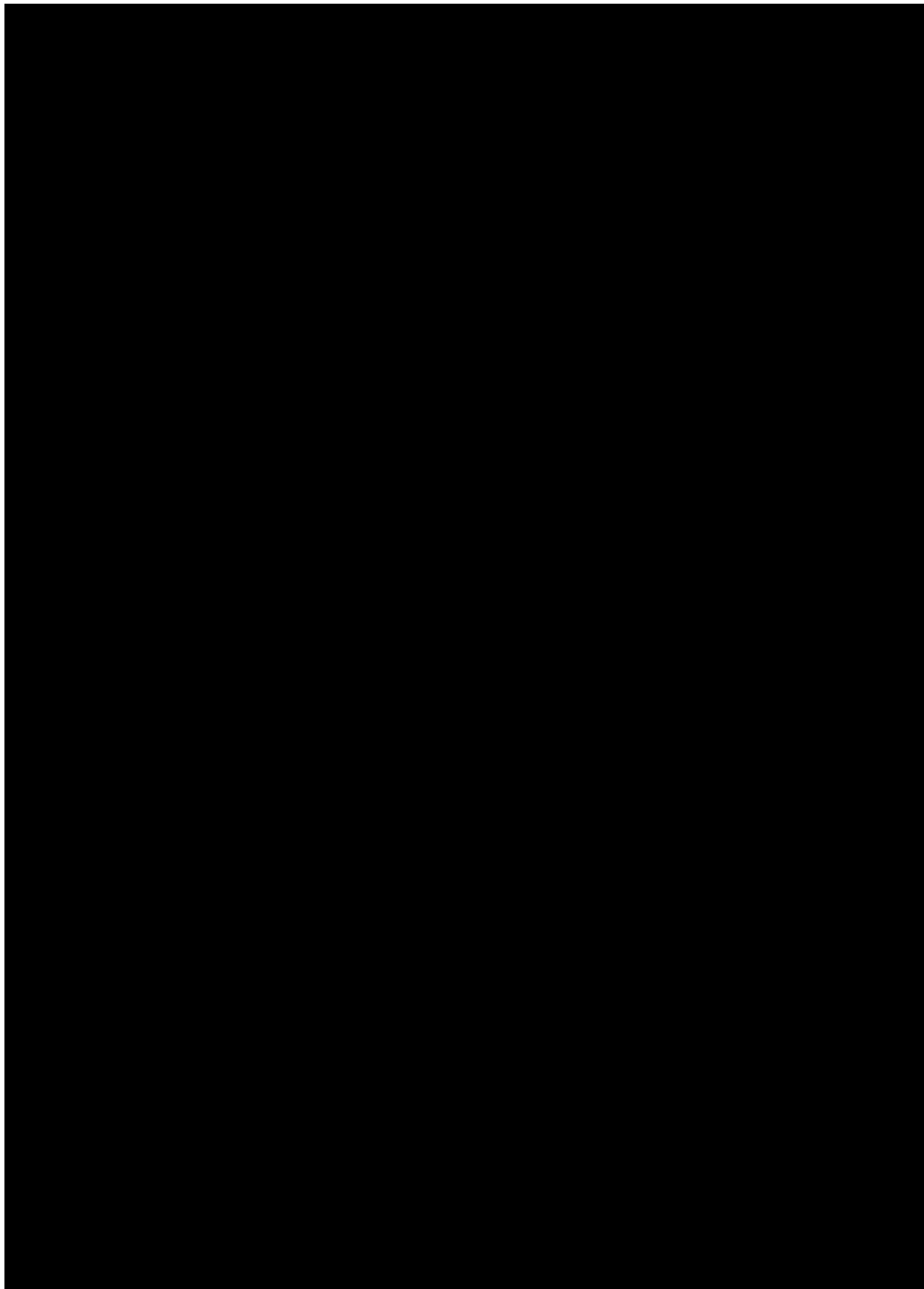
- Participants who believe they have extenuating circumstances warranting an exception to this policy may submit a written appeal to the Program Manager.
- Appeals must include a detailed explanation and any relevant supporting documentation.
- The Program Director, in consultation with appropriate administrative offices, will review and respond to appeals within 30 days.

Part 8

Liability insurance has been attained by 7 Mares GmbH in accordance with previous guidelines received from Virginia Tech. Our company currently has €7.5 million liability concerning people and €750,000 for liabilities concerning goods. We have recently contacted an insurance broker in Virginia to check if it would be possible to hire a policy that covers the requirements of the RFP in a more tailored package, to offer precise coverage, something that will be set up in the pre-commencement phase of the contract.



VERSICHERUNGSBESTÄTIGUNG



Part 9

Small, Women-Owned and Minority-Owned Business (SWaM)

As we are based in Germany, we cannot comply with “The state in which the business has its principal place of business does not deny a like certification to a Virginia-based small, women-owned or minority-owned business or provide a preference to small, women-owned or minority-owned firms that is not available to Virginia-based businesses.” Because this is a US-oriented provision, we would not offer complete compliance. However, purely based on the description of SWaM, 7 Mares GmbH commits to offering opportunities equally throughout the contract. In addition, 7 Mares GmbH is classified as a micro-company, with ‘no more than 25 employees and no more than \$3 million in average annual revenue over the three-year period prior to certification.



Part 10

RFP # 952642408, Study Abroad Program Master Service Agreement Providers

INCLUDE THIS PAGE WITH YOUR PROPOSAL, SIGNATURE AT SUBMISSION IS REQUIRED

DUE DATE: Proposals will be received until **July 25, 2024 at 3:00 PM**. Failure to submit proposals to the correct location by the designated date and hour will result in disqualification.

INQUIRIES: All inquiries for information regarding this solicitation should be directed to Levi Henry, Phone: (540) 231-7852 e-mail: lhenny29@vt.edu. All inquiries will be answered in the form of an addendum. Inquiries must be submitted by 2:00 PM on July 3, 2024. Inquiries must be submitted to the procurement officer identified in this solicitation.

OPTIONAL PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: An optional pre-proposal conference will be held on **June 27, 2024 at 2:00 PM**. See RFP Section IX, Pre-proposal Conference for additional information.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

***Please note, proposal submission procedures have changed effective March 2023.**

Proposals may NOT be hand delivered to the Procurement Office.

Proposals should be submitted electronically through Virginia Tech's procurement portal. This portal allows you access to view business opportunities and submit bids and proposals to Virginia Tech digitally and securely.

Proposals must be submitted electronically at:

<https://bids.sciquest.com/apps/Router/PublicEvent?CustomerOrg=VATech>

Vendors will need to register through this procurement portal, hosted by Jaggaer. **It is encouraged for all vendors to register prior to the proposal submission deadline to avoid late submissions.** Registration is easy and free. If you have any challenges with the registration process, please contact Jaggaer Support at 1-800-233-1121 or procurement@vt.edu.

Click on the opportunity and log in to your vendor account to begin preparing your submission. Upon completion, you will receive a submission receipt email confirmation. Virginia Tech will not confirm receipt of proposals. It is the responsibility of the offeror to make sure their proposal is delivered on time.

Hard copy or email proposals will not be accepted. Late proposals will not be accepted, nor will additional time be granted to any individual Vendor.

Attachments must be smaller than 50MB in order to be received by the University.

In compliance with this Request For Proposal and to all the conditions imposed therein and hereby incorporated by reference, the undersigned offers and agrees to furnish the goods or services in accordance with the attached signed proposal and as mutually agreed upon by subsequent negotiation.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: Triago Cabral Pinto Reis Date: July 26th, 2024

[INCLUDE THIS PAGE]

Part 11

Budget Creation Process

As we have a small structure, we work mostly through program-based contracts with specialists for each program, reducing our fixed cost structure. This allows us to offer price-competitive programs throughout. However, our greater company infrastructure and organizational depth gives us the ability to engage consistently with the University to decide how resources should be utilized and budgets aptly managed. Our Financial Team will be led by Tiago. He is well-suited to crafting an efficient budget alongside Virginia Tech, having vital experience as a management consultant where he focused on public financial management. Using his background in management consultancy, lecturing of corporate finance and strategic coordination of NGOs, Tiago will work closely with the University to ensure that budgets are optimized to create the best student experience.



Winter Program: Germany | Austria

Budget Exercise for Transparency:

Costs for:

- 15 Students.
- One Faculty.
- One Program Manager.
- One Program Leader.

Administrative Fee	\$20,000.00
Orientation	\$500.00
Accommodation	\$22,500.00
Transportation (including flights)	\$28,000.00
Airport Pickup on Arrival Day and Transfer to the Airport on Departure Day	\$1,000.00
Meals	\$6,000.00
Translator Fees for Project Work	\$0.00
All Project Materials and Supplies	\$500.00
Cultural Engagement and Class Activities (Cultural and Business Visits and Meetings)	\$10,000.00
Total Program Cost	\$88,500.00
Cost Per Paying Student	\$5,900.00



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info@7mares.de

Heimstr. 3, Berlin, Germany



**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
PROCUREMENT DEPARTMENT**

ADDENDUM NO. 1

DATE: July 16, 2024
TO: All Offerors
FROM: Levi Henry, Contracting Officer
TOTAL PAGE(S): 4 pages (not including attachments)
SOLICITATION TITLE: Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Providers
SOLICITATION NUMBER: 952642408

I. CLARIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The deadline for proposal submission has been extended from 3:00 PM EST on July 25, 2024 to **3:00 PM EST on July 26, 2024** as part of this addendum

The following sub-sections are being added to Section VI – Statement of Needs:

J. Invoicing Requirements:

The Contractor shall submit invoices for payment to the University exclusively in USD. Each invoice must clearly reference specific line-item descriptions from the Total Program Budget that correspond to the requested payment.

Invoices should be remitted to the University's point of contact for the program specified within the Addendum to the Master Agreement. Normal processing of invoices through standard internal University business procedures will ensure the invoice is submitted to the University's accounts payable department for processing and payment.

The following sub-section is being added to Section VII.A – Specific Requirements for Proposal Submission:

11. Budget Creation Process – Provide Information about how your company can work with the University to engage in the budget creation and development process.

The following sub-section replaces in entirety the section titled "Fees" on Attachment B template:

Cost per Participant, Participant's Program Fee and Development of Total Program Budget:

The costs per person and the subsequent Participant's Program Fee will be determined in advance of each customized program and specified in the executed Addendum as the Total Program Budget.

The Total Program Budget shall be developed taking in to consideration the costs of the following line items but is not limited to only these items and may be program specific. The Total Program Budget shall be subject to the agreement of both parties and finalized through execution of the Program's Addendum to this Agreement:

- a. Administrative Fee of Contractor

- b. Orientation
- c. Accommodation
- d. Transportation
- e. Airport pick up on arrival day and transfer to the airport on departure day
- f. Meals
- g. Translator fees for project work
- h. All project materials and supplies
- i. Cultural engagement and class activities

The following sub-section is added to the Attachment B template:

Payment Schedule:

Participants: Registered participants will pay Participant's Program Fee directly to the University. The University will in turn make payments directly to the Contractor under the following guidelines:

Milestone payments, such as initial deposits, pre-payments, and interim payments, are permitted and will be specifically outlined and mutually agreed upon in the Addendum to the Master Agreement.

II. REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

1. **In regard to the template for the master services agreement, is there any flexibility with using the provider's template instead?**

Virginia Tech Response: *To streamline our approach to these agreements, the preference is that the Master Services Agreement Template be the document utilized for the agreements established from this RFP. This will help expedite the approval process at the University.*

2. **Does the scope of this RFP cover all Virginia Tech's different schools and programs, or will those separate entities develop their own agreements?**

Virginia Tech Response: *This covers all the Study Abroad Programs under Virginia Tech.*

3. **Will it be mandated that the University uses providers selected as part of this RFP process?**

Virginia Tech Response: *As this is a new process, they will be used to the extent they can. Over time as the program develops, it will eventually be a requirement that a provider has gone through this process to obtain a master service agreement to be included in the study abroad provider list.*

4. **What is the renewal process after each 2-year term?**

Virginia Tech Response: *Typically, we will reach out with 6 months remaining on the current term to send the provider a renewal letter asking if they are willing to renew the contract for the next term. At that time if there are any additional items that need to be incorporated, that will be reviewed.*

5. **Many points within the RFP appear to be related to U.S. based suppliers. As a foreign entity, will this affect our consideration of being selected as a provider?**

Virginia Tech Response: *No, the intent and goal of this RFP is to be open to all entities both foreign and domestic. The location of your company shall not be used as a factor for selecting awarded providers. If there are items within the RFP that you feel do not apply to your company, please notate in your proposal response that our request is not applicable to your company.*

6. **Per section VI.I. in the RFP, to what extent is there flexibility to negotiate the outlined Cancellation and Program Return Policy? In many of our locations, in order to secure program arrangements over peak tourism season when the majority of faculty-led programs occur, bookings must be made far in advance and come with non-refundable cancellation fees. There are cases when we may not be able to ensure 100% refunds for cancellations earlier than 60 days (about 2 months) before the program start date.**

Virginia Tech Response: *The preference is to proceed with the policy outlined, however we understand that there may be cases where this is not possible. In this case, we ask that providers be transparent with the University about the challenges that need to be considered so that we can proceed accordingly.*

7. **What is the current number of faculty-led study abroad programs that are being conducted by Virginia Tech?**

Virginia Tech Response: *There are currently about 90 faculty-led programs taking place.*

8. **Approximately how many students and faculty typically participate in these programs?**

Virginia Tech Response: *It is dependent upon multiple factors, but typically they tend to range from between 10 to 30 participants.*

9. **What are the University's expectations for the involvement of the budget development and creation?**

Virginia Tech Response: *Once your company has been engaged to provide services, the expectation is that there is a partnership between your company and the program coordinator at Virginia Tech to have an honest dialogue about what would be a justifiable budget in order to obtain the highest quality services for the lowest price to the students.*

10. **How far into detail should providers go in terms of developing the budget? For example, is that from the time they arrive to the airport to the time they leave?**

Virginia Tech Response: *The budget for the programs will need to go into considerable detail if possible. However, there will be categories within the budgets that allow for shifting of budgeted resources between categories as needed during the execution of the program all the while maintaining the overall program budget. Note, The RFP is not asking for any specific budget to be provided at the time of RFP proposal submission, but we do wish to understand your company's process for developing total program budgets so we can plan accordingly.*

11. **We currently have an ongoing Program Services Agreement with the university under which our Program Proposals fall under. If we are to be awarded a contract through this process and the document under Attachment B is executed, then is the understanding correct that the current PSA will be replaced in its entirety by this new document?**

Virginia Tech Response: *Yes, that is correct. Your current PSA will be replaced by the new master services agreement with the University resulting from this RFP.*

12. And if that understanding is correct, is there room to negotiate provisions that had been in the Program Services Agreement to be placed back in this new Master Agreement (should our counsel advise so)?

Virginia Tech Response: Yes, pending VT legal review and approval.

13. I note that you have Attachment C which is the Addendum template for the program portion that is meant to go with VT’s Master Services Agreement. Does this mean that all our program proposals need to conform to Attachment C format or are we still able to submit our version of a program proposal?

Virginia Tech Response: Once you have a Master Services Agreement with the University, moving forward all program proposals shall conform to the template in Attachment C.

14. We do multiple types of programs with VT (such as semester/internship), not just faculty led. How does this RFP process affect those non fac led programs?

Virginia Tech Response: The current RRP process is specific to custom faculty-led programs and will not affect providers who engage in other program collaborations with VT. If you have a question about a particular circumstance, please contact vtabroad@vt.edu for support.

III. ATTENDANCE ROSTER AND RECORDING OF PREPROPOSAL CONFERENCE

Below is the attendance roster and a link to the recording of the pre-proposal conference held on June 27, 2024

<https://www.procurement.vt.edu/preproposal.html>

**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
ATTENDANCE ROSTER
NON-MANDATORY PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE**

RFP Number 952642408

Date: June 27, 2024 Time: 2:00 PM EST

Company Name	Representative(s)
Peacework	Jessica Falla
Key Travel	Brandon Trefonas, Mike Schields, Makenzie Howard
Santa Reparta International School of Art	Allison Reyna
MICExperts Ticino	Diana Richner
EDU Africa	Tafadzwa Muchopa
Worldstrides	Alexis Bourgeois
7 Mares GMBH	Tiago Pinto Pais
CET Academic Programs	Brian Wiehr
Academic Programs International	Shanaya Thompson
Global Economic Ventures	Anna Brady
EDU Trips	Kate Coffey

IES Abroad	Robin Leephaibul
American Universities International Programs Limited	Kevin Arscott
Diversity Travel	Beverly Weir
SIT Study Abroad	Ben Efird
Learn From Travel	Roman Yavich
Learn Russian in the EU	Sergey Simonov
Service Without Borders	Daniel Hindman
Knomadic	Maria Rojas
SRISA	Emily Cucalon, Allison Reyna
Via Via Travel	Vlatka Maric
Wayra Spanish Institute	Diego Patt
Virginia Tech	Glenn Bugh, Katie Heiderscheit, Emily Talley, Candice Albert, Bob Efird, Keith Goyne, David Robertson, Ragheda Nassereddine, Margie Deck, Marie Medley, Levi Henry, Mary Helmick, John Spence, Theresa Johansson, Emily Schwartz



Request for Proposal # 952642408

For

Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Program Providers

June 4, 2024

Note: This public body does not discriminate against faith-based organizations in accordance with the *Code of Virginia*, § 2.2-4343.1 or against a bidder or offeror because of race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by state law relating to discrimination in employment.

RFP # 952642408, Study Abroad Program Master Service Agreement Providers

INCLUDE THIS PAGE WITH YOUR PROPOSAL, SIGNATURE AT SUBMISSION IS REQUIRED

DUE DATE: Proposals will be received until **July 25, 2024 at 3:00 PM**. Failure to submit proposals to the correct location by the designated date and hour will result in disqualification.

INQUIRIES: All inquiries for information regarding this solicitation should be directed to Levi Henry, Phone: (540) 231-7852 e-mail: lhenry29@vt.edu. All inquiries will be answered in the form of an addendum. Inquiries must be submitted by 2:00 PM on July 3, 2024. Inquiries must be submitted to the procurement officer identified in this solicitation.

OPTIONAL PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE: An optional pre-proposal conference will be held on **June 27, 2024 at 2:00 PM**. See RFP Section IX, Pre-proposal Conference for additional information.

PROPOSAL SUBMISSION:

***Please note, proposal submission procedures have changed effective March 2023.**

Proposals may NOT be hand delivered to the Procurement Office.

Proposals should be submitted electronically through Virginia Tech’s procurement portal. This portal allows you access to view business opportunities and submit bids and proposals to Virginia Tech digitally and securely.

Proposals must be submitted electronically at:

<https://bids.sciquest.com/apps/Router/PublicEvent?CustomerOrg=VATech>

Vendors will need to register through this procurement portal, hosted by Jaggaer. **It is encouraged for all vendors to register prior to the proposal submission deadline to avoid late submissions.** Registration is easy and free. If you have any challenges with the registration process, please contact Jaggaer Support at 1-800-233-1121 or procurement@vt.edu.

Click on the opportunity and log in to your vendor account to begin preparing your submission. Upon completion, you will receive a submission receipt email confirmation. Virginia Tech will not confirm receipt of proposals. It is the responsibility of the offeror to make sure their proposal is delivered on time.

Hard copy or email proposals will not be accepted. Late proposals will not be accepted, nor will additional time be granted to any individual Vendor.

Attachments must be smaller than 50MB in order to be received by the University.

In compliance with this Request For Proposal and to all the conditions imposed therein and hereby incorporated by reference, the undersigned offers and agrees to furnish the goods or services in accordance with the attached signed proposal and as mutually agreed upon by subsequent negotiation.

AUTHORIZED SIGNATURE: _____ Date: _____

[INCLUDE THIS PAGE]

I. PURPOSE:

This Request for Proposal (RFP) seeks to solicit proposals to establish a contract through competitive negotiations by Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), an agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

As a leading research institution, Virginia Tech engages in global teaching, research, and service, which includes offering a robust study abroad program portfolio. In an effort to streamline the University's approach to selecting providers that assist with study abroad programs, we are encouraging proposals from all potential providers to be submitted for review in order to establish master service agreements with the University. Providers who have worked with the University in the past and those who wish to work with the University in the future are highly encouraged to participate in this solicitation. Providers who are currently affiliated and working with Virginia Tech on existing programs are also strongly encouraged to submit in this solicitation cycle so as to be part of the full portfolio. The goal through this process is to centralize oversight of study-abroad provider services and networks. The University invites all qualified providers to submit a proposal.

II. SMALL, WOMAN-OWNED AND MINORITY (SWAM) BUSINESS PARTICIPATION:

The mission of the Virginia Tech supplier opportunity program is to foster inclusion in the university supply chain and accelerate economic growth in our local communities through the engagement and empowerment of high quality and cost competitive small, minority-owned, women-owned, and local suppliers. Virginia Tech encourages prime suppliers, contractors, and service providers to facilitate the participation of small businesses, and businesses owned by women and minorities through partnerships, joint ventures, subcontracts, and other inclusive and innovative relationships.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/>

III. CONTRACT PERIOD:

The term of this contract is for two year(s), or as negotiated. There will be an option for four (4) two-year renewals, or as negotiated.

IV. EVA BUSINESS-TO-GOVERNMENT ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT SYSTEM:

The eVA Internet electronic procurement solution streamlines and automates government purchasing activities within the Commonwealth of Virginia. Virginia Tech, and other state agencies and institutions, have been directed by the Governor to maximize the use of this system in the procurement of goods and services. *We are, therefore, requesting that your firm register as a vendor within the eVA system.*

There are transaction fees involved with the use of eVA. These fees must be considered in the provision of quotes, bids and price proposals offered to Virginia Tech. Failure to register within the eVA system may result in the quote, bid or proposal from your firm being rejected and the award made to another vendor who is registered in the eVA system.

Registration in the eVA system is accomplished on-line. Your firm must provide the necessary information. Please visit the eVA website portal at <http://www.eva.virginia.gov/pages/eva-registration-buyer-vendor.htm> and **register both with eVA and Ariba**. *This process needs to be completed before Virginia Tech can issue your firm a Purchase Order or contract.* If your firm conducts business from multiple geographic locations, please register these locations in your initial registration.

For registration and technical assistance, reference the eVA website at: <https://eva.virginia.gov/>, or call 866-289-7367 or 804-371-2525.

V. CONTRACT PARTICIPATION:



It is the intent of this solicitation and resulting contract to allow for cooperative procurement. Accordingly, any public body, public or private health or educational institutions, or Virginia Tech's affiliated corporations and/or partnerships may access any resulting contract if authorized by the contractor.

Participation in this cooperative procurement is strictly voluntary. If authorized by the Contractor, the resultant contract may be extended to the entities indicated above to purchase at contract prices in accordance with contract terms. The Contractor shall notify Virginia Tech in writing of any such entities accessing the contract, if requested. No modification of this contract or execution of a separate contract is required to participate. The Contractor will provide semi-annual usage reports for all entities accessing the Contract, as requested. Participating entities shall place their own orders directly with the Contractor and shall fully and independently administer their use of the contract to include contractual disputes, invoicing and payments without direct administration from Virginia Tech. Virginia Tech shall not be held liable for any costs or damages incurred by any other participating entity as a result of any authorization by the Contractor to extend the contract. It is understood and agreed that Virginia Tech is not responsible for the acts or omissions of any entity, and will not be considered in default of the contract no matter the circumstances.

Use of this contract does not preclude any participating entity from using other contracts or competitive processes as the need may be.

VI. STATEMENT OF NEEDS/SCOPE OF WORK:

Virginia Tech's current faculty-led program portfolio includes 90 programs across all academic areas on all continents including Antarctica. As a comprehensive institution with a large global engagement portfolio, we aim to identify a network of providers to support high-quality study abroad services aligned with the Forum on Education Abroad's *Standard of Good Practice* and *Code of Ethics* that maintain the existing breadth of the portfolio as well as its geographic diversity.

- A. Values: Virginia Tech requests proposals that align with the following Global Education Office values and reflect a commitment to:
 - a. Concrete measures to promote equity, inclusion, and access; these could include, among others:
 - i. Policies and procedures aligned with inclusive excellence and support staff committed to fostering an environment of inclusion and belonging.
 - ii. Targeted marketing and support materials for under-represented groups

- iii. Support for students with financial need
 - iv. Identity-based on-site resources to support student success
 - v. Guidance and specific program recommendations for students with disabilities
 - 1. Web and other digital technologies, the built environment, and any domain in which thoughtful design, management, and procedures can improve disability access.
 - b. Intercultural learning, global awareness, and anticolonial action, for example:
 - i. Cultivation of sensitivity to identity, power, and positionality issues
 - ii. Standard inclusion of intercultural engagement and reflection activities
 - iii. Guidance on the development of intercultural engagement skills for career readiness
 - iv. Hiring of local teams, application local pedagogy, and redistribution of wealth to the communities that make study abroad possible
 - c. Ethical engagement and service with/within local communities that reflect respect for community care and a commitment to place-based pedagogy
 - i. Engagement with host communities in ways that reflect their needs and contribute to their well-being
 - ii. Commitment to continuity of community engagement.
 - iii. Prioritization of the health, safety, and perspective of local communities
 - d. Practicing and prioritizing sustainability
 - i. Program design with sustainability, environmental justice, and climate action as a foundation
 - ii. Incorporation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals into the program experience and curriculum
 - iii. Options to offset study abroad travel emissions
 - e. Modeling financial integrity and good stewardship
 - i. Transparent budgetary practices
 - ii. Concrete measures to provide high-quality services at the lowest cost possible
 - f. Opportunities to foster global virtual collaborations
 - i. Pedagogy and practices aligned with Collaborative Online Internal Learning and Virtual Exchange
 - ii. Technology and other infrastructure-related capacity to facilitate virtual exchanges
- B. Liability, Emergency Medical & Security Health Insurance Coverage
- a. Successful proposals must include applicable insurance coverage that meets VT's requirements, as shown in ATTACHMENT A, Section 7 – INSURANCE.

- b. The university has standard study abroad insurance coverage. Providers shall not require additional insurance coverage beyond what is outlined in ATTACHMENT A, Section 7 – INSURANCE.
- c. Providers must maintain an emergency action and communications plan that is shared with the University and program leaders in advance. The organization must provide a single communication channel 24 hours a day to professionals who specialize in crisis and emergency management to support in an emergency. This service must be able to guide Virginia Tech staff and students on safety and security precautions and if required coordinate evacuation services.

C. Program Support

- a. Appropriate academic content
 - i. If providing academic services, providers must reflect a commitment to high-quality academics to align with Virginia Tech’s curriculum and the learning objectives of the program.
- b. In-country support
 - i. On-site personnel: Virginia Tech’s Global Travel Policy indicates a faculty-to-student ratio of 1:15. The standard minimum program enrollment is 10; however, programs may run with fewer students if financially viable. Virginia Tech seeks providers with the ability to offer in-country support staff. Such staff should be fluent in the host language, familiar with the location, and available 24/7 to assist in emergencies. Availability of a local/cultural guide and/or translator (if relevant) is also important.
 - ii. Ground Transportation: The University requires safe and reliable airport transfers and ground transportation at each location. The bidder must be able to provide motor coach/bus transportation if required for group activities such as company visits, academic/business lectures, cultural activities and group meals. Ground transportation vendors arranged by the provider must meet all local requirements for licensing and registration.
 - iii. Lodging: Lodging must be secured at three-star equivalent hotels or hostels unless otherwise specified. Accommodation in private homes with host families may be requested for some programs. Depending on the location and availability double, triple, or quad occupancy rooms can be reserved for students and single occupancy rooms for faculty/staff. The accommodation should be located near city centers or sites relevant to the program and include wireless internet access. Accommodation facilities must meet any local requirements for licensing, health, and safety.
 - iv. Site Visits: Ability to arrange cultural, business, industry, laboratory, and other visits, depending on the program requirements.
 - v. Meals: Ability to arrange group meals as requested by the program leader; knowledge and recommendations to students for convenient and inexpensive options for other meals.

- vi. Excursions/Activities: Ability to create and implement an itinerary of local excursions and activities that support the expressed learning outcomes of each program.

D. Communications

- a. Providers must offer a dedicated service team for each program that will be responsible for scheduling and facilitating meetings (initial planning calls related to the proposal, pre-departure logistics and orientation, on-site services, post-program debriefing, etc.). The service team must provide regular status updates throughout the planning process and should also be available post-program for debriefing and closure of any outstanding issues.
- b. During the program, the service team must provide multiple redundant emergency contact protocols to allow the traveling group to seamlessly communicate directly with the study abroad provider, the in-country ground team, the guide, the University, and other relevant stakeholders. In the event of unforeseeable events, the provider should notify of program alterations and offer regular updates to the University regarding booking confirmation and payment deadlines.

E. Pre-Departure/Upon Arrival Support

- a. Providers must offer country-specific expertise including site-specific and collaboration on pre-departure orientation. All Virginia Tech programs are required to host at least one pre-departure orientation and an upon-arrival orientation at each destination. These sessions must include the following content: familiarization with the locality; important logistics; emergency response protocols; communications plan; site-specific and cultural information; and a health, safety, and security briefing).

F. Air Travel

- a. Though Virginia Tech program participants typically make their own air travel arrangements, providers should be able to book group air travel if requested by the program organizer.

G. Marketing & Recruitment

- a. Virginia Tech values providers who are able to assist in marketing and recruitment efforts, including but not limited to support for information sessions, and content creation in alignment with Virginia Tech's brand identity and style guide.

H. Data Privacy Protections

- a. To the extent applicable, Contractor agrees to hold student information, including any personally identifiable student information or education records as those terms are defined under federal law, ("Confidential Data") in strict confidence and warrants to University that it will use reasonable industry practices to establish and maintain adequate procedures to ensure the confidentiality and privacy of such Confidential Data, from unauthorized use or disclosure in violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

I. Program Cancellation and Return Policy:

In the event that Virginia Tech wishes to cancel any program 60 days before the start date (the "Cancellation Deadline") due to low enrollment or any other reason, Virginia Tech will

receive a refund of 100% of uncommitted and unexpended program fees. There will be no refund if Virginia Tech wishes to cancel the program after the Cancellation Deadline. Cancellations must be submitted in writing to the Contractor and will be noted based on the date notification is received. [Subject to "Acts of God" section below.]

In the unlikely event that the U.S. Department of State or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issues a travel advisory of health notice of Level 3 or higher advising against travel to host country locations during the program and Virginia Tech wishes to cancel the program, Virginia Tech will receive a refund of 100% of uncommitted and unexpended program fees as of the date Virginia Tech notifies the Contractor in writing of the cancellation due to the U.S. Department of State or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advisory or safety cancellation.

VII. PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION:

A. Specific Requirements

Proposals should be as thorough and detailed as possible so that Virginia Tech may properly evaluate your capabilities to provide the required goods or services. Offerors are required to submit the following information/items as a complete proposal:

1. Plan for providing the services in accordance with the scope of work as outlined above in section VI. Offeror shall demonstrate understanding and commitment to adhere to the expectations of the University.
2. A description for different types of program offering(s) offeror is able to provide to the University.
3. Experience / Qualifications
 - a. Industry Recognition your Company has received.
 - b. Forum on Education Abroad membership details
 - c. Additional relevant certifications within the industry
 - d. Client List / Higher Education Client List (preferably 3-5 references)
4. Crisis Management and Emergency Response procedures
5. Medical, Emergency, and Evacuation Insurance Coverage details
6. Scheduling, Planning, and/or Lead Time Requirements or Considerations
7. Participant Withdrawal Policy
8. Submission of Insurance Documentation (COI) in accordance with ATTACHMENT A, Section 7 - INSURANCE.
9. Participation of Small, Women-owned and Minority-owned Business (SWaM) Business: If your business cannot be classified as SWaM, describe your plan for utilizing SWaM subcontractors if awarded a contract. Describe your ability to provide reporting on SWaM subcontracting spend when requested. If your firm or any business that you plan to

subcontract with can be classified as SWaM, but has not been certified by the Virginia Department of Small Business and Supplier Diversity (SBSD), it is expected that the certification process will be initiated no later than the time of the award. If your firm is currently certified, you agree to maintain your certification for the life of the contract. For assistance with SWaM certification, visit the SBSB website at <http://www.sbsd.virginia.gov/>

10. The return of the Submission Instruction page and addenda, if any, signed and filled out as required.

D. General Requirements

1. RFP Response: In order to be considered for selection, Offerors shall submit a complete response to this RFP to include;

- a. **One (1) electronic document** in WORD format or searchable PDF of the entire proposal as one document, INCLUDING ALL ATTACHMENTS must be uploaded through the Virginia Tech online submission portal. Refer to page 2 for instructions.

Any proprietary information should be clearly marked in accordance with 2.d. below.

- b. Should the proposal contain **proprietary information**, provide **one (1) redacted electronic copy** of the proposal and attachments **with proprietary portions removed or blacked out**. This redacted copy should follow the same upload procedures as described on Page 1 of this RFP. This redacted copy should be clearly marked "*Redacted Copy*" within the name of the document. The classification of an entire proposal document, line item prices and/or total proposal prices as proprietary or trade secrets is not acceptable. Virginia Tech shall not be responsible for the Contractor's failure to exclude proprietary information from this redacted copy.

No other distribution of the proposals shall be made by the Offeror.

2. Proposal Preparation:

- a. Proposals shall be signed by an authorized representative of the Offeror. All information requested should be submitted. Failure to submit all information requested may result in Virginia Tech requiring prompt submission of missing information and/or giving a lowered evaluation of the proposal. Proposals which are substantially incomplete or lack key information may be rejected by Virginia Tech at its discretion. Mandatory requirements are those required by law or regulation or are such that they cannot be waived and are not subject to negotiation.
- b. Proposals should be prepared simply and economically providing a straightforward, concise description of capabilities to satisfy the requirements of the RFP. Emphasis should be on completeness and clarity of content.
- c. Proposals should be organized in the order in which the requirements are presented in the RFP. All pages of the proposal should be numbered. Each paragraph in the proposal should reference the paragraph number of the corresponding section of the RFP. It is also helpful to cite the paragraph number, subletter, and repeat the text of the requirement as it appears in the RFP. If a response covers more than one page, the paragraph number and subletter should be repeated at the top of the next page. The proposal should contain a table of contents which cross references the RFP

requirements. Information which the offeror desires to present that does not fall within any of the requirements of the RFP should be inserted at an appropriate place or be attached at the end of the proposal and designated as additional material. Proposals that are not organized in this manner risk elimination from consideration if the evaluators are unable to find where the RFP requirements are specifically addressed.

- d. Ownership of all data, material and documentation originated and prepared for Virginia Tech pursuant to the RFP shall belong exclusively to Virginia Tech and be subject to public inspection in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Trade secrets or proprietary information submitted by an Offeror shall not be subject to public disclosure under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. However, to prevent disclosure the Offeror must invoke the protections of Section 2.2-4342F of the Code of Virginia, in writing, either before or at the time the data or other materials is submitted. The written request must specifically identify the data or other materials to be protected and state the reasons why protection is necessary. –The proprietary or trade secret material submitted must be identified by some distinct method such as highlighting or underlining and must indicate only the specific words, figures, or paragraphs that constitute trade secret or proprietary information. The classification of an entire proposal document, line item prices and/or total proposal prices as proprietary or trade secrets is not acceptable and may result in rejection of the proposal.

- 3. Oral Presentation: Offerors who submit a proposal in response to this RFP may be required to give an oral presentation of their proposal to Virginia Tech.—This will provide an opportunity for the Offeror to clarify or elaborate on the proposal but will in no way change the original proposal. Virginia Tech will schedule the time and location of these presentations. Oral presentations are an option of Virginia Tech and may not be conducted. Therefore, proposals should be complete.

VIII. SELECTION CRITERIA AND AWARD:

A. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by Virginia Tech using the following:

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Maximum Point Value</u>
1. Quality of services offered and suitability for the intended purposes	30
2. Qualifications and experiences of Offeror in providing the services	30
3. Specific plans or methodology to be used to provide the Services	30
4. Participation of Small, Women-Owned and Minority (SWAM) Business	10
Total	100

B. Award

Selection shall be made of two or more offerors deemed to be fully qualified and best suited among those submitting proposals on the basis of the evaluation factors included in the Request for Proposal, including price, if so stated in the Request for Proposal. Negotiations shall then be conducted with the offerors so selected. Price shall be considered, but need not be the sole determining factor. After negotiations have been conducted with each offeror so selected, Virginia Tech shall select the offeror which, in its opinion, has made the best proposal, and shall award the contract to that offeror. Virginia Tech may cancel this Request for Proposal or reject proposals at any time prior to an award. Should Virginia Tech determine in writing and in its sole discretion that only one offeror has made the best proposal, a contract may be negotiated and awarded to that offeror. The award document will be a contract incorporating by reference all the requirements, terms and conditions of this solicitation and the Contractor's proposal as negotiated.

Virginia Tech reserves the right to award multiple contracts as a result of this solicitation.

IX. OPTIONAL PRE-PROPOSAL CONFERENCE:

An optional pre-proposal conference will be held on **June 27, 2024 @ 2:00 PM**. The purpose of this conference is to allow potential Offerors an opportunity to present questions and obtain clarification relative to any facet of this solicitation.

ZOOM Link: <https://virginiatech.zoom.us/j/83100288578>

Meeting ID: 831 0028 8578

While attendance at this conference will not be a prerequisite to submitting a proposal, offerors who intend to submit a proposal are encouraged to attend.

Any changes resulting from this conference will be issued in an addendum to this solicitation.

X. INVOICES:

Invoices for goods or services provided under any contract resulting from this solicitation shall be submitted by email to vtinvoices@vt.edu or by mail to:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)
Accounts Payable
North End Center, Suite 3300
300 Turner Street NW
Blacksburg, Virginia 24061

XI. METHOD OF PAYMENT:

Virginia Tech will authorize payment to the contractor as negotiated in any resulting contract from the aforementioned Request for Proposal.

Payment can be expedited through the use of the Wells One AP Control Payment System. Virginia Tech strongly encourages participation in this program. For more information on this program please refer to Virginia Tech's Procurement website: <http://www.procurement.vt.edu/vendor/wellsone.html> or contact the procurement officer identified in the RFP.

XII. ADDENDUM:

Any **ADDENDUM** issued for this solicitation may be accessed at <http://www.apps.vpfin.vt.edu/html.docs/bids.php>. Since a paper copy of the addendum will not be mailed to you, we encourage you to check the web site regularly.

XIII. COMMUNICATIONS:

Communications regarding this solicitation shall be formal from the date of issue, until either a Contractor has been selected or the Procurement Department rejects all proposals. Formal communications will be directed to the procurement officer listed on this solicitation. Informal communications, including but not limited to request for information, comments or speculations regarding this solicitation to any University employee other than a Procurement Department representative may result in the offending Offeror's proposal being rejected.

XIV. CONTROLLING VERSION OF SOLICITATION:

The posted version of the solicitation and any addenda issued by Virginia Tech Procurement Services is the mandatory controlling version of the document. Any modification of/or additions to the solicitation by the Offeror shall not modify the official version of the solicitation issued by Virginia Tech Procurement Services. Such modifications or additions to the solicitation by the Offeror may be cause for rejection of the proposal; however, Virginia Tech reserves the right to decide, on a case by case basis, in its sole discretion, whether to reject such a proposal.

XV. TERMS AND CONDITIONS:

This solicitation and any resulting contract/purchase order shall be governed by the attached terms and conditions, see Attachment A.

XVI. CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION:

- A. Theresa Johansson, Director, Global Education Office, at Virginia Tech or their designee, shall be identified as the Contract Administrator and shall use all powers under the contract to enforce its faithful performance.
- B. The Contract Administrator, or their designee, shall determine the amount, quantity, acceptability, fitness of all aspects of the services and shall decide all other questions in connection with the services. The Contract Administrator, or their designee, shall not have authority to approve changes in the services which alter the concept or which call for an extension of time for this contract. Any modifications made must be authorized by the Virginia Tech Procurement Department through a written amendment to the contract.

XVII. ATTACHMENTS:

- Attachment A - Terms and Conditions
- Attachment B - Template for Master Agreement
- Attachment C – Template for Addendum to Master Agreement

ATTACHMENT A

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

RFP GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

See:

https://www.procurement.vt.edu/content/dam/procurement_vt_edu/docs/terms/GTC_RFP_02182022.pdf

ADDITIONAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. **ADDITIONAL GOODS AND SERVICES:** The University may acquire other goods or services that the supplier provides other than those specifically solicited. The University reserves the right, subject to mutual agreement, for the Contractor to provide additional goods and/or services under the same pricing, terms and conditions and to make modifications or enhancements to the existing goods and services. Such additional goods and services may include other products, components, accessories, subsystems, or related services newly introduced during the term of the Agreement.
2. **AUDIT:** The Contractor hereby agrees to retain all books, records, and other documents relative to this contract for five (5) years after final payment, or until audited by the Commonwealth of Virginia, whichever is sooner. Virginia Tech, its authorized agents, and/or the State auditors shall have full access and the right to examine any of said materials during said period.
3. **AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS:** It is understood and agreed between the parties herein that Virginia Tech shall be bound hereunder only to the extent of the funds available or which may hereafter become available for the purpose of this agreement.
4. **CANCELLATION OF CONTRACT:** Virginia Tech reserves the right to cancel and terminate any resulting contract, in part or in whole, without penalty, upon 60 days written notice to the Contractor. In the event the initial contract period is for more than 12 months, the resulting contract may be terminated by either party, without penalty, after the initial 12 months of the contract period upon 60 days written notice to the other party. Any contract cancellation notice shall not relieve the Contractor of the obligation to deliver and/or perform on all outstanding orders issued prior to the effective date of cancellation.
5. **CONTRACT DOCUMENTS:** The contract entered into by the parties shall consist of the Request for Proposal including all modifications thereof, the proposal submitted by the Contractor, the written results of negotiations, the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, all of which shall be referred to collectively as the Contract Documents.
6. **IDENTIFICATION OF PROPOSAL:** Virginia Tech will only be accepting electronic submission of proposals. All submissions must be submitted to the Virginia Tech online submission portal. Upon completion you will be directed to your Submission Receipt. Virginia Tech will not confirm receipt of proposals. It is the responsibility of the offeror to make sure their proposal is delivered on time. **Attachments must be smaller than 50MB in order to be received by the University.** Proposals may **NOT** be hand delivered to the Procurement Office.

7. INSURANCE

The [Contractor] shall maintain (and shall cause its independent contractors or subcontractors to maintain), at its own expense, with a company or companies licensed to do business in the Commonwealth of Virginia the following insurance coverages:

Workers' Compensation

Statutory Virginia Limits

Commercial General Liability – to include coverages for premises & operations, personal & advertising injury, rented premises, and bodily injury.

\$1,000,000 per occurrence

\$2,000,000 aggregate

\$2,000,000 products/completed operations

Business Auto Liability – to include owned, non-owned, and hired car coverage

\$1,000,000 each accident, combined single limit

Umbrella Liability - in excess of commercial general & business auto liability

\$5,000,000 per occurrence

All coverages listed above pursuant to this Agreement shall be primary and non-contributory, and shall be maintained throughout the Term of this Agreement. All insurance policies listed above, with the exception of Workers' Compensation, must list "Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the Commonwealth of Virginia, its officers, officials, employees, agents, and volunteers" as additional insureds. Contractor's obligation to maintain Workers' Compensation insurance applies only to the extent that it is required by statute in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the Contractor's obligation to maintain Business Auto Liability insurance applies only to the extent that Contractor owns or utilizes automobiles. Contractor agrees that the insurance requirements specified in this Agreement do not reduce the liability of the Contractor, and that Contractor is responsible for maintaining its own insurance coverage on its personal property.

Evidence that such insurance is in effect shall be provided upon execution of this Agreement, annually thereafter, and at the request of Virginia Tech in the form of a Certificate of Insurance. The Certificate of Insurance must list "Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the Commonwealth of Virginia, its officers, officials, employees, agents, and volunteers" as additional insureds. The Certificate of Insurance should list the following as the certificate holder, and the certificate sent to the same:

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the Commonwealth of Virginia

Office of Risk Management

North End Center, Suite 3300 (MC0310)

300 Turner Street

Blacksburg, VA 24061

riskmanagement@vt.edu

8. **NOTICES:** Any notices to be given by either party to the other pursuant to any contract resulting from this solicitation shall be in writing via email.
9. **SEVERAL LIABILITY:** Virginia Tech will be severally liable to the extent of its purchases made against any contract resulting from this solicitation. Applicable entities described herein will be severally liable to the extent of their purchases made against any contract resulting from this solicitation.
10. **CLOUD OR WEB HOSTED SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS:** For agreements involving Cloud-based Web-hosted software/applications refer to link for additional terms and conditions: http://www.ita.vt.edu/purchasing/VT_Cloud_Data_Protection_Addendum_final03102017.pdf

ATTACHMENT B

Template for

Master Agreement for Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

between

Contractor

and

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)

The following document serves as a service agreement (“Agreement”) between _____ (“Contractor”) and Virginia Tech for the operation of customized faculty-led study abroad programs. In the interest of expanding educational opportunities and to provide a unique learning experience for graduate and undergraduate students, as well as promote collaboration between the two parties, Contractor and Virginia Tech agree to the following provisions:

Award: This Master Services Agreement (MSA) results from a public and competitive solicitation for services issued by Virginia Tech, followed by the subsequent proposal received from the Contractor. The following documents contain additional terms that are hereby incorporated by reference into the MSA in the following order of precedence:

- a. This executed master agreement for custom faculty-led study abroad programs
- b. Summary of Negotiations (dated xx/xx/xx)
- c. Contractor’s Proposal (dated xx/xx/xx)
- d. Request for Proposal Addendum (dated xx/xx/xx)
- e. Request for Proposal Document (dated June 7, 2024)

Program:

This Agreement is based on the principle of reciprocity and expresses the interest of both parties to cultivate educational experiences for Virginia Tech students and faculty through collaboration with the Contractor.

Academics:

The programs’ academic focus will depend upon the academic interests and expertise of individual faculty/staff involved. Contractor will provide the following academic services for the Program participants in an executed Addendum specifying the details of each program.

Fees:

The costs per person will be determined in advance of each customized program and specified in the executed Addendum.

The fee may include but is not limited to. The fee shall be subject to the agreement of both parties:

- a. Administrative Fee
- b. Orientation
- c. Accommodation
- d. Transportation
- e. Airport pick up on arrival day and transfer to the airport on departure day
- f. Meals
- g. Translator fees for project work
- h. All project materials and supplies

Unless notated otherwise in the Executed Addendum, all services and accommodations are to be selected, facilitated, and arranged by the Contractor in consultation with Virginia Tech.

Participant Registration:

Virginia Tech students will be nominated by the academic department to ensure students meet Virginia Tech’s institutional requirements for study abroad. The final selection of all participants in the program from the Virginia Tech student body shall remain in the sole and absolute discretion of the specific department for which the program is designed for. All Virginia Tech students selected to participate shall comply with all applicable requirements of the Contractor as detailed within the Executed Addendum.

Payment Schedule:

Full program payment is due 30 days prior to the start of a program. The Contractor will issue an invoice to Virginia Tech a minimum of 60 days prior to the start of a program. Participants are responsible for remitting payment directly to the Contractor for the program fee and services rendered.

Insurance:

In order to participate in the program, all participants MUST acquire international medical and security insurance coverage. Virginia Tech will ensure that all participants have medical and security assistance coverage through the university-contracted vendor for the duration of the program dates.

Acts of God:

Neither party shall be responsible for failure to perform this Agreement if circumstances beyond their reasonable control, including, but not limited to: acts of God, governmental authority, terrorism, or war in or with the United States or the Program’s location prevent such performance.

Participant Withdrawal Policy:

In the event that a participant wishes to withdraw from the program prior to the start of the program refund is at the discretion of the Contractor.

Terms of the Agreement:

The Agreement shall become effective on the day representatives of both parties affix their signatures, will be in force for a period of five years, and is subject to revision or modification by mutual written agreement.

In witness hereof, the authorized representatives of Contractor and Virginia Tech hereby execute this Agreement on the dates set forth below.

For Contractor

_____ Date: _____
Name
Title

For Virginia Tech

_____ Date: _____
Name
Director of Procurement

ATTACHMENT C

Template for

Addendum to Master Agreement for Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs

between

Contractor and

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)

Date

The following document serves as an addendum to the agreement for Custom Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs ("Master Agreement") between Contractor, and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (hereinafter "Virginia Tech") for the operation of the XXXXX Program in XXXXXXXXXX.

The College of XXXXXXXXXX at Virginia Tech and Contractor are partnering to offer the "XXXXXXXXX Program" in TERM/YEAR subject to the terms of this Addendum.

This Addendum outlines the specifics of the program. All Terms and Conditions of the Master Agreement prevail.

Program:

Program Name:

A. Program dates

- a. The program begins on _____ in the following locations _____
- b. The program ends on _____ in the following locations _____

B. Program inclusions

- a. Participant lodging accommodations will include _____
- b. Participant transportation will include _____
- c. Other inclusions

C. Program costs

- a. The Program Fee is USD _____ per Participant
- b. For each program track offered, Contractor will provide Virginia Tech with _____ free faculty/staff placements.
- c. Beyond this allocation, faculty/staff costs are USD _____ per Program Leader.
- d. Additional staff from Virginia Tech will be charged the normal program fee by Contractor. Such fees will be due at the same time as students' program fees.

D. Number of Participants

- a. Contractor requires a minimum enrollment of ___ Participants and _ Program Leader from Virginia Tech in order to offer the program.
- b. If there is need for additional space, Virginia tech will contact Contractor to see is space is available.

E. Deadlines

- a. The final enrollment and deposit deadline is _____.
- i. Final faculty/staff and student participant names (as written on passport) and, insofar as the information is disclosed to Virginia Tech, their gender, dietary

requirements, allergies, and special accommodations (if applicable) must be confirmed by this date (as per the template to be provided by Contractor).

ii. The non-refundable payment of ____% of the program fees or \$ ____ amount is due at this time.

b. Final payment and documentation deadline: _____

i. The balance of the payment of the program fees are due at this time.

ii. All remaining Participant information (completing the template provided by Contractor) is due.

F. Itinerary

a. Refer to attached draft itinerary

b. Virginia Tech acknowledges and agrees that the attached itinerary and program details are subject to change and are contingent upon factors including but not limited to, the availability of transport, and any changes imposed by third parties, among other possible changes. Decisions on itinerary changes will be made in the best interests of all participants and with regards to the health and safety of participants.

For Virginia Tech

Name

Dean of XXXXXXXX

Date

For Contractor

Name

Title

Date