

NAIS RESEARCH

NAIS and United Educators Study Abroad Risk Survey



National Association
of Independent Schools

www.nais.org



About NAIS and United Educators

The National Association of Independent Schools provides services to more than 1,800 schools and associations of schools in the United States and abroad, including 1,600 nonprofit, private K-12 schools in the U.S. that are self-determining in mission and program and are governed by independent boards. For more information, visit www.nais.org.

NAIS conducts research among schools nationally and then provides you with targeted, digested reports you can use to evaluate your own practices. Our research clearinghouse also identifies external research relevant to independent schools and helps you understand how to use the findings in your work. See the full suite of NAIS research reports at www.nais.org.

United Educators (UE) , a reciprocal risk retention group, is a licensed insurance company owned and governed by nearly 1,600 members representing thousands of schools, colleges, and universities throughout the United States. Our members range from small independent schools to multicampus public universities. UE was created in 1987 on the recommendation of a national task force organized by the National Association of College and University Business Officers. Our mandate is to provide schools, colleges, and universities with a long-term, stable alternative to commercial liability insurance. United Educators is Rated A (Excellent) by A.M. Best. For more information, visit www.ue.org.

NAIS and UE Study Abroad Risk Survey and Summit

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Survey Executive Summary

A majority of survey respondents offer one or more study abroad programs each year (53 percent), with 80 percent of schools reporting an average program length of less than one month. While schools run international programs to many different countries, the top five destinations are France, China, Spain, Italy, and Costa Rica.

Schools approach running a study abroad program in three different ways: Some are centralized through a single function or academic department (45 percent); some are centralized for oversight purposes through a single function or academic department with multiple functions or academic departments responsible for managing each program offered (31 percent); and a smaller number are dispersed across multiple functions or academic departments (15 percent). Money seems to be a challenge; half of the schools report having a budget under \$15,000 to run their international programs.

A majority of schools report fewer than 50 students participating in a study abroad program each year (58 percent), while 17 percent of schools have 100 or more students. Only 9 percent of schools require a student to participate in an international program to satisfy a course or graduate, and many schools (41 percent) do not accept students younger than sixth grade in their study abroad program. Almost every school (96 percent) requires parents of student participants to sign a release or waiver of liability. A lower percentage (80 percent) of schools require students to sign an assumption of risk form, which acknowledges the risks associated with the program.

While 81 percent of schools have a formal approval process for newly proposed study abroad programs, only 65 percent have a formal process to approve or select trip leaders. Of these schools, 89 percent use background checks for trip leaders. Respondents indicate that trip leaders are trained in three areas: procedures to follow during a crisis, appropriate behavior with students, and the application of the school code of conduct during the study abroad program.

Ninety-three percent of the schools have pre-trip orientation sessions, which students, trip leaders, and parents of student participants are required to attend. Some of the topics addressed during these sessions include student conduct and discipline, respect for other cultures, and risks associated with program location or activities.

Of schools that work with third-party vendors, 82 percent have written contracts with them. These contracts include insurance requirements, emergency and crisis management protocols, and orientation and on-site services for students.

Seventy percent of schools have a crisis management plan for their study abroad programs. Schools tend to buy different types of insurance, including general liability, health and medical assist, and evacuation and repatriation.

After students have arrived at the study abroad location, close to 70 percent of schools offer an on-site orientation that covers emergency contacts, local laws and customs, risks of the location, and so on. Twenty-one percent of schools vet host families and foreign national staff members who have direct and unsupervised contact with students participating in the program. Of these schools, only 39 percent use background checks to approve host families or foreign national staff members. Of those schools hiring local vendors, only 38 percent vet them.

Finally, after concluding study abroad programs, over half of the schools use surveys to assess them or obtain feedback on participants' experience. Fifty-seven percent of schools conduct surveys among participating students, while 59 percent ask trip leaders to complete a trip report.

Background

Global education and programming have been hot topics in independent school education since the early 2000s. However, the risks associated with these programs have raised concerns from school leaders considering such programs. There also appears to be a lack of concrete guidance in terms of best practices for managing risk in this evolving field. These issues reached a head in 2013 when a lawsuit brought by a student for an injury sustained on a school trip resulted in a multimillion dollar verdict against the independent school.

As a result, NAIS and United Educators have been working together to survey independent schools on their practices in key areas of international travel and risk management of these trips. The initial survey was launched in 2013. In order to gain additional feedback from the field, NAIS and United Educators also hosted a summit in October 2013, bringing together leaders in this area to further discuss common experiences, challenges, and practices in global education programs.

This report analyzes the data collected from the second edition of the survey, which was launched in fall 2018; it also incorporates insights from the 2013 Summit. (Totals may not equal 100 due to rounding.) By understanding the importance, prevalence, and practices of these programs, NAIS and UE will be better positioned to provide relevant and helpful resources aimed at decreasing potential risks to program participants and the sponsoring schools.

Survey Methodology

On September 13, 2018, an online survey was distributed among 2,152 independent school business officers. Out of the total messages sent, 102 bounced back, and 67 business officers opted out. The survey closed on October 19 and received an 11.6 percent response rate.

The survey was designed to gauge the extent to which independent schools use study abroad programs to enrich the student experience and the efforts taken to ensure that these programs are well-managed.

For purposes of this survey, “study abroad program” refers to any school-sponsored educational program offered to students involving travel to a foreign country for up to one academic year, including programs delivered at foreign institutions, ad hoc short-term programs led by school faculty, and experiential and service-learning trips.

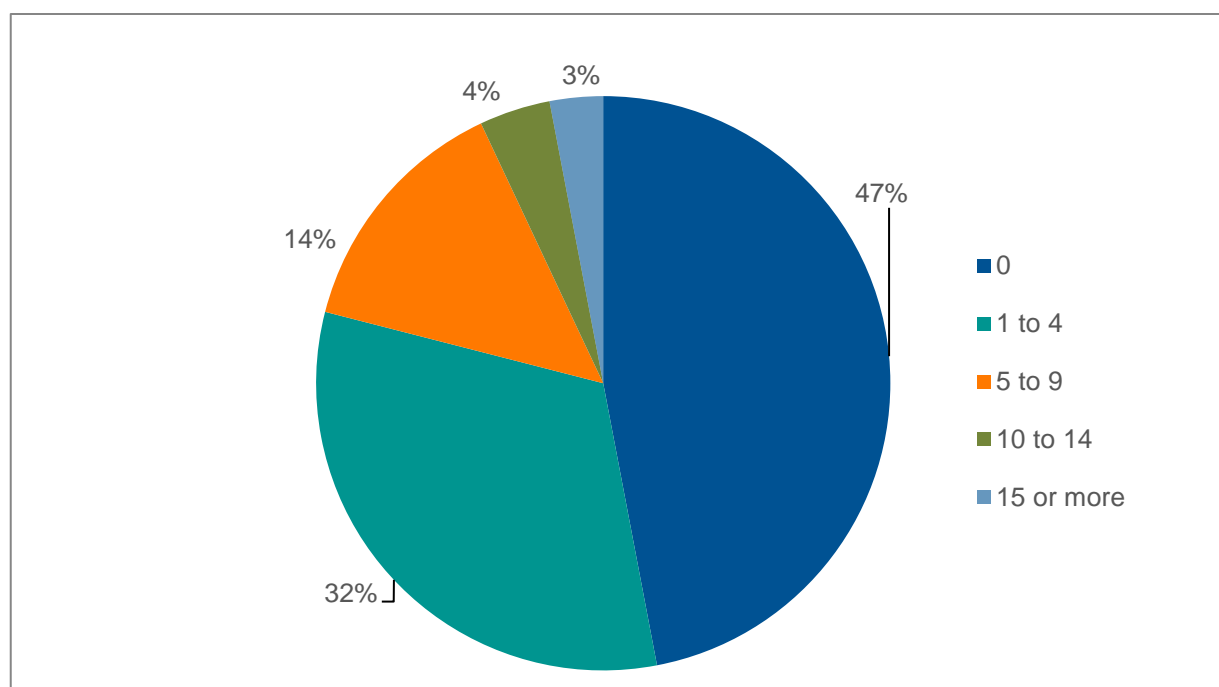
Key Findings

Characteristics of Study Abroad Programs

Number of Programs

Fifty-three percent of respondents in the survey reported offering study abroad programs, which is down from 64 percent in 2013. Thirty-two percent of them run between one and four programs, also down from 46 percent in 2013. Fourteen percent of schools offer five to nine study abroad programs.

How many study abroad programs does your school offer each year?



Schools with fewer programs tend to be smaller. Of those schools with one to four study abroad programs, around 56 percent had fewer than 500 students. In contrast, of schools with five to nine study abroad programs, 33 percent enrolled fewer than 500 students.

The number of international study programs also seemed to be correlated with the size of the

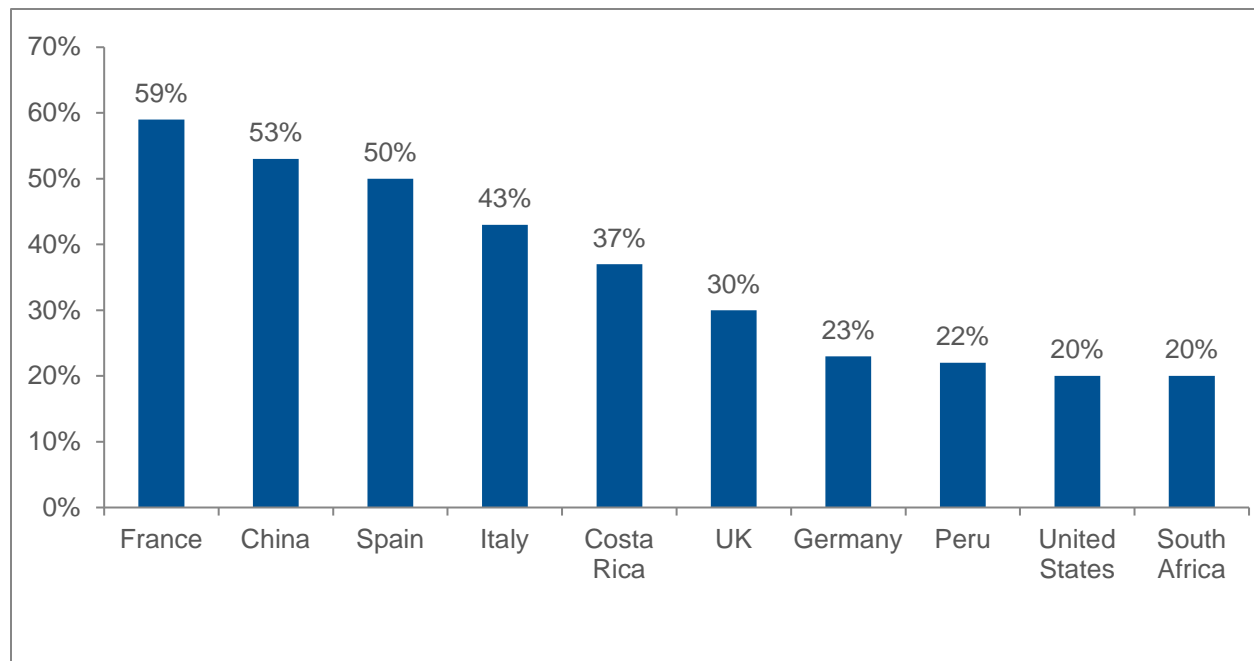
school's annual expenditures. Only 14 percent of schools with annual expenditures of under \$5 million run more than four programs a year, compared to 63 percent of schools with more than \$20 million in annual expenditures.

Countries Included

While the primary destinations for school travels abroad still include European countries within the top five destinations, schools are also traveling more to less developed nations. Close to half of respondents cited France as one of the destinations for study abroad programs (59 percent). Other countries completing the list of the top five included China (53 percent), Spain (50 percent), Italy (43 percent), and Costa Rica (37 percent). These top five nations are the same as they were in 2013.

Additional destinations outside of the top 10 included Ecuador, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Australia, Argentina, Greece, India, Cuba, Vietnam, Thailand, and the Dominican Republic.

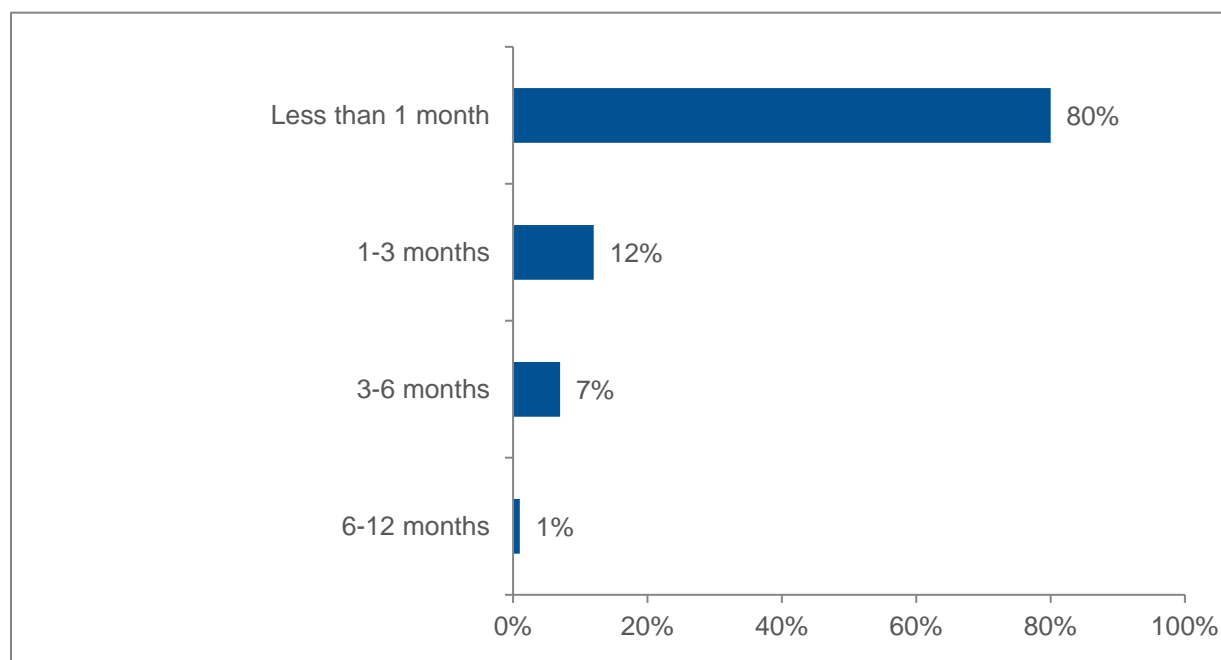
Over the past three years, in which countries has your school offered a study abroad program?



Length

The majority of schools (80 percent) have short-term international programs with an average length of less than 1 month. It is worth noting that some of these programs are volunteer/service trips or trips taking place over school vacations that do not require much time.

What is the average length of the study abroad programs offered by your school?

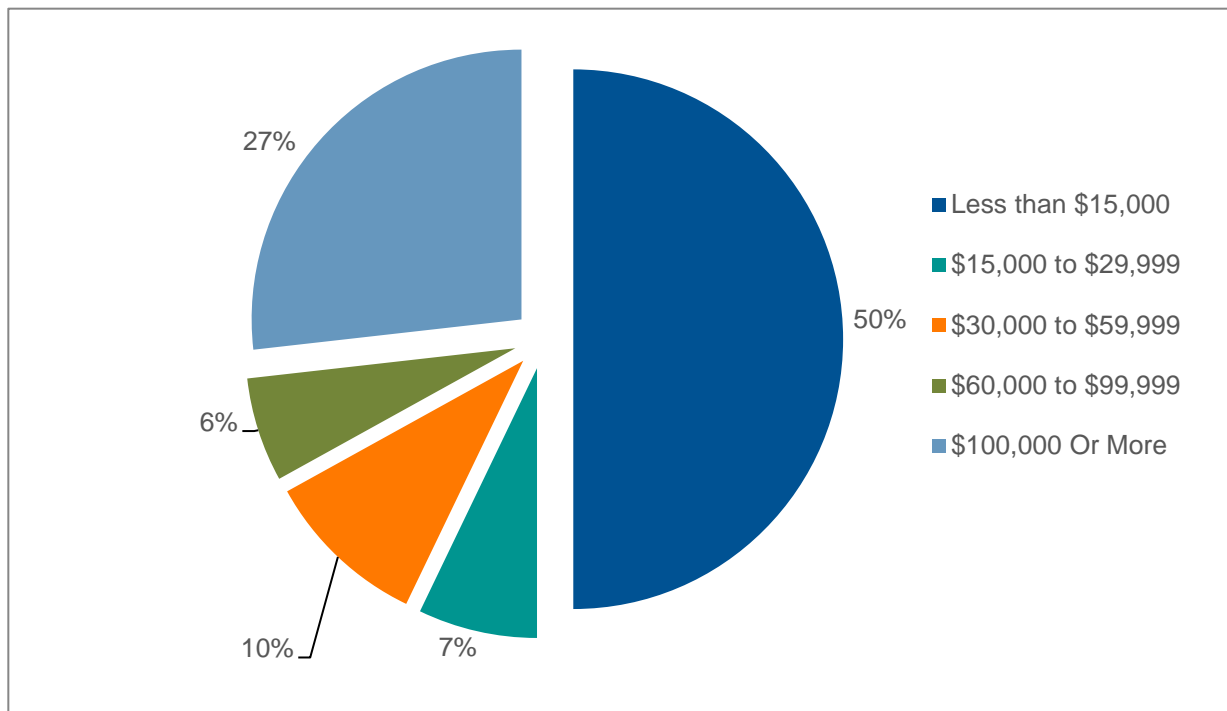


Budget

A slight majority of respondents reported that their schools have small budgets for international programs. Half of responding schools have a total budget under \$15,000, while 7 percent of them have a budget between \$15,000 and \$29,999. About 27 percent of schools have a budget of over \$100,000, which is up 12 percentage points from 2013. Schools with larger study abroad budgets tend to offer more study abroad programs: Only 25 percent of schools with study abroad budgets over \$15,000 offer more than four programs, while 70 percent of schools with a study abroad budget of over \$100,000 offer more than four programs. Schools with smaller study abroad budgets are also less likely to offer programs to a variety of countries: 49 percent of

schools with budgets under \$15,000 offered programs to more than 10 countries in the past 3 years, while 76 percent of schools with budgets over \$100,000 offered programs to the same number of countries.

What is the total budget (excluding faculty and staff salaries) for study abroad programming offered by your school?



Summit Insights: Budget

Summit participants generally agreed that international programs are usually launched with the objective of making them self-sustaining. These programs are designed to break even through the fees directly paid by families of participating students. However, having a budget for international programs achieves a number of different purposes. First, a budget provides the individual overseeing the programs with the ability to undertake pro-active risk management, including performing site visits, hiring additional help through partners or other staff, purchasing any additional equipment (such as satellite phones), and maintaining a fund for any

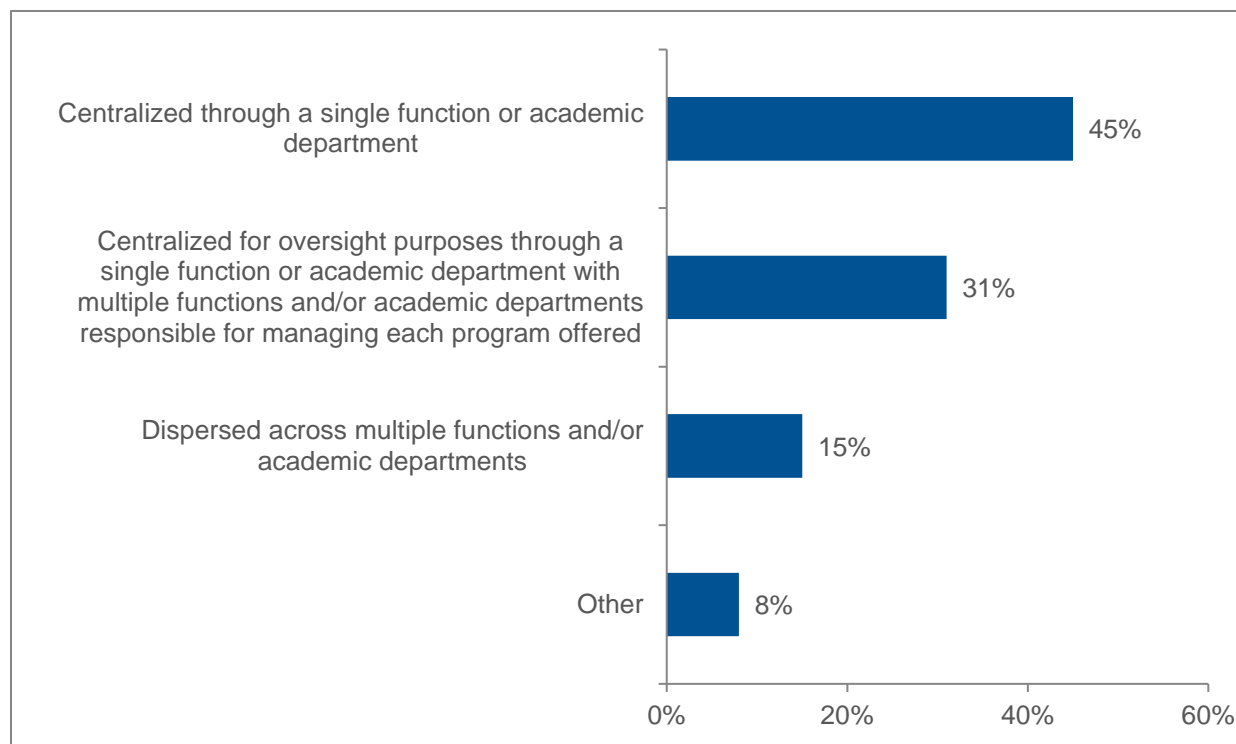
unanticipated costs that may occur during the trip. Second, a budget can provide financial aid for students who otherwise may be unable to participate in the experience. At least three of the participating summit schools noted that their programs are designed to ensure that financial obstacles do not keep students from participating in these opportunities. This access is particularly important for schools that require students to participate in at least one trip abroad. Finally, allocation in the budget for global programs is a tangible expression of the school's commitment to global education. This last point was particularly important to schools with more robust programming as it underscores the importance of ensuring that substantial programs receive the support, financial and otherwise, that the programs need to deliver effectively.

Management

When asked what approach the school uses to oversee and manage study abroad programs, almost half of the schools had programs that were centralized through a single function or academic department (45 percent). Schools with larger study abroad budgets are more likely to centralize the management of the programs: 44 percent of schools with a study abroad budget of less than \$15,000 centralized their programs, while 59 percent of schools with a budget of over \$100,000 decided to centralize. Smaller percentages of schools had programs centralized for oversight purposes through a single function or academic department with multiple functions or academic departments responsible for managing each program offered (31 percent) or dispersed across multiple functions or academic departments (15 percent).

Other forms of management (8 percent) included through the school administration, individual faculty members, or staff in charge of the programs. In some instances, the school works with a third-party vendor to coordinate the program.

What approach does your school use to oversee and manage study abroad programs?



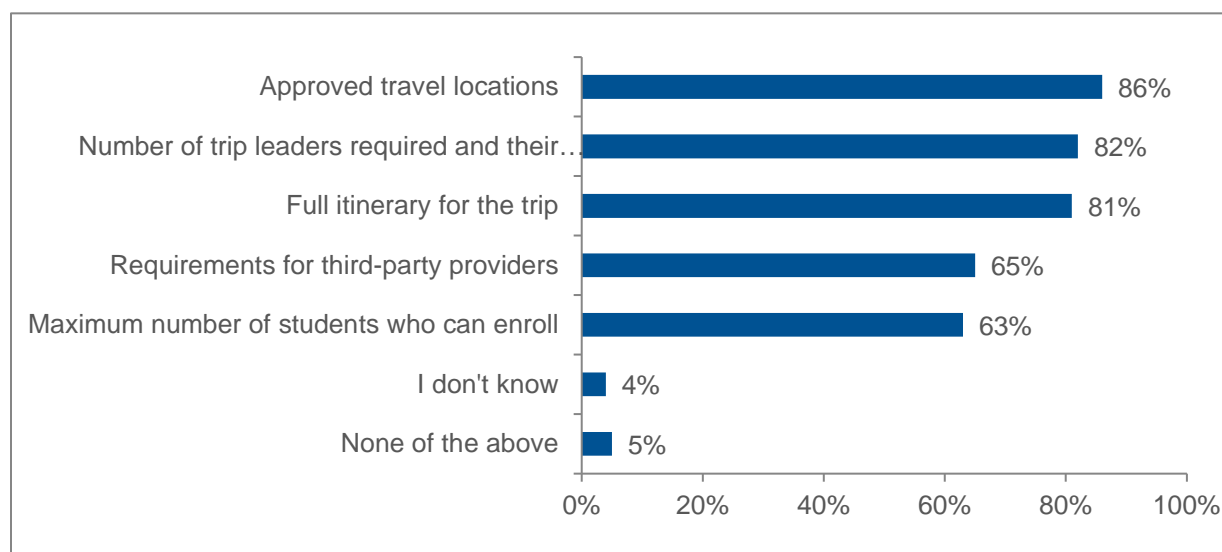
Summit Insight: Management and Oversight

Summit participants roundly agreed that centralized oversight is a preferable approach to global programming, either through an individual or a team. Oversight of international programs becomes difficult and inconsistent when it is decentralized among many different offices or divisions. One of the main protections that schools have against potential harm and resulting liability is establishing a consistent system to manage risk through training, policies, procedures, releases, and other steps, and ensuring that this system is implemented consistently. Without centralized oversight, details slip through the cracks. Schools also lose the advantage of having an individual or a consistent team as a centralized group that understands all of the programs, their individual risks, and the steps that have been taken to manage those risks.

Approval of New Programs

More than eight in 10 survey participants indicated that they have or require a formal approval process for newly proposed study abroad programs (81 percent), up from 73 percent in 2013. The most common elements included to evaluate the trip proposal were approved travel locations (86 percent), the number of trip leaders required and their qualifications (82 percent), and the full itinerary for the trip (81 percent).

Which of the following are used to evaluate a trip proposal? Select all that apply.



Summit Insight: Trip Approval

Hand in hand with a centralized trip oversight committee or individual is a formal process for trip approval. One summit participant noted that his school routinely takes at least 18 months to two years to evaluate a proposal and fully “vet” a proposed trip. Most of the summit schools have a formalized paper form and review process that reviews the proposals and either approves, disapproves, or proposes further research or information before approving the program. Many of the summit schools noted that the approval process helps the school’s leadership keep an eye on the extent of the risk in each trip and be more generally aware of how the school is operating abroad.

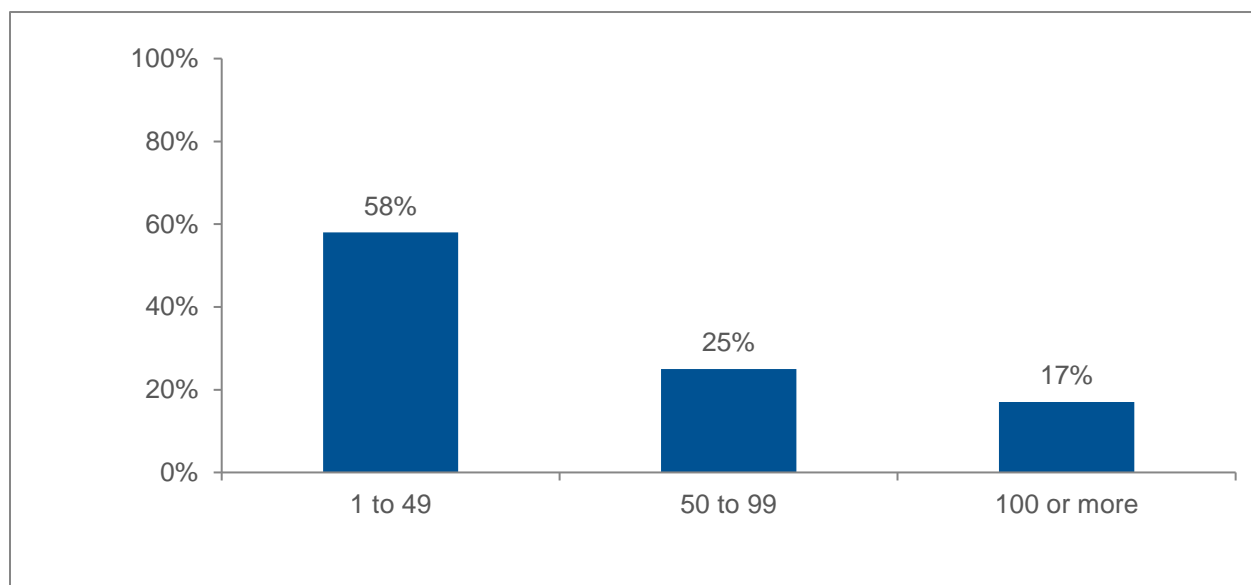
Participants in Study Abroad Programs

Number of Students

Among schools with study abroad programs, 58 percent have between one and 49 students participating in the program per year, while 17 percent of schools have 100 or more participants (up 10 percentage points from 2013).

Schools offering fewer programs a year were more likely to have fewer students participating in these programs. For instance, 82 percent of schools with one to four programs a year reported fewer than 50 students taking part in the study abroad programs, while all of the schools with 15 or more programs a year included 50 students or more in those programs.

How many students participate in your school's study abroad programs each year?



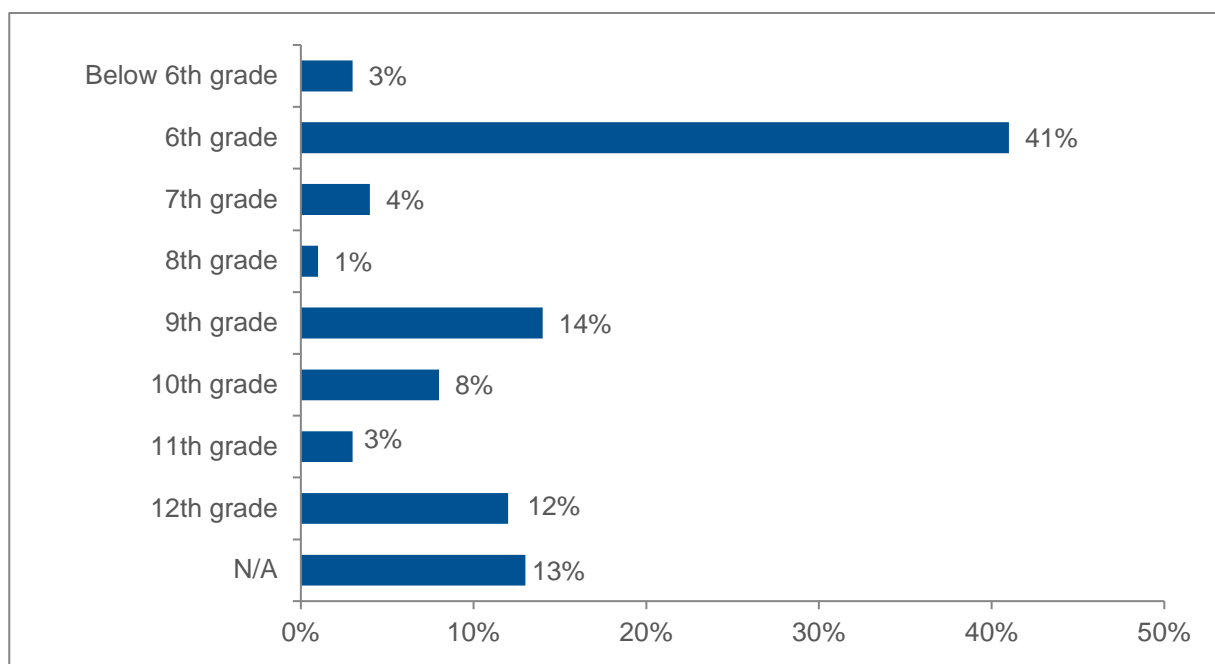
Participation Requirements

Ninety-one percent of respondents indicated that students at their schools were not required to participate in an international travel program to satisfy course or graduation requirements. While there are still certain grade restrictions for participation, many schools are allowing

students to begin participating in study abroad programs at younger ages.

Many schools (41 percent) require that students be at least in sixth grade to participate in a program, up from 12 percent in 2013. Another 14 percent of schools require students to be in ninth grade to take part in international programs, down from 41 percent in 2013. Very few schools (3 percent) allow students below sixth grade to participate.

What is the minimum grade level required for participation in your school's study abroad programs?



Like colleges and universities, many schools (62 percent) use established criteria to select students to participate in study abroad programs. The majority of these schools (62 percent) have more than 500 students.

Summit Insight: Student Screening and Application Process

Many of the summit schools carefully evaluate the student applicants for trips, even when a school trip is part of the student's extracurricular activities, such as a choir tour or a trip for a sports team. Retaining discretion to determine which students may lack the appropriate

maturity for a particular trip is important, both as a general deterrent for students inclined to misbehave and to manage potential trip risks ahead of time. Several summit schools noted that certain school trips may not be appropriate for everyone due to the nature of the destination, cultural experiences, or potential safety issues. In cases where students who have displayed behavior issues in the past want to participate in such a trip, the global program director may encourage the student to either wait until he or she is more mature or encourage the student to consider a different travel opportunity.

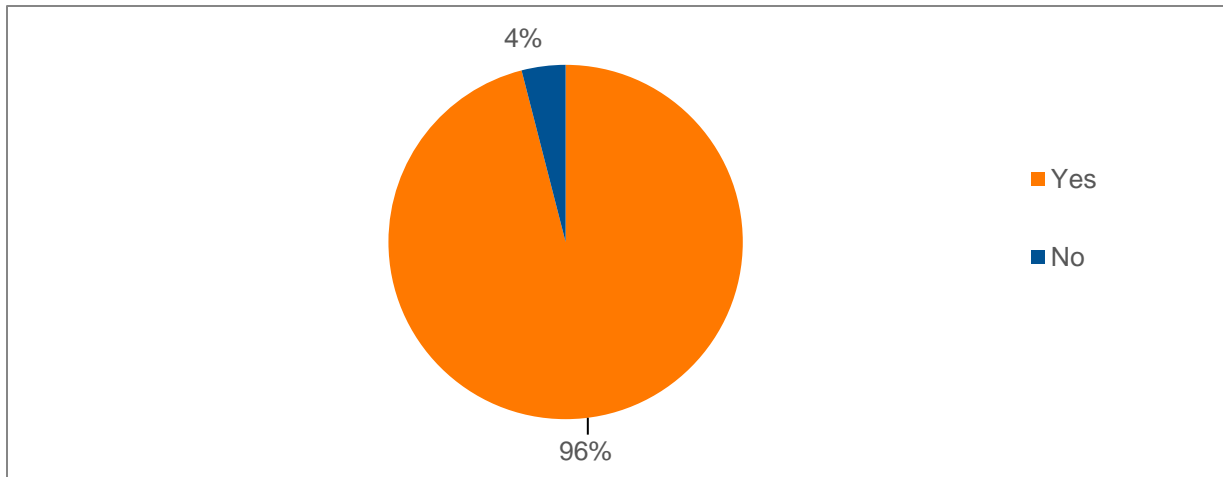
Several schools noted that they require all students participating in trips to have statements from student advisors or other faculty providing an overview of the student's behavior and a recommendation to allow the student to participate. At least one school requires an application, essays, a statement from the student's mentor or advisor, and committee review. Many of the schools agreed that if a trip leader did not feel comfortable taking a particular student, that leader had the option of denying that student's admission to the trip. Finally, one school reported that students with outstanding financial obligations to the school cannot participate in any trips.

Many summit schools have wrestled with screening students for allergies and potential disability access issues when considering their travel with the school. While the schools themselves can accommodate students on campus and on many U.S. trips, taking students to other countries where there is little to no control over food (particularly for students with peanut allergies) or where there is an outdated infrastructure presents very specific problems. Most schools have dealt with these issues as they arose, but schools should be aware of the potential for concerns in this area.

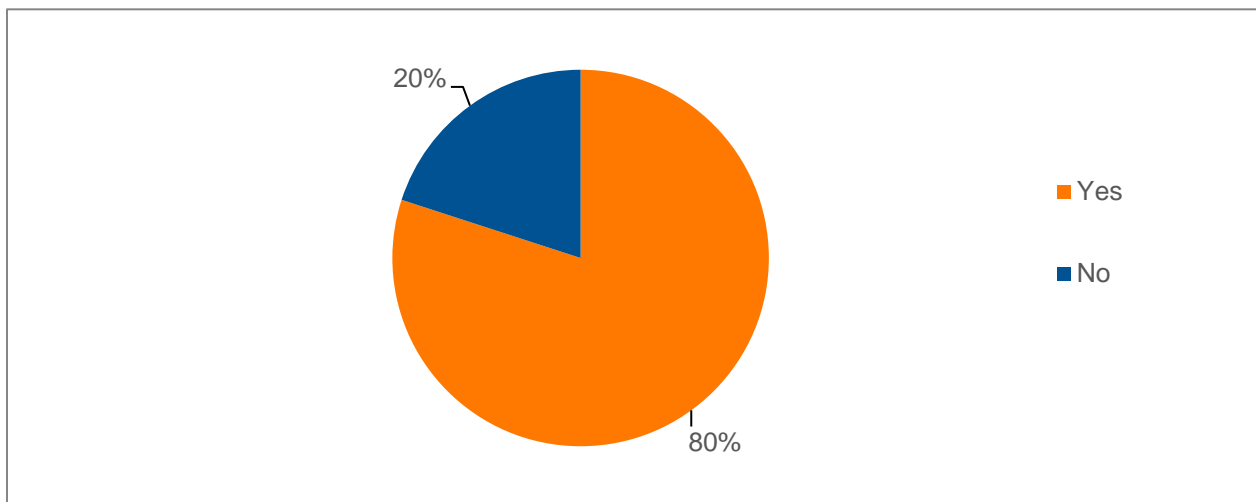
Forms Required

Almost every school (96 percent) requires parents of student participants to sign a release or waiver of liability. In addition, 80 percent of schools require student participants to sign a form that acknowledges the risks associated with the program (an assumption of risk form). This practice seems to be becoming more common among independent schools. In 2013, only 62 percent of schools required a signed assumption of risk form.

Does your school require parents of student participants to sign a release or waiver of liability?



Are student participants required to sign an assumption of risk form or any other form that acknowledges the risks associated with the program?



Summit Insight: Waivers and Releases

All schools participating in the summit required parents to sign liability waivers or releases, which are an important part of managing the risks of international travel. The person signing a liability waiver should have a clear understanding of the potential risks of the trip. Many summit

schools were concerned about ensuring that parents or guardian have a sufficient understanding of the risks. Accordingly, several schools required parents or guardians to attend an information session that covered risks for students before providing the releases to sign. Because of general concern about whether parents who couldn't attend these sessions had the necessary understanding of risk before signing releases, many schools made follow-up calls or found other ways to contact parents directly. Summit schools roundly agreed that even if state law did not favor enforcing liability waivers against parents waiving their right to make claims, having the parent session and the signed document can still help the school in any later litigation.

Most of the summit schools also required students to participate in orientation programs, sometimes multiple sessions, that discussed the various risks and issues related to the trip and required students to agree to comply with a code of conduct. These orientation sessions and the related forms serve to make certain that the students themselves are aware of the risks and responsibilities associated with the trip.

Pre-Trip Preparation

Trip Leader Selection

Sixty-five percent of schools have a formal process to approve or select faculty, staff, parents, or volunteers as trip leaders. In addition, 89 percent of schools use background checks to approve or select trip leaders, up from 80 percent in 2013.

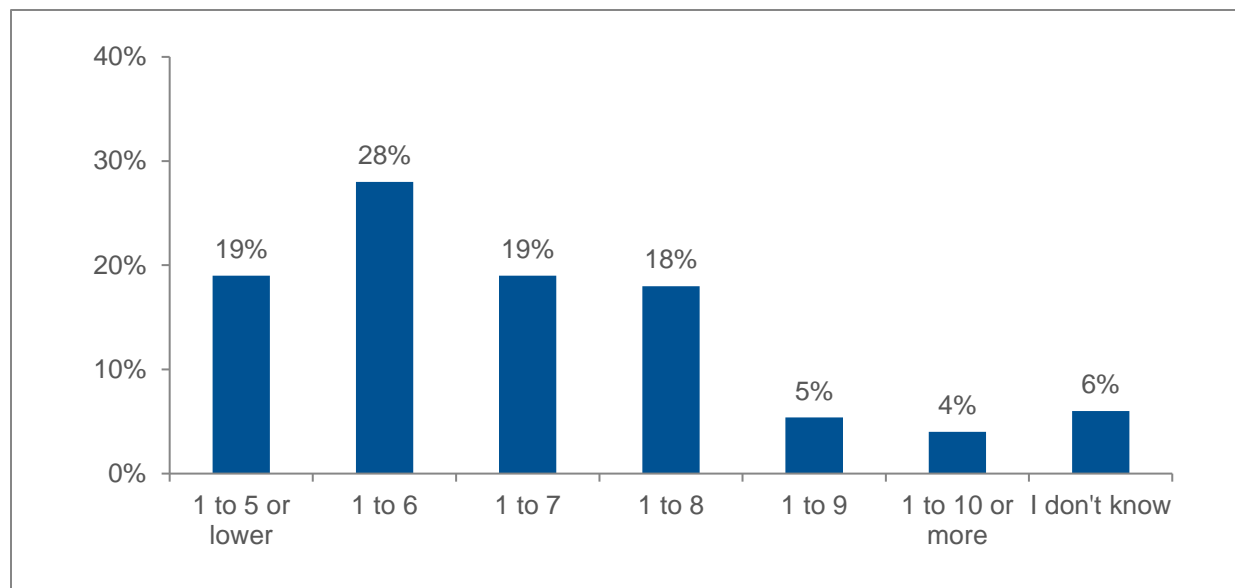
Summit Insight: Trip Leader Selection

Summit schools generally agreed that there should be a formal process for selecting and approving faculty, staff, parents, and volunteers to participate in school trips. A couple of schools noted that new staff are not allowed to lead trips until they have been with the school for a set period of time. One school that has longer trips to more impoverished countries noted that it is extremely selective about teachers chaperoning trips. This school and a couple of other summit schools that embark on fairly complex trips noted that while the teachers are the content experts, many do not have any background or training in leading a trip of students to particularly challenging areas. For this reason, the schools typically recruit outside leaders with wilderness or other trip expertise to ensure that the skillset needed for the trip is present. Several summit schools noted that they were moving away from volunteers or unpaid chaperones to ensure that those overseeing the trip feel that their duties are part of their “job” rather than a choice.

Trip Leader-to-Student Ratio

Twenty-eight percent of schools responding to the survey require a 1:6 trip leader-to-student ratio for study abroad programs, followed by 19 percent of schools with a 1:5 or a 1:7 trip leader-to-student ratio. Schools appear to have decreased the trip leader-to-student ratio since 2013. The number of schools with a 1:6 ratio increased by 6 percent since 2013, while the number of schools with a ratio of more than 1:10 decreased by 6 percent from 2013.

What is the average trip leader-to-student ratio required for your school's study abroad programs?



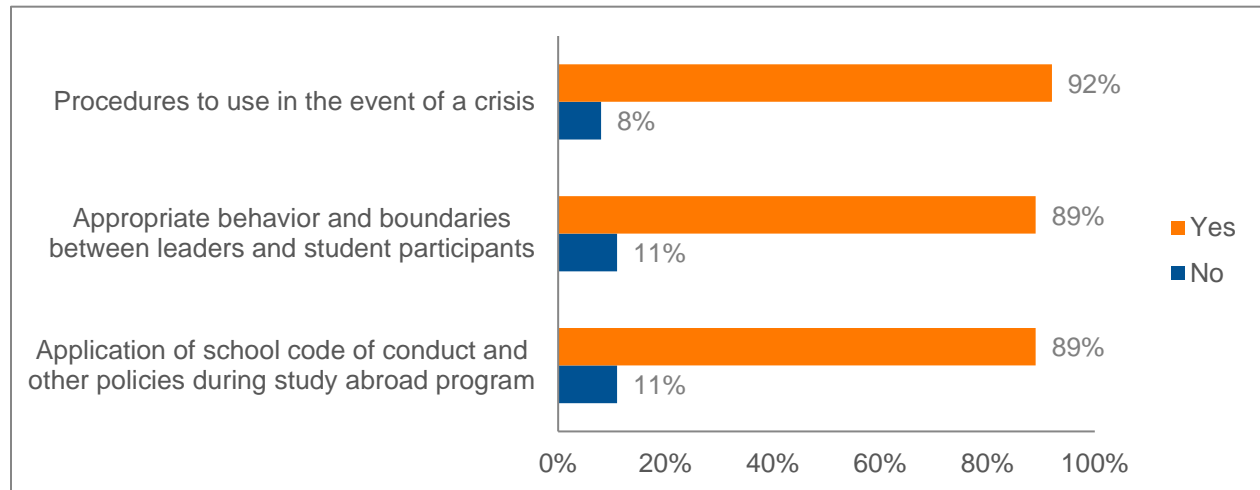
Summit Insight: Leader to Student Ratio

Several summit schools noted the importance of having sufficient numbers of adults on the trip to be able to have a “spare” adult to go with students to hospitals, home, or other potential deviations from the trip schedules. Unexpected things have happened on many school trips and a low adult to student ratio allows chaperones flexibility in the event that an adult must be on hand to handle an emergency involving one or more students.

Trip Leader Training

Trip leaders generally receive training in procedures to use in the event of a crisis (92 percent), application of school code of conduct and other policies during the study abroad program (89 percent), and appropriate behavior and boundaries between leaders and student participants (89 percent).

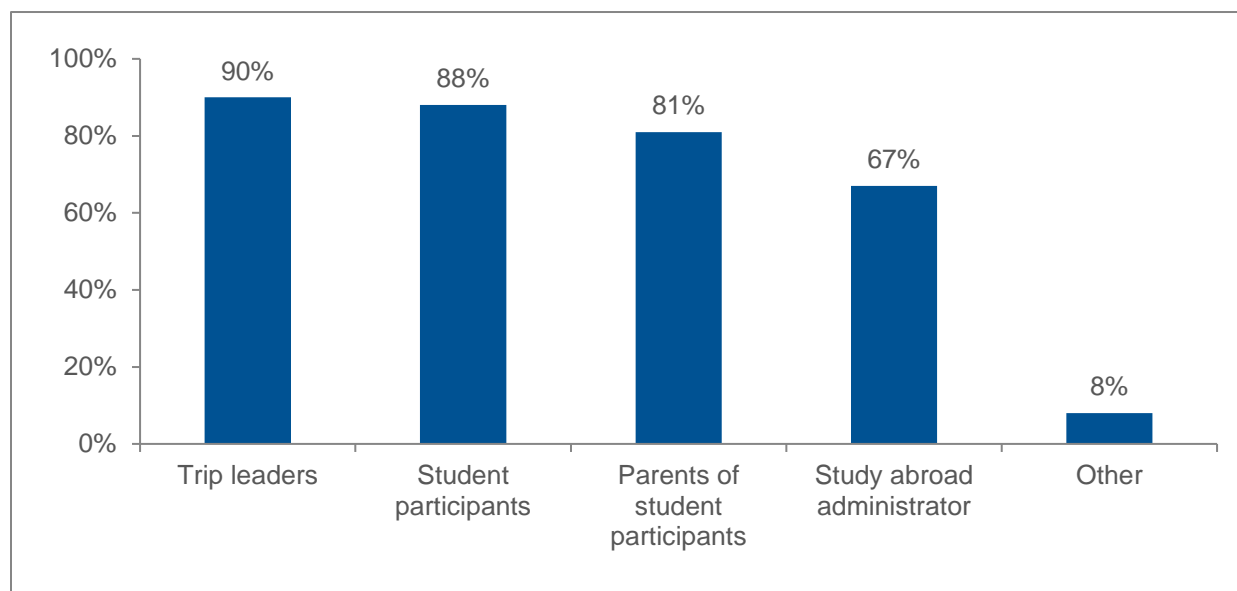
Do trip leaders receive training before the start of the program on the following?



Pre-Trip Orientation

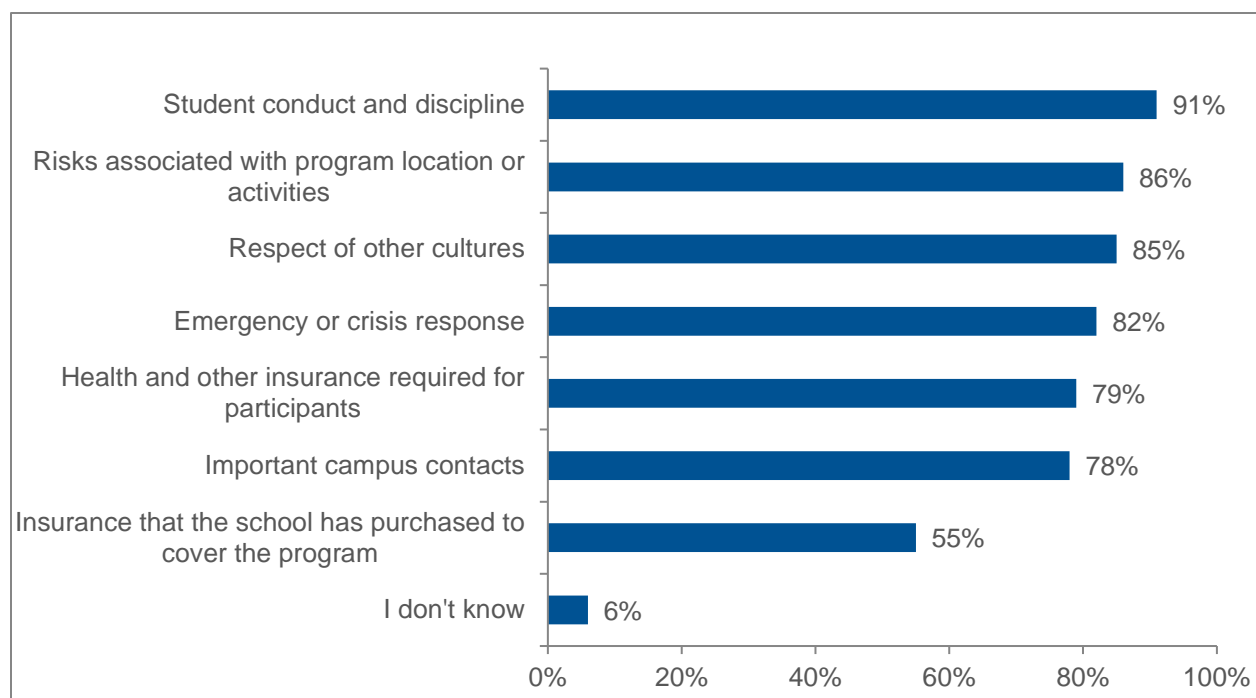
Schools are also very likely (93 percent) to conduct a pre-trip orientation for each study abroad program. The orientation must be attended by trip leaders (90 percent), student participants (88 percent), and parents of student participants (81 percent).

Who is required to attend pre-trip orientation sessions? Select all that apply.



The top three topics emphasized in the pre-trip orientation are student conduct and discipline (91 percent), risks associated with program location or activities (86 percent), and respect for other cultures (85 percent). These are the same topics that were most commonly addressed in 2013.

Which of the following topics are addressed during the pre-trip orientation? Select all that apply.



Summit Insight: Trip Orientation

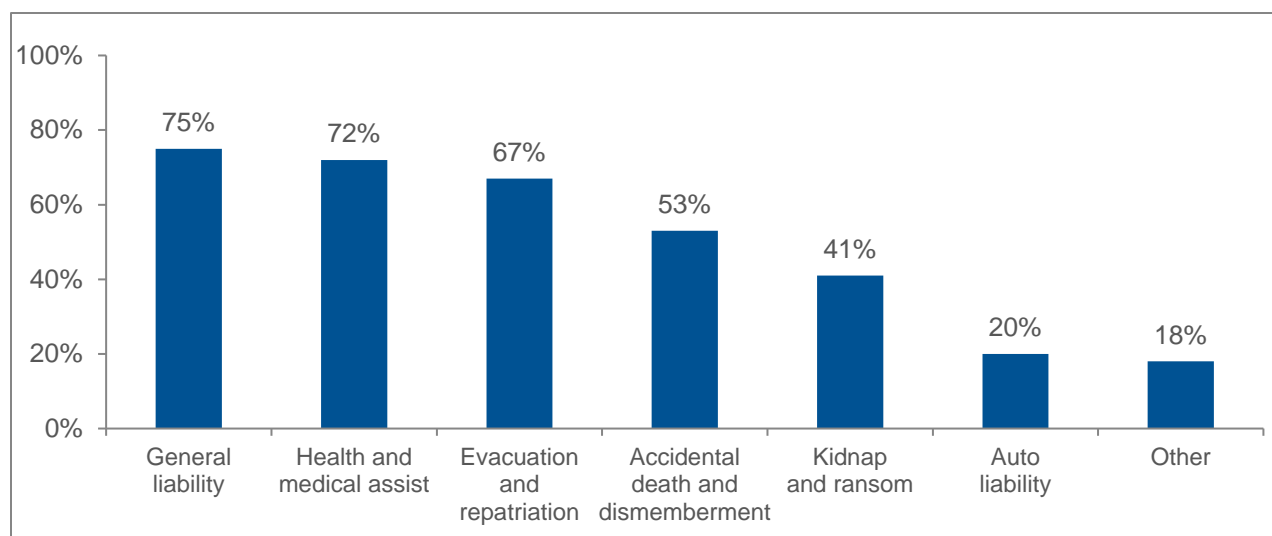
All summit schools indicated they conduct an orientation for students, parents, and trip leaders, and many hold specific orientation trainings addressing potential issues that may arise on the trip. The extent of these orientations varies depending on the type of trip. All schools felt that orientation helped prepare everyone involved for both the overall trip and any potential emergency and communication issues that may arise. Several summit schools also make recommendations to parents regarding physicians or hospitals that have a background in international medicine and travel to ensure that trip participants have the appropriate inoculations and any needed medications for the trip. However, summit participants cautioned

schools against requiring parents to use a specific physicians or hospital; rather, schools should be clear that parents have the freedom to choose any physician or hospital with appropriate expertise.

Types of Insurance

Respondents usually purchase general liability (75 percent), health and medical assist (72 percent), and evacuation and repatriation (67 percent) insurance for their programs. While the percentage of respondents purchasing general liability insurance has decreased by 6 percentage points from 2013, the percentage of respondents purchasing health and evacuation insurance has increased by 10 and 11 percentage points respectively.

What type of insurance does the school purchase for study abroad programs? Select all that apply.



Summit Insight: Insurance

Many summit schools generally agreed that requiring the students to have international health insurance was extremely helpful when overseas. Further, at least one school had trip leaders and U.S. school emergency contacts call the school's insurance company to do emergency simulation drills, so that the trip leaders and school contacts were familiar with the insurance company and how their systems work. One school strongly recommended conferring with the school's

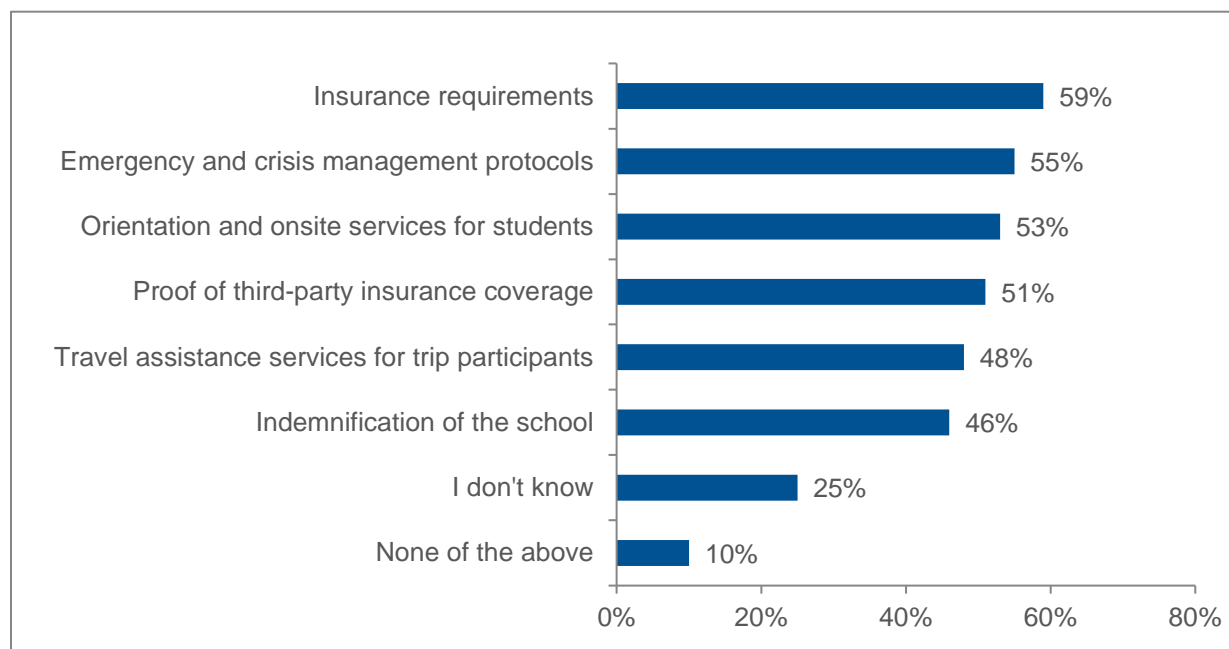
insurance broker or insurance company prior to travel regarding the wide variety of scenarios that can occur during a trip abroad, particularly to potentially more dangerous countries, to feel comfortable that students are appropriately covered under the school's policies or additional health policies.

Third-Party Vendors

When compared to the 2013 survey, this survey found that schools are more likely to offer study abroad programs conducted by third-party vendors and to enter into written contracts with those vendors. Many schools (76 percent) offer study abroad programs that are conducted by third-party vendors (up 12 percentage points from 2013). Among those schools working with third-party vendors, 82 percent enter into written contracts with those vendors (up 13 percentage points from 2013).

The top three elements covered under those contracts are insurance requirements (59 percent), emergency and crisis management protocols (55 percent), and orientation and on-site services for students (53 percent).

Which of the following are included in contracts with vendors? Select all that apply.



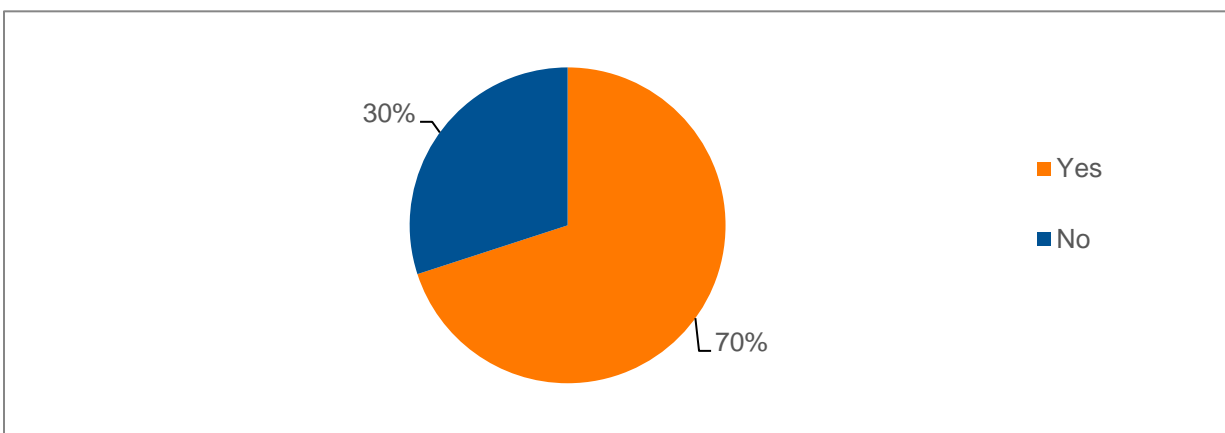
Summit Insight: Third Party Vendor Contracts

Of the topics covered during the summit, third party vendors and comprehensive contract procedures gave summit schools the most pause. The summit schools that entered into agreements with third party vendors had many ways to ensure that services and expectations were researched and well documented. One school noted that many vendors will let a representative from the school go on another trip to get a feeling for how the company runs its trips. Beyond the proof of insurance, a contract including an indemnification provision, which provides that if something happens to a student due to the actions of the vendor, the vendor will also defend the school if it is sued, was crucial. One school noted that it requires a comprehensive written itinerary for every step of the trip, including types of transportation, emergency scenarios and resources, and anything unusual about the trip itself. Virtually all summit schools that use third party vendors had some form of vetting process, such as references or safety checks via qualified third parties. Schools also noted that they put out requests for proposals to ensure that they received a good array of options.

Crisis Management Plan

Seventy percent of schools have a crisis management plan (including an evacuation plan and a plan to communicate with parents) for each study abroad program. The percentage of schools with a crisis management plan is up 18 percentage points from 52 percent in 2013.

Does the school have a crisis management plan (including an evacuation plan and a plan to communicate with parents) for each study abroad program?



Summit Insight: Emergency Planning

The summit schools all agreed that emergency planning needs to be part of any trip. The specific steps summit schools take were varied, but their suggestions included:

- Provide emergency and crisis planning instruction for school leaders, trip leaders, students, and parents so that all of the participants understand their roles and what may be needed in a crisis on the particular trip. These trainings may be provided by a third party in some cases, but many include scenarios, reworking of actual events, and team building so that the groups traveling together have experience working together. The extent and the intensity of the training vary depending on the type of trip and the conditions anticipated.
- Brief students before the trip and at various stops along the way about basic emergency procedures generally and for that particular overnight stay. Several summit schools took a few minutes every morning to point out particular risk management concerns for that day and to inform or remind the students of what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Have phone policies. Many schools that allow students to bring cell phones require all students to add every trip participant's phone number as well as school emergency contact information. The trip leaders have international calling plans and, in some cases, satellite phones.
- Build phone chains. All of the schools had some form of phone chain so that the trip leaders had more than one person to contact back at the school if something went wrong.
- Implement parent communications plans. The schools also had a plan for communicating with parents and parents were informed about this plan at orientation.
- Know where the resources are during every part of the trip. Identifying in advance resources such as hospitals, police, embassies and having these resources as part of the trip leaders' crisis notebook.
- Ensure that trip leaders have a complete notebook and guide on various crisis situations. This information should include the various trip specific risks and resources, all key school information, insurance information, student forms and health information, and

other protocols. One school used the Michigan State manual as a basis for theirs and all trip leaders are required to travel with it. Here are the Michigan State resources:

http://studyabroad.isp.msu.edu/people/faculty/health_safety_security/general_principles.html.

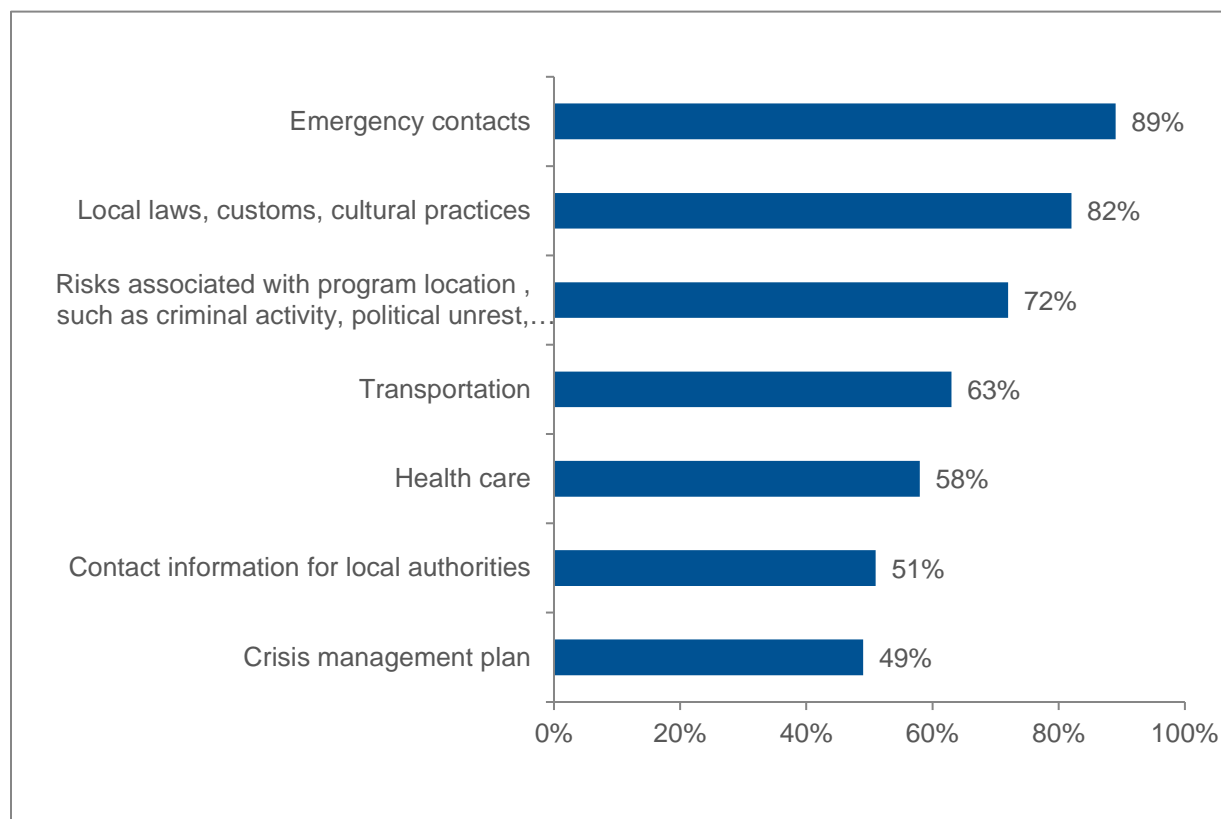
Conducting Study Abroad Programs

On-Site Orientation

Nearly seven in 10 survey participants (69 percent) indicated that they conduct an on-site orientation once students arrive at the study abroad location. This is up 12 percentage points from 2013.

This on-site orientation commonly addresses topics such as emergency contacts (89 percent); local laws, customs, cultural practices, and beliefs (82 percent); and risks associated with program location (72 percent). While these are the same topics that were most frequently addressed in 2013, the percentage of schools addressing emergency contacts in the session has increased by 11 percentage points.

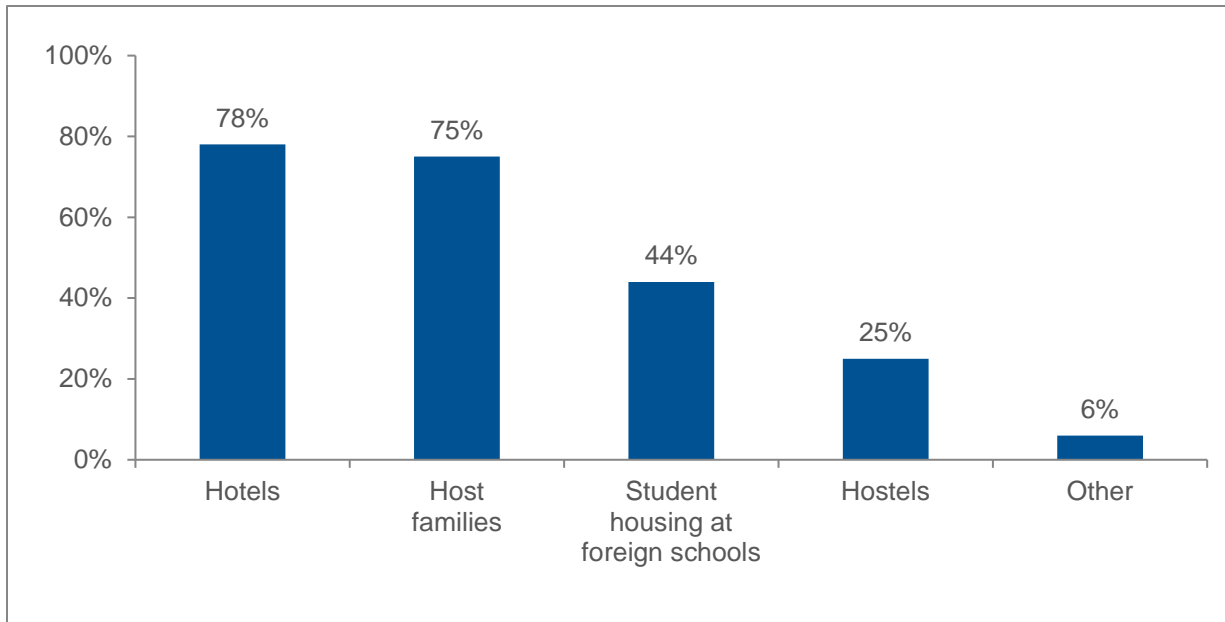
What topics are addressed in on-site orientation programs? Select all that apply.



Housing

Schools most often house students in hotels (78 percent) or with host families (75 percent). Only 25 percent of schools use hostels.

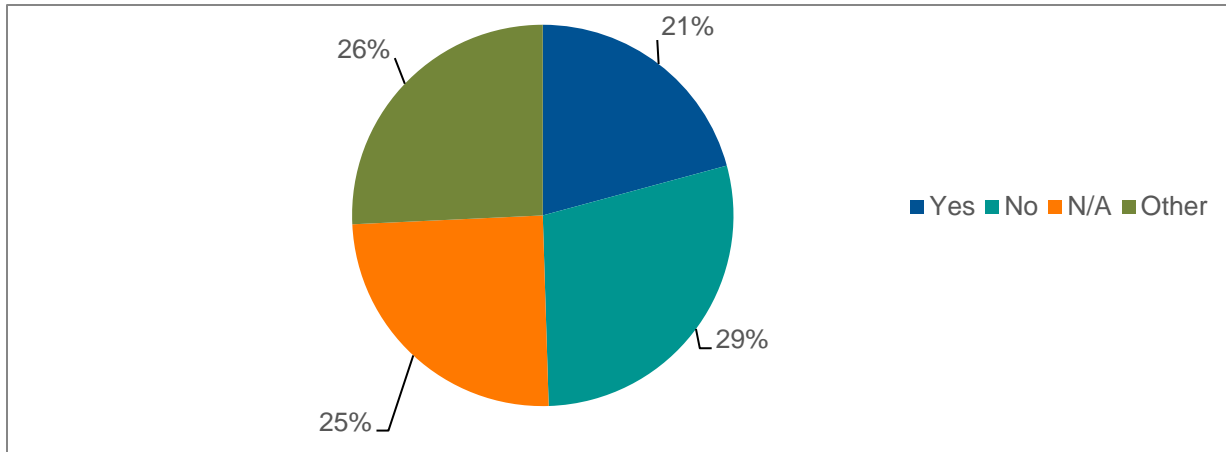
What types of housing are provided to participants during the programs? Select all that apply.



Host Families and Foreign National Staff

Only 21 percent of respondents answered affirmatively when asked whether their school vets host families and foreign national staff members who have direct and unsupervised contact with students participating in international programs. A similar percentage (23 percent) of schools reported vetting host families and foreign national staff in 2013.

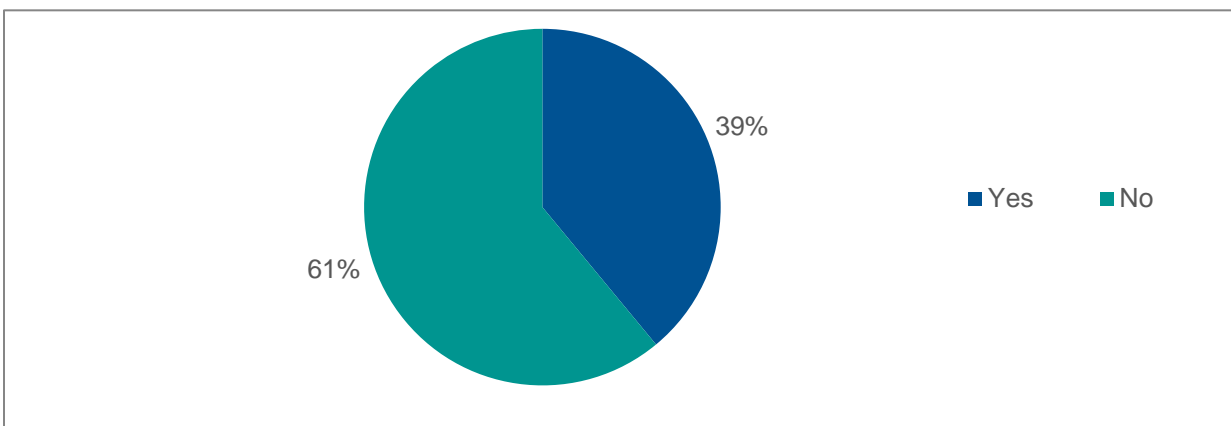
Does your school vet host families and foreign national staff members who have direct and unsupervised contact with students participating in study abroad programs?



Background Checks

Only 39 percent of the schools that vet and approve host families and foreign national staff members use background checks to do so. One of the reasons for this low response may be the difficulty and cost associated with conducting international background checks. That being said, the percentage of schools conducting background checks on host families and foreign national staff is up 11 percentage points from 2013, suggesting that the practice is becoming more common.

Are background checks used to approve or select host families and foreign national staff members?



Summit Insight: Vetting Host Families

Summit schools agreed that vetting host families is particularly complicated. Background checks are culturally abhorrent in many countries, often implying a lack of trust in the family or that they are criminals. The summit schools had many ways of addressing the general risk concerns. One school has the program coordinator spend the night with one or more host families when reviewing the location generally and the coordinator visits all of the host families while doing the site visit. Another school collects specific references for host families from the local partner school or other partner organization (NGO). For longer stays, several of the summit schools have made it a practice to visit the students in their host homes during their stay and check in with them regularly. All of the schools that use host families agreed that some form of list of requirements or statement of understanding about the duties of a host family can help ensure that the host family understands the school's expectations. Although such a document may not be a fully enforceable agreement, it can help show that the school took steps to protect its students' welfare.

The summit schools generally agreed that host families present challenges, but also incredible benefits through immersing students in the local culture and language. One of the summit schools strongly encouraged those using host families to look closely at why that type of housing is appropriate for a particular trip and weigh the benefits against the potential risks. Others noted that there are cultural issues, too, with using host families. Some school programs allow only one student per a host family, largely to ensure that the students have the full cultural experience, but in some countries it would be considered bizarre to place a single student, particularly a female, alone in a family.

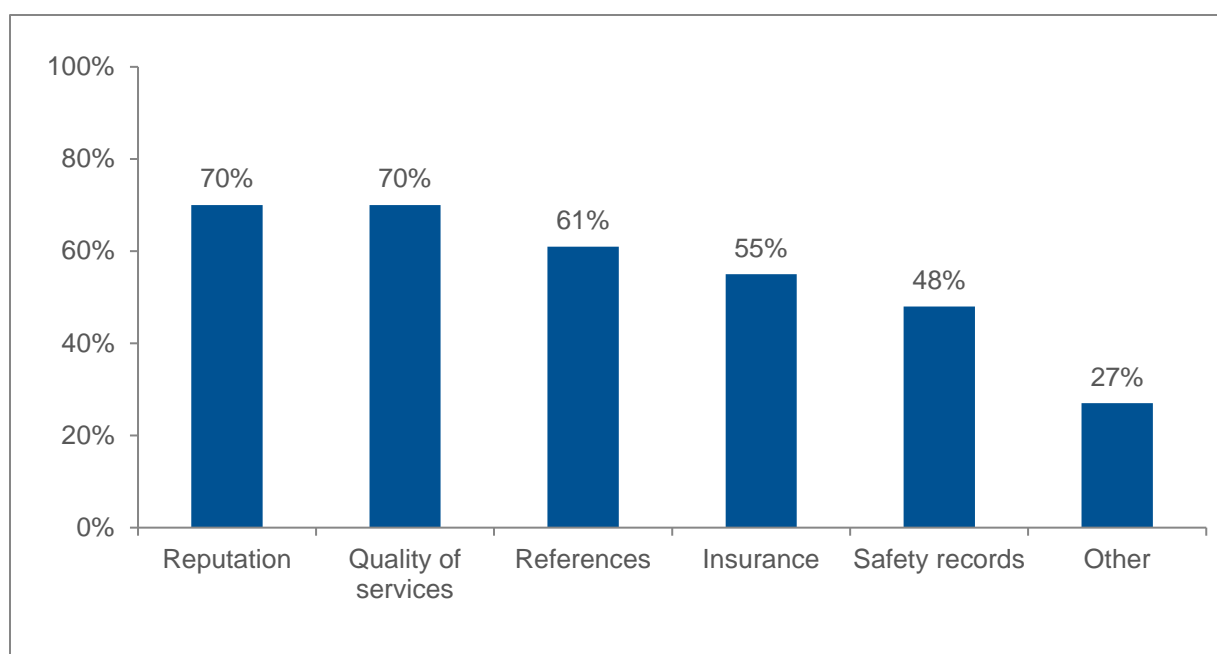
Finally, parents and guardians sending students to stay with host families should recognize that background checks and other information that are standard in the United States are not necessarily so abroad. Schools should explain to parents and guardians both the steps they take and the limitations. Further, students should be cognizant of the cultural issues and expectations when staying with host families and know to reach out for support from the school and local contacts if necessary.

Local Vendor Vetting

Only 38 percent of schools that rely on local vendors or service providers, such as a private transportation company, vet those vendors. This is down 4 percentage points from 2013.

When vetting is conducted, it includes elements such as the provider's reputation (70 percent), quality of services (70 percent), and references (61 percent).

What elements are included in your vetting process? Select all that apply.



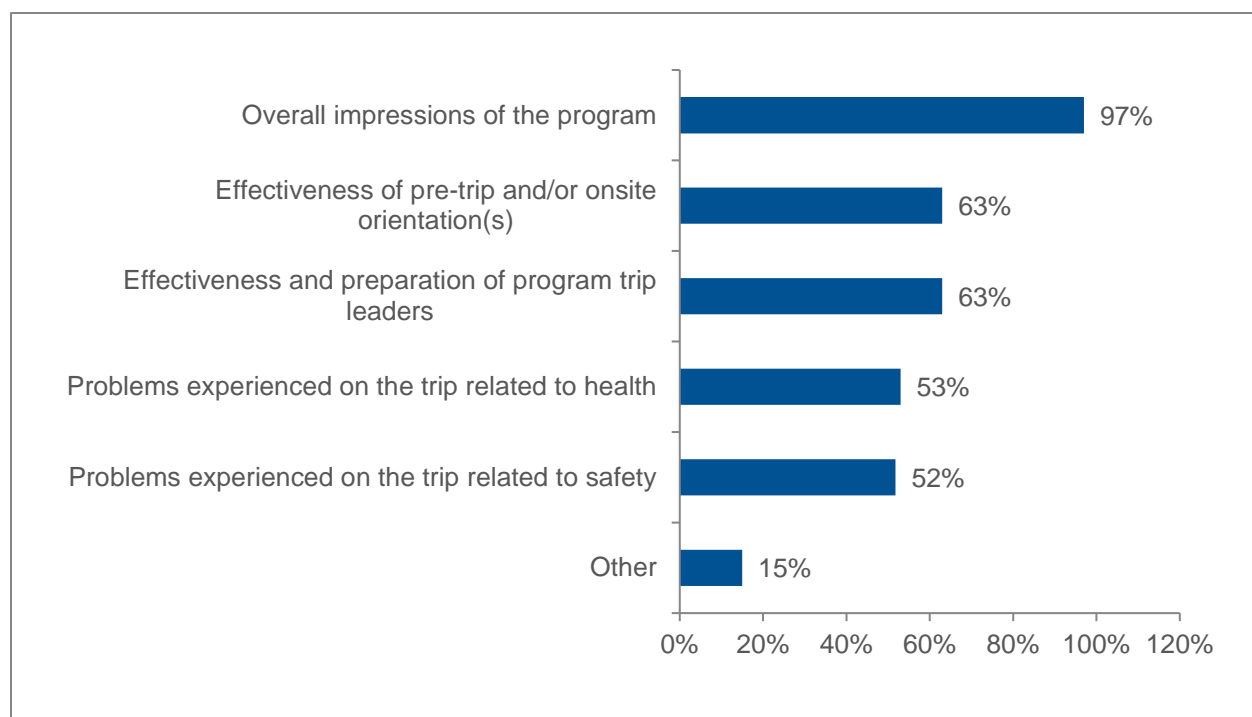
Student Post-Trip Survey

When the program is over, 57 percent of schools conduct a post-trip survey of participating students. This is up from 37 percent in 2013.

Among the schools that conduct a survey, common questions include overall impressions of the program (97 percent), effectiveness of pre-trip and on-site orientation(s) (63 percent), and effectiveness and preparation of program trip leaders (63 percent). The percentage of schools

asking about overall impressions of the program has increased by 13 percentage points since 2013.

What topics are addressed in the students' post-trip survey?



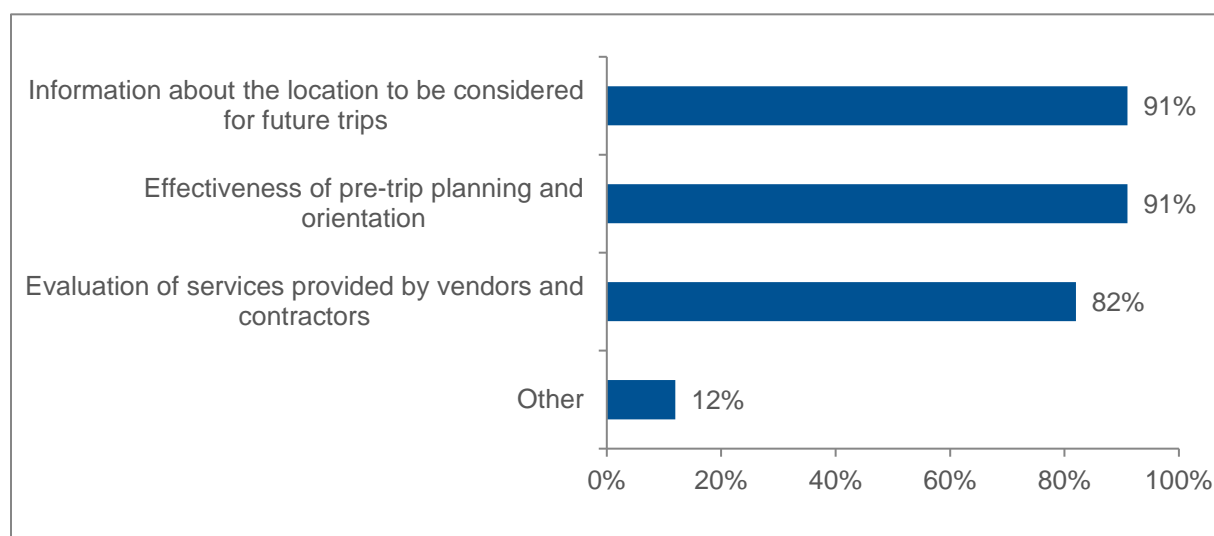
Summit Insight: Post Trip Surveys

Most of the summit schools conducted post-trip surveys. Particularly for longer trips and experiences, the surveys sought to find out participation objectives, offer self-evaluations, and seek other feedback. Some schools offer written or online surveys, while others do more casual group or one-on-one interviews. These interviews were good opportunities to discuss issues or concerns that might have arisen during the trip. At least one summit school also surveyed parents after the students returned to get feedback from the parents on the value of the trip and how they felt the trip was handled overall.

Trip Leader Post-Trip Report

Respondents were slightly more likely (59 percent) to ask trip leaders to complete a post-trip report. The number of schools asking trip leaders to complete a post-trip report is up 13 percentage points from 2013. Trip leaders are questioned on topics such as information about the location to be considered for future trips (91 percent), effectiveness of pre-trip planning and orientation (91 percent), and evaluation of services provided by vendors and contractors (82 percent).

What topics are addressed in the trip leaders' post-trip report? Select all that apply.



Summit Insight: Post Trip Reports from Trip Leaders

Most of the summit schools required post-trip reports from trip leaders. The method for reporting out varied from school to school. Some trip leaders provided written reports, while others engaged in group discussions and in one-on-one discussions with the global program coordinator. These reports also served as chances to walk through any crisis issues and determine lessons learned from the trips. Summit schools discussed how important this trip follow-up and evaluation are, particularly as they relate to ensuring that those responsible for these trips understand the professional expectations of overseeing such an excursion. Some summit schools noted that a final report and evaluation of a trip could become part of the employee file.

Conclusions

Main Concerns About Study Abroad Programs

The top issues that concern schools include safety, risk management, crisis management, and cost. Here are some responses from the participating schools.

What elements of study abroad programs concern you the most?

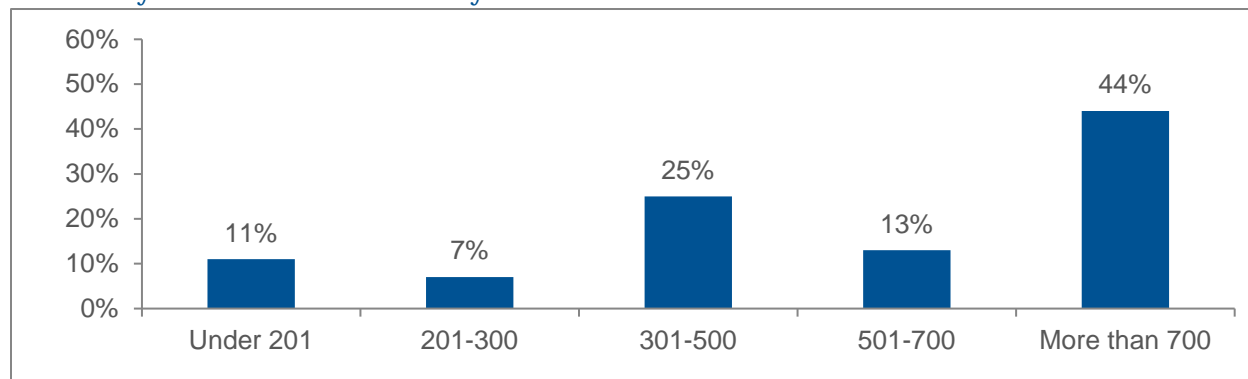
- Safety of the students!
- Student safety and security
- Crisis management
- From the school perspective I think it is risk management and student safety. As someone involved in the planning I am most concerned with the experiences of both the host families and the visiting families and hope for the best and that connections are made that last a lifetime.
- The potential for risk/harm while on a program. Student mental health. Host families and physical harm. School and program leader liability should something happen. Communication by students to parents/families about an incident, big or small, before chaperones can communicate to them.
- Cost, access, effectiveness, safety

School Demographics

Enrollment

More than half of the schools responding to the survey (57 percent) are fairly large schools with more than 500 students. Only 11 percent of participant schools have fewer than 201 students.

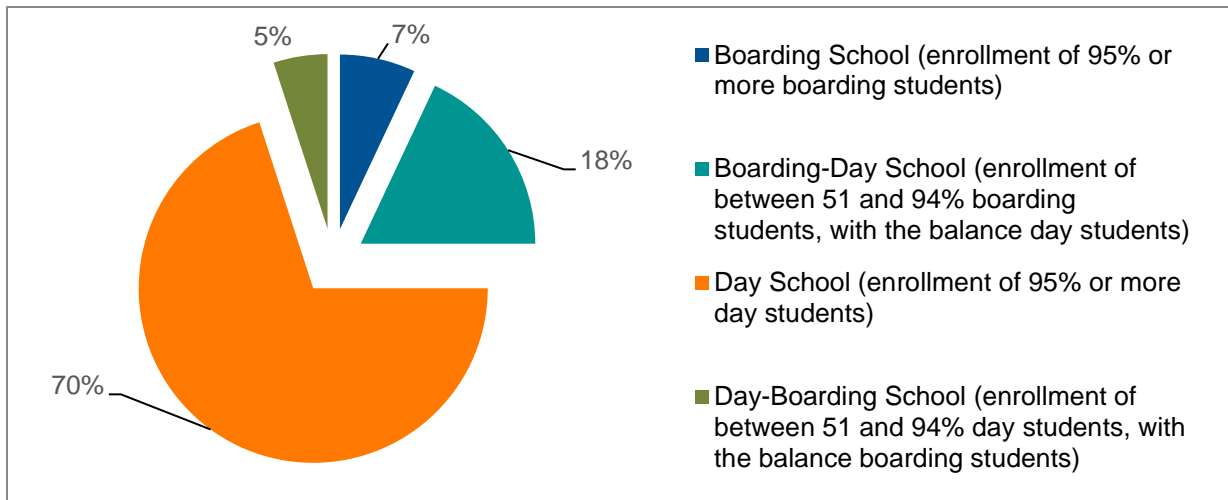
How many students are enrolled at your school?



Type

Most of the survey participants were from day schools (70 percent); only 5 percent were from day-boarding schools.

Which of the following best describes your school?



Annual Expenditures

Forty-five percent of respondents have an annual expenditure of more than \$20 million, while only 8 percent have less than \$5 million.

What are your school's annual expenditures?

