

Sustainability Guidelines



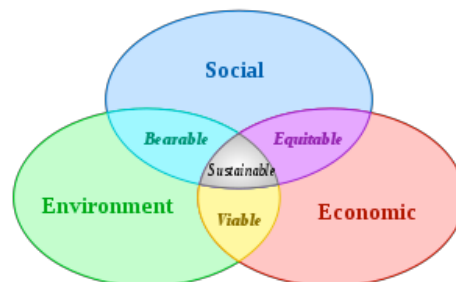
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Abroad View, a leading magazine on educational travel, has pioneered a “Green Passport Program” that calls students to sustainable living and learning practices while abroad. Prior to departure students make this pledge:

As a Green Passport holder I acknowledge the interconnectedness of the world’s people and the environment. I pledge to explore and take into account the social and environmental consequences of studying, living, working, traveling, or volunteering abroad and will try to improve these aspects of my international experience. While overseas, and when I return home, I will do my best to act in accord with the Green Passport Code of Conduct by:

- *Minimizing my impact on the environment*
- *Acting in culturally respectful ways*
- *Engaging with locals and participating in the local community*
- *Giving back to my host communities*

Sustainability refers to a particular quality of life. A “sustainable” community is one where social, environmental, and economic factors produce a life system that is socially equitable, culturally adaptive, economically expansive, and ecologically secure. As a result of this 4-fold bottom line, residents are able to lead healthy, dignified, productive, and meaningful lives—both now and in future generations—without harming the natural world.



General Sustainability Guidelines

Educational travel, like tourism generally, is ambivalent. Under certain conditions it can enrich the socio-cultural and economic life of local communities, while re-shaping students' world awareness. Under other conditions it can simply be just one more consumer form that produces unintended negative impacts on the local culture, environment, and economy. Much depends on us, the traveler. How might we travel, live, and learn abroad in ways that produce the most good and the least harm?

To help answer this question, we can suggest some general guidelines:

- Make sincere efforts to understand the power and privileges associated with your racial, ethnic, class, gender, and national identities.
- Allow host communities the right to define their own priorities, issues, strategies, and solutions and what your role and contribution will be.
- Be open to feedback from your hosts on your academic work and cultural learning.
- Learn your host community's political history, social and religious groups, and cultural traditions.
- Adapt to local customs without demanding Western amenities and privileges.
- Refrain from culturally insensitive practices.
- Frequent locally owned businesses and utilize local services.
- Travel carbon neutral by offsetting your travel emissions.

Carbon Offsets

Airplanes are amazing inventions. They accomplish the miraculous feat of hurling hundreds of thousands of pounds of people, baggage, and aluminum thousands of miles at high speeds. But they do so by consuming huge amounts of toxic jet fuel and dumping massive amounts of dangerous pollutants into the fragile stratosphere, compounding the slow but certain harm of climate change. A single round trip flight from LAX to Manila or Hyderabad produces two to three metric tons of carbon dioxide per person. To put this in perspective, the average American generates 19 tons of carbon dioxide, whereas the average Filipino produces 0.8 and the average Indian 1.0 tons over an entire year. (Experts tell us that a sustainable level for the planet is 1.5 metric tons of CO₂ per capita.)

To make up for the carbon dioxide that international travel creates, voluntary offset companies offer organizations and individuals the opportunity to reduce their environmental impact by purchasing "carbon offsets" as a voluntary surcharge for flights. The monies the offset company receives help to fund green projects like tree planting, solar energy, landfill gas capture, and wind farms that help to balance out the environmental impact of airborne journeys. Essentially, carbon offsets are credits you purchase to apply to the emissions you put into the environment.

Voluntary offsets are no panacea for the increasing threat of climate change. Nor are they a way to "pay to pollute" on the GLT without restraining vanity travel or reducing carbon emissions in the rest of our lives. In the long run, we are likely to move towards a low carbon economy that includes carbon tax. Until then, voluntary carbon offsets spur us to learn and serve the world, while neutralizing some of the unavoidable emissions involved in doing so.

The Global Learning Term program requires students to provide evidence of having purchased a carbon offset for all program-related air travel. Follow these steps:

1. Read "Carbon Offsets 101" (Worldwatch Institute): <http://www.worldwatch.org/node/5134>
2. Select one of the companies below.
3. Purchase carbon offsets that reflect the estimated amount of carbon emitted through air travel determined by the company's online carbon calculator.
4. Print out a confirmation receipt for the carbon offset purchase.
5. Submit receipt to GLT Coordinator.

Carbon offset companies

Each of the companies listed below are highly rated as supporting specific carbon offset standards. They require that offsets be real, permanent, quantifiable, and independently verified in an annual audit conducted by an accredited third party.

- **Terra Pass** (<http://www.terrapass.com/>): a California-based company that is the official partner of Expedia. Buy your plane ticket through Expedia (<http://www.expedia.com/>) and they will automatically calculate the amount of carbon emitted by your flight, and then give you the option of purchasing an offset for that amount.
- **NativeEnergy**: a US-based for-profit company <http://www.nativeenergy.com/>
- **Travelocity** (<http://www.travelocity.com/>) allows you to purchase offsets when you book on their site through their Go Zero project. They fund native tree-planting projects through the Conservation Fund (<http://www.conservationfund.org/now>). Travelocity gives you the option of adding activities to customize your trip. In the Table of Contents, select the Other Services category, then select the Go ZeroSM product; then designate your donation amount before completing your booking.

Resources

Anja Kollmuss et al. "Voluntary Offsets for Air-Travel Carbon Emissions: Evaluations and Recommendations of Voluntary Offset Companies." Tufts Climate Initiative. December 2006. http://www.aceee.org/consumerguide/TCI_06Report.pdf

Astrid Jirka, "Sustainable Travel and Study Abroad." *Transitions Abroad*. Retrieved January 31, 2009, from http://www.transitionsabroad.com/publications/studyabroadmagazine/2006Fall/sustainable_travel_and_study_abroad.shtml

"Green Passport Program": <http://www.greenpassport.us/>

"Sustaining Study Abroad," *Inside Higher Ed* (March, 2009):

<http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2009/03/12/studyabroad>

“Sustainability in International Education: Recommendations for Education Abroad Administrators and Faculty.” Retrieved January 31, 2009, from www.livingroutes.org/NAFSA_Sustainability_TF_Report.pdf

Sustainability Pledge, Santa Clara University:
<http://www.scu.edu/sustainability/getinvolved/pledge.cfm>

The Forum on Education Abroad, “Standards of Good Practice for Short-Term Education Abroad Programs.” Retrieved January 31, 2009, from <http://www.forumea.org/standards-index.cfm>

United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), “Aviation and the Global Atmosphere.” Retrieved January 07, 2009, from www.grida.no/climate/ipcc/aviation/index.htm