SOUTHEAST ASIAN FLAGSHIP LANGUAGES INITIATIVE - VIETNAMESE

Participant Handbook

May 2026 | Hanoi, Vietnam

THE LANGUAGE FLAGSHIP
Creating Global Professionals

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Introduction

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Southeast Asian Flagship Languages Initiative (SEAFLI - Vietnamese)! The SEAFLI selection process is highly competitive, and you should take pride in having earned a position on this groundbreaking program.

In these complex times, it is difficult to think of any work more important than that of learning a foreign language and developing genuine insight into an overseas culture such as in Vietnam. We are immensely pleased to be partnering with the University of Wisconsin- Madison (UW-Madison), the Institute of International Education (IIE), and the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) to deliver an overseas program specially designed to maximize your language growth and cultural learning through intensive, immersion- based study abroad.

Such programs are not without challenges. Immersion learning can be disorienting, even overwhelming. At the very least, prolonged, intensive overseas study – during which students adapt to a new culture in every aspect of their daily lives – is bound to involve a certain degree of discomfort, as familiar cues and social mores are suddenly replaced by an entirely new set of reference points, rules, and assumptions. For this reason, all our participants experience some degree of culture shock as well as physical challenges while adjusting to a new culture, weather patterns, diet, and daily routines. Classes are rigorous, often demanding, and foreign pedagogy may be unlike the teaching styles you are used to. In short, there will be times when the going is tough.

You have been selected for the program in part because you have demonstrated the flexibility, maturity, and insight required to successfully adapt to life and studies overseas. And SEAFLI is designed to provide ongoing support and guidance throughout your time abroad in order to help you overcome any obstacles you encounter and maximize the benefits of your time overseas. We therefore have no doubt that the challenges you encounter will be passing, and that you will find your semester abroad profoundly rewarding for the relationships you develop, the connections you build, the gains you make in your language proficiency, and the new insights you develop into a unique, and fascinating culture – all of which is only possible through intensive, immersive study.

This handbook is designed to give you essential information about the program, its structure, policies, and goals, as well as some practical insight into travel and life as a student abroad in your host country. We hope it will also provide useful insights into some of the challenges you may face and the extensive resources available to help you overcome them. Key among those resources will be your American Councils Resident Director, your host family, and the staff and faculty of your host institution. Together, these people will form an important network of support throughout your time abroad.

We hope you will take some time to read the handbook in its entirety and to discuss it with family and friends in detail. Please feel free to contact us at any time with questions or concerns.

Congratulations once more on being admitted to the program!

The SEAFLI Team

PROGRAM PARTNERS

The Institute for International Education (IIE) oversees the Flagship Language Initiatives and administers the SEAFLI Boren Scholarships and Fellowships on behalf of the National Security Education Program. IIE implements many of the world's most prestigious and innovative scholarship and training programs, including supporting the Flagship educational and cultural exchange programs of the U.S. Departments of State and Defense. IIE is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to building international goodwill through educational and cultural exchange among nations. By enabling more than 18,000 outstanding men and women each year to study, conduct research, receive practical training, or provide technical assistance outside their own countries, IIE fosters mutual understanding, builds global problem-solving capabilities, and strengthens the international competence of U.S. citizens.

The National Security Education Program (NSEP) is a key initiative of the Defense Language and National Security Education Office (DLNSEO) of the U.S. Department of War (DoW). DLNSEO provides program management oversight for many high value training and education programs. NSEP's primary mission is to develop a pipeline of foreign language and culture expertise for the U.S. federal government workforce. NSEP was established by the David L. Boren National Security Education Act of 1991. NSEP represents an investment in vital expertise in languages and cultures critical to U.S. national security. NSEP award recipients agree to work in qualifying national security positions for a minimum of one year. This unique service requirement generates a pool of U.S. undergraduate and graduate students with competencies in critical languages and area studies who are highly committed to serving at the federal level in the national security community.

The University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison), founded in 1848, is a public land-grant university and prolific research institution. UW-Madison is the recipient of the SEAFLI grant and has academic oversight of the program. UW-Madison hosts the 8-week summer domestic portion of SEAFLI, with students studying Vietnamese through the Southeast Asian Summer Studies Institute (SEASSI). In addition, SEAFLI students enroll in UW-Madison's International Academic Programs (IAP) study abroad department and are considered UW-Madison special students during the summer and when abroad in the fall, thus receiving UW-Madison credit for all SEAFLI courses. UW-Madison works in close collaboration with American Councils and The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) to implement smooth articulation from domestic to abroad programs by working with ULIS staff on development of course materials and pedagogy trainings.

American Councils for International Education (AC) acts as a sub-contractor to UW-Madison to administer the overseas portion of SEAFLI working in collaboration with The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) to provide overseas instruction and immersion activities designed to help program participants connect with their local host community. American Councils hires and trains the program's Resident Director, oversees student housing and host family placements, arranges cultural activities with ULIS, and provides ongoing logistical support – as well as emergency aid 24-hours per day - to participants throughout the program. American Councils is a non-profit leader in the field of cultural exchange, language training, and global professional development. Since its inception in 1974, American Councils' educational portfolio has grown to include 85 countries vital to national security, prosperity, and peace. Today, the organization provides intensive, overseas immersive language learning to U.S.

students in such countries as Armenia, Azerbaijan, China, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Morocco, Russia, Senegal, Tajikistan, Tanzania, Taiwan, and Ukraine. Programs are backed by thorough research to ensure their quality and integrity. Participants on American Councils programs represent a spectrum of learners, from high school through the postdoctoral and professional levels. To date, there is a community of more than 89,000 alumni, including national leaders, ministers, members of parliament, ambassadors, and CEOs.

The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS): The SEAFLI Vietnamese overseas program is administered in partnership with the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) in Hanoi, Vietnam. ULIS was established in 1955 and is one of the several colleges making up the Vietnam National University. As one of the premier universities for language studies in Southeast Asia, ULIS is home to a number of graduate and undergraduate programs.

IN-COUNTRY SUPPORT

The Resident Director (RD) is American Councils' chief program representative in Vietnam and a key source of support and guidance for all SEAFLI participants. A fluent speaker of Vietnamese, the RD serves as the program's primary liaison with the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS), Vietnamese government officials, host families, and language partners. The RD works closely with ULIS on the logistical and programmatic arrangements that support the day-to-day operation of SEAFLI and directly oversees all non-academic aspects of the program, including homestays, cultural activities, and student-life issues. The RD is also charged with ensuring program participants understand and abide by the program's policies regarding student conduct, travel, attendance, and health and safety. Throughout the program, the RD is available to help with cultural adjustment challenges, health concerns, programmatic issues, and logistics. The RD can be reached by mobile phone 24 hours a day for any emergency.

The ULIS Academic Coordinator oversees the SEAFLI program and serves as the main liaison between ULIS, AC, and UW-Madison. The Academic Coordinator identifies and recruits ULIS program staff and faculty, develops the academic program in collaboration with UW-Madison's pedagogy staff, conducts trainings for ULIS instructors and language partners, and monitors the overall academic program quality. In addition to yearlong communication with UW-Madison faculty and staff on academic matters, the Academic Coordinator coordinates with the American Councils RD and Program Manager on the logistical and programmatic arrangements that support the SEAFLI academic program throughout the fall semester.

ULIS faculty work with SEAFLI students and are deeply committed to their success. Students will find them accessible, supportive, friendly, and caring. SEAFLI faculty also join excursions and a wide range of cultural activities with SEAFLI participants. Professional, energetic, and strongly committed to the teaching of Vietnamese, ULIS faculty have been widely praised by others for their engaging, upbeat instruction and close attention to student needs. You should never hesitate to ask for help or clarification in class or during office hours, and to let them know if you feel overwhelmed or confused. If you have questions or concerns regarding classroom instruction or classroom management, we suggest that you first speak to your RD, who can help you think through how to raise the issue directly with your instructor in a culturally appropriate way. UW-Madison oversees the program's academics and

communicates directly with the ULIS Academic Coordinator and with your instructors on academic matters. Your RD can also share your concerns with the American Councils U.S. Team, who will pass them along to UW-Madison.

While we strongly encourage you to raise questions and concerns with your RD first, the **American Councils U.S. Team** is also available to respond to you at any time. You can contact the SEAFLI Program Officer and Program Manager via email or phone. Please see Appendix J: Contact Information. Please keep in mind that your RD will be best positioned to address logistical questions and to respond to an emergency on site (in which case you should contact them directly by cell phone).

Vietnam and Hanoi

The SEAFLI-Vietnamese program is based in Hanoi. As the capital, Hanoi has an urban population of over 4 million people, with the population of the wider metropolitan area numbering over 20 million. In terms of population size, Hanoi is second only to Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.

Going back to the first millennium BCE, people have lived in and settled land in present-day Vietnam. Until its independence in 938 CE and the establishment of the first Vietnamese dynasty, Vietnam was under Chinese rule. From that time until the early 19th century, Vietnam slowly expanded southward until it stretched from the northern Red River Delta to the southern Mekong Delta.

In the second half of the 19th century, European colonialism took hold, and France ruled over the territory until Vietnam regained independence in 1945, in the aftermath of World War II. France attempted to regain colonial control, leading to a bloody conflict that resulted in the country being divided in two. In the context of the Cold War, the ideological divide between the communist north and the anti-communist south provided the backdrop for a proxy war in Vietnam between the USSR and the US until the early 1970s. After US withdrawal and the North Vietnamese victory in 1975, the country reunified into the territory known today as Vietnam.

Today, Vietnam is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Vietnam is located along the eastern side of the Southeast Asian peninsula, bordered by China to the north, Laos and Cambodia to the west, and the Gulf of Tonkin and the South China Sea to the east. The country also shares a number of maritime borders, including with Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

Hanoi has long served as the capital of Vietnam, going back to the third century BCE, and now reflects that extended history mixed with relics of French colonialism and the modern city of today. With a wide range of cultural, entertainment, and historical activities, Hanoi attracts people from around the world to visit each year. Hanoi theaters are home to performances of water puppetry, a traditional form of entertainment developed in the north of Vietnam.

Characterized by humid subtropical weather, Hanoi has four distinct seasons. Hot and wet summers give way to warm but mild falls and cooler and dryer winters. Hanoi is home to many universities and was designated a "City for Peace" by UNESCO in 1999.

More information on Vietnam and Hanoi can be found in the following websites:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanoi

https://www.nationsonline.org/oneworld/vietnam.htm

https://wikittravel.org/en/Vietnam

http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/clinician/none/vietnam

http://www.lonelyplanet.com/vietnam

The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS)

The SEAFLI-Vietnamese program is hosted by the University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS) in Hanoi, Vietnam. ULIS was established in 1955 and is one of the several colleges making up the Vietnam National University. As one of the premier universities for language studies in Southeast Asia, ULIS is home to a number of graduate and undergraduate programs.

ULIS Pedagogy

ULIS and UW-Madison work extensively together to develop and adjust the SEAFLI academic program. Faculty from both universities consult closely on curriculum design throughout the year. ULIS faculty have many years of experience teaching U.S. students and regularly attend workshops on academic culture in the U.S.

Nevertheless, it is important to keep in mind that the SEAFLI program is not designed to re-create U.S. language classrooms overseas. The program you are joining in Hanoi is ultimately highly influenced by and rooted in Vietnamese pedagogy and Vietnamese academic culture: therefore, your classes at ULIS will probably feel quite unlike those at the US-Madison. We hope you will approach your courses and faculty with flexibility, openness, and cultural sensitivity.

Teachers in Vietnam are deeply respected, and while far from autocratic, they are generally used to a greater level of deference than that which might be typically accorded to pedagogues in the U.S. This is not at all to say that you should not ask questions, express your opinions, or seek help from your instructors. Just the opposite: your earnest commitment to learning and your readiness to engage in the

classroom will be highly appreciated and responded to warmly. However, it is extremely important to be on time for class and to avoid interrupting your instructor (most easily by waiting until she or he invites questions). You should be sure to learn your teachers' names and to address them by their appropriate title, which in Vietnam should always include Thầy (Mr.) or Cô (Ms.). For example, you can call a female teacher named Lan "Cô Lan" and a male teacher named Trí "Thầy Trí". If you have trouble catching it on the first day of class, ask your teachers to repeat their names and to write them down for you on the blackboard. You can also ask your Resident Director to help you learn the full names of your instructors.

If you have a concern about the quality of instruction you are receiving, please first speak to your Resident Director, who can help you explore ways to address the issue and consider some of the cultural nuances of raising it directly with your instructor. Your Resident Director can also share your concern with the American Councils U.S. Team, who will pass it along to UW-Madison. Because UW-Madison oversees the academic program, its pedagogy experts work directly with the ULIS Academic Coordinator and your instructors to address any substantive academic issues. If for any reason you prefer to contact the SEAFLI program manager regarding such issues, you are also welcome to do so by writing or calling directly (please see Appendix J: Contact Information).

Courses and Coursework

Please note: Every year, our academic program is adjusted slightly based on recent experience, student outcomes, evaluations, faculty input, and ULIS's staffing and administration. Therefore, please keep in mind that the information below may be subject to change.

Brief Course Overview

- Intensive small-group language instruction (20 hours per week)
    - Approximately 6-11 students per class
    - Focusing on reading, speaking, listening, and writing
    - Active and participatory class
- Individualized language tutoring (4 hours per week)
    - Conversation partners & socializing with peers
- Extracurricular cultural activities
- Bi-weekly excursions

Example of weekly schedule based on past programs (subject to change):

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8AM – 12PM Language Class- Vocabulary, Grammar Listening exercises	8AM – 12PM Read Class (2hrs); Language Class (2hrs)	8AM – 12PM Read Class (2hrs); Language Class (2hrs)	8AM – 12PM Language Class- Correction of Exercises; games, role-play activities	8AM – 12PM Visit/Cultural immersion- Combined In-Situ Learning
Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch

	2PM – 4PM Language Partner Session		2PM – 4PM Language Partner Session	

Desired Learning Outcomes

Desired learning outcomes for language classes differ by two approximate levels:

Intermediate courses:

- Deliver and share ideas about familiar topics using common expressions and sentences in short social interactions in everyday situations by asking and answering frequently used inquiries;
- Comprehend both spoken and written messages found in highly familiar everyday communication in real-life contexts;
- Comprehend texts conveying basic information that are not complex and have predictable patterns of presentation;
- Inaugurate discourse that is minimally connected and primarily organized in individual and strings of sentences containing predominantly high frequency vocabulary;
- Ask simple questions and handle direct survival situations. They can express and present their ideas, write messages, request for information, take notes, fill forms and compose short narrative and descriptive paragraphs. Their utterances and writings could be understood by native Vietnamese speakers who are accustomed to interact with non-native speakers.

Advanced courses:

- Deliver and share ideas about academic and non-academic topics using complex sentences at paragraph level;
- Communicate accurately and fluently in order to participate fully and effectively on a variety of topics in social interactions both in formal and non-formal situations;
- Understand authentic speech in a wide range of topics, including academic and professional discourse;
- Comprehend structurally complex texts from different genres dealing with a wide range of subjects.
- Compensate for limitations in their language control (lexical and structural) by using prior knowledge and contextual clues;
- Successfully negotiate unexpected complication in social situation using sufficient control of structure and vocabulary to be understood by native Vietnamese speakers, even if they are unaccustomed to non-native speech and writings.

Academic Credit

SEAFLI participants are enrolled as full-time UW-Madison students throughout the fall semester abroad and receive a total of 12 credits on their transcripts.

- Total Fall Credits: 12
    - Two 4-credit language courses
    - 4-credit reading course

Language Group Placement

Soon after you arrive in Vietnam, you'll be asked to complete a written and oral assessment with ULIS faculty, which will be used to place you in a group of peers with language skills similar to yours. Please keep in mind that students are placed in language groups according to their language proficiency alone, regardless of whether they are graduates or undergraduates. If you have questions about your placement, please talk with your RD, who will be glad to also confer with ULIS faculty.

Language Partners

To help maximize your language immersion, carefully selected ULIS students will be paired with you as language partners to help you practice Vietnamese outside class. You will be introduced to your language partner during the on-site orientation in Hanoi. During these meetings, students practice new language concepts acquired in class and discuss other culturally relevant topics and events. They are experts on the host culture and are knowledgeable about your host city – they can guide you on events and places of interest in Hanoi.

Your language partners in the Summer Program play a primarily academic role. In contrast, your language partners in the Fall Semester not only play an academic role. They also play an additional role as well – they should help you connect socially to the university student body and the broader community of your host city. You should proactively ask your language partner to help you find student clubs and activities to connect with and to identify events and activities in your neighborhood to attend – that is an important part of their role. If these events take place at times they are available, they may even attend the events with you. They may wait for you to take the lead in making these requests and you should step up and let them know what type of university or neighborhood clubs, activities and events you are interested in.

Language partners are mostly active students of University of Language and International Studies selected from a broad range of academic fields and backgrounds. They offer SEAFLI participants a unique opportunity to connect with local students and to learn about daily life in Vietnam from a supportive peer.

The following criteria are considered during the selection of language partners:

- High academic achievement
- Bilingual and/or experienced in learning another language
- Willingness to dedicate time and effort to support students' language and cultural learning
- Open-mindedness
- Knowledge about the city of Hanoi and surrounding areas
- Enthusiasm and energy
- Similar age and interests to those of the students
- Willingness to speak exclusively in Vietnamese with the students
- Knowledge and awareness of Vietnamese culture and society
- Knowledge and willingness to be a 'Vietnamese ambassador' to international students

Cultural Activities and Excursions

Your Resident Director will plan a series of cultural activities as part of your program. These activities are designed to extend your linguistic and cultural learning beyond the classroom by actively engaging you with people and places that promise to provide new insights into Vietnam's history and culture. Throughout the excursions, you'll be asked to speak only Vietnamese, in keeping with the program's language policy (see Language Policy below). As these activities are part of your academic program, attendance is mandatory, just as it is for regular classes.
While the activities change, each year and we cannot guarantee any particular excursion this year we want to share some examples of recent past excursions. This list of excursions is for illustrative purposes only and may change this year. Recent excursions have included:

Van Mieu is a temple dedicated to Confucius in Hanoi. The temple also hosts the Imperial Academy, Vietnam's first national university. The temple was built in 1070. http://vanmieu.gov.vn/en/

Vietnam Museum of Ethnology (Ha Noi) has many different functions such as research, collection, preservation, and restoration of objects and materials of ethnic peoples; organizing exhibitions, performances, and other forms of activities to introduce cultures of ethnic groups in Vietnam as well as in other countries. http://www.vme.org.vn/vi

Vietnam National Museum of History stores and preserves about 200,000 objects and materials of Vietnamese cultural history among which there are nearly 110,000 antiques and 19 national treasures from prehistory to 1945. https://baotanglichsu.vn/en

Duong Lam ancient village is 44km west of Hanoi center. There, students will learn about three types of traditional houses in the rural areas of Northern Vietnam with a history dating back three hundred years: houses of officials, houses of merchants, and houses of farmers. Afterwards, students will conduct research on promoting the image of rural food and commemorative gifts in the countryside to attract tourists to visit the ancient village.

Bat Trang ceramic making village, far from 10km from Hanoi center. Bat Trang is considered the oldest ceramic making village in Vietnam. Bat Trang ceramics are one of the most renowned representatives of Vietnamese fine arts.

Tràng An (Ninh Bình), far from Hanoi about 100km. Trang An Scenic Landscape Complex is a comprehensive tourist area of world cultural and natural heritage recognized by UNESCO in Ninh Binh, Vietnam. Trang An has beautiful nature with mountains, mysterious caves, tranquil rivers, sacred relics and rich and rare flora and fauna.

After classes and on free weekends, there are lots of things in and around Hanoi, which students can enjoy either by themselves or with friends and host family. Some historic sites you can explore in Hanoi include Hoan Kiem Lake Walking Street, West Lake, Hanoi Creative City, Big Church, Uncle Ho's Mausoleum, etc. Students may be invited by their host families to attend family events such as weddings and naming ceremonies within and outside of Hanoi. Hanoi also has great restaurants, craft markets and shops that you can enjoy.

Housing: Living With a Host Family

To maximize cultural and linguistic immersion during their semester abroad, all SEAFLI participants live with local Vietnamese-speaking host families. We understand that for many participants, this is a significant adjustment after living independently, alone or with friends, for many years, and the cultural demands of living with a family can be weighty (more on that below). But participants consistently report that host family life was a key source of their language growth and their greater understanding of the host culture. Indeed, many program alumni credit their host families with providing some of their most important insights into host country life and thought. We hope therefore that you will find the small sacrifices and adjustments required to reside with a family are more than worth the opportunity to enter Vietnamese culture and daily life in a way few Americans are able to experience.

Host Family Selection Process

Host families are selected by ULIS staff and American Councils to participate in the SEAFLI program because they are committed to cross cultural learning and engagement. Therefore, you should assume your family will want to get to know you and to learn about American customs and ideas. At the same time, your hosts will likely assume that you are interested in learning about their lives and customs. The readier you are to engage, the more your family will welcome you into its shared life. While this does not guarantee that you will develop a life-long bond with your host family (although some students do), it does mean that you should feel welcome and supported throughout your homestay. At the same time, adjusting to your family's daily habits, routines, and values will require some flexibility, open-mindedness, and good humor. Keep in mind that your RD is always available to help as you adjust and to work through issues as they arise.

- **Host Family Information Form** is completed by SEAFLI students prior to departure and helps American Councils and ULIS match you with a host family based on the information you provide.
    - List specific preferences and interests
    - Inform us about allergies, dietary restrictions, feelings about smokers, essential at home needs, medical needs, etc.

While we work hard to find families who align with all aspects of each SEAFLI participant's requests, we are not always able to find perfect matches. Many families in Vietnam simply lack the space to host students so we cannot always find a family that meets the students exact preferences. For example, it can be challenging to place students in families with many children or with no children at all. You will also notice that our host families are socio-economically different: while all are decidedly middle class (otherwise, they could not spare a room for a guest), some are certainly wealthier than others, and therefore, you may find the house in which you live is demonstrably smaller, or larger, than that of your fellow participants. Although American Councils tries to find host families who live close to the university, you may have a 45-minute-long commute on public transportation. This is an average commute in Hanoi, and many people travel even farther.

All SEAFLI host families complete training and information sessions with ULIS staff to learn about the program's requirements and to prepare for some of the cultural challenges involved in hosting a U.S. student. All families commit to:

- Provide the participant with dinner on weekdays, and lunch and dinner weekends;

- Provide a private room, bed, sheets, and desk for the participant;
- Speak only Vietnamese with the participant and to support the participant's Vietnamese language development. (You should never be asked to speak English extensively in your host family.)

The Host Family Compromise and Contract

Living with a host family involves an essential compromise. While your Vietnamese hosts will make great efforts to ensure you feel comfortable and welcome, it is also important that you, as a guest, be prepared to adapt to the family's basic routines, customs, and etiquette. This can be challenging, especially for students who have lived on their own for many years and grown accustomed to their independent lives. Your family, for example, will likely worry if you are out at night, and we therefore ask that you plan to let them know if you will be home late. Further, it is not acceptable in Vietnamese culture to appear intoxicated or to smell of alcohol, or to have a friend of the opposite sex stay the night (even if your relationship is entirely platonic). Doing so may severely damage your relationship with your family. To ensure there is no confusion regarding the program's expectations of you in relation to your host family, you will be asked to sign the American Councils Host Family Contract during the Pre-Departure Orientation (PDO) (during which we will talk at length about life with a host family). A copy of the agreement can be found below in Appendix F: Host Family Contract for Students. Please be sure to review it carefully; if you have any questions or concerns about the contract, please let us know directly.

Food Culture Within the Host Family

One of the many adjustments you'll make while living with your family will involve diet. We appreciate your flexibility and open-mindedness, and most importantly, your readiness to recognize the care and attention your family provides you in the context of their culture. You should feel free to answer honestly (but diplomatically) when asked whether you like a particular food or meal (you may want to talk with your RD and teachers about the best way to delicately explain when something does not appeal to you), and you should feel comfortably well-fed in your host family. But do also keep in mind that your family is asked to provide healthy, nutritious *Vietnamese* meals, not American ones. If you have specific dietary needs or requirements, you should consider purchasing this yourself.

Feeding people is one of the ways Vietnamese show affection and your host mother will almost certainly spend a great deal of time and energy preparing meals for you and urging you to eat. Even if you decline, she and other members of your host family will likely continue plying you with food, convinced that your refusals are just good manners. (In many cultures, it is polite, after all, to refuse offers of food to ensure you are not overtaxing your host.) Even if this routine becomes a little tiresome, we hope you will remember that the food prepared for you, and the urging to eat more, is motivated by care, affection, and a generous desire to make sure you are well looked after. If you have dietary concerns, allergies, or other problems relating to food in your host family, be sure you reach out to your RD for help and advice.

By and large, you will be on campus at lunchtime during the week; for this reason, families are asked to provide only dinner Monday through Friday. However, if you happen to be home during the week, your family will almost certainly offer you lunch. In these instances, you might want to consider contributing in some small way to the meal – perhaps by bringing home a little fruit or some other affordable treat

for your family members. In general, any small gesture along these lines will be deeply appreciated by your host family.

Please note that your Vietnamese host family is not expected to provide accommodations for visiting family or friends. If you will be hosting visitors, please plan to make arrangements for your guests to stay in local hotels (see section below on Guests). We ask that you speak with your RD well before you finalize plans for any such visits.

Adjusting to Your Homestay

As a student of Vietnamese language and Vietnamese culture, you may already have anticipated some of the differences to be expected while living with your family in Hanoi. We will be talking at length with you about host-family life during the program's pre-departure orientation, and your RD will be on hand throughout the program to help you navigate some of the complexities that you may encounter. We thought it might also be helpful to note here a few of the challenges students in the past have experienced. These include:

- **Less privacy**: We hope that you will respond with patience, understanding and good humor to your hosts' great interest in you, their concern about your well-being, and their culturally determined understanding of respect and privacy. Family members and others may ask questions about your personal life. Out of concern for your well-being, your host family may check on your whereabouts. Children in your household may be curious about you and your things and may enter your room quite freely. Don't hesitate to talk with your RD about privacy – or other issues – that might come up with your family.
- **Electricity cuts**: Occasional electricity and power outages can happen in Hanoi, particularly during the summer months. While these interruptions may occur, residents have adapted to them, often relying on alternative lighting sources such as candles. Additionally, some households utilize alternative water storage methods to ensure a continuous water supply during these times.
- **Security Cameras**: Many Vietnamese families have a security camera at the entranceway and in common rooms of their households. The cameras are used to prevent petty theft by service workers. No families have cameras in their bedrooms or bathrooms. If your home does have a camera in the common areas, your host family will provide you with detailed information on what is recorded (e.g. whether audio is taped) and for how long the video is kept.
- **Frequent guests**: Relatives and friends often come to stay with Vietnamese families. These visits are so routine, your family members may not always think to explain to you who is visiting (although we encourage them to do so.) You should feel free to politely ask your host family members about visiting guests. If for any reason you feel uncomfortable about a visitor who is staying with your host family, be sure to let your RD know immediately.

Over the years, RDs and Flagship Language Initiative program participants have found the following strategies and habits can be helpful as students adapt to their life with a host family:

- **Set boundaries.** Finding private time for yourself to reflect and process can be difficult in a host family arrangement, but it is important to maintain this balance. Therefore, you should plan to

carve out a little time for yourself to read or just rest and process the day. Establishing this time early on will make your life easier.

- **Offer to help with chores from the get-go.** You will feel more a part of the family, and it may help your host family to see you as more than a guest.
- **Ask your family for help on homework assignments or flashcards**. This is a great way to engage together and for your family to feel a part of and be proud of your Vietnamese language growth.
- **Make time for your family.** When invited to family events our outings, try to find a way to say 'yes.' The more you engage with your family and participate in shared events, the more you will quickly feel at home.
- **Don't worry too much about linguistic mistakes**. Your host family is a great place to test your languages skills and make mistakes. Unlike your teachers, your family members will care first and foremost about what you are communicating – not how you communicate. Don't let fear of mistakes prevent you from engaging in conversation, asking questions, and connecting at home. This is your chance to launch out into new linguistic territory. Your interlocutors will not be evaluating your grammar or pronunciation – they will just want to get to know you.
- **Periodically bring home a small treat for the family** or a modest contribution to a meal: nothing expensive, but a small sign of your appreciation for the family.
- **Cook your family a meal**. This is a good way of showing your family that you want to share a part of where you come from, and that you are interested in enjoying meals together.
- **Share family pictures from home** with your host family members. Family is an exceedingly important part of Vietnamese culture, and your hosts will appreciate the chance to learn about yours.
- **Be gracious.** Your host family will do a lot for you; try to keep this in perspective even if parts of the homestay are challenging.

Perhaps most importantly, we hope you will be able to approach life with your family with good humor, patience, and an open mind. There will be times when you feel overwhelmed by cultural differences, confused by the language, and generally fatigued: keep in mind that this is very much part of the process of immersion learning. All your peers, and the many students who have completed Flagship Language Initiative programs before you, will have had similar struggles – and eventual victories. Remember you are in a supportive, caring community and try to laugh as much as you can. That said, if for any reason you are not happy with your host family, don't hesitate to talk with your RD, who will work with you to address your concerns and improve the situation. If necessary, the RD can also find a new family for you to stay with. However, these changes are relatively rare, and may require some time. Therefore, it is important to let your RD know about concerns early in the program so that they can begin working with you on solutions as soon as possible.

Guests

If you plan to have a family member or friend come to Vietnam to visit you while on program, please talk with your RD about timing and logistics for the visit well before you finalize plans. Keep in mind that you will still be required to attend regular classes and other program activities while your visitors are in town, so you will need to manage the visit around your regular schedule. See the Visitor Policy below for more information. Your Vietnamese host family is not expected to provide accommodations for visiting

family or friends. If you will be hosting visitors, please plan to make arrangements for your guests to stay in local hotels.

While it can be enjoyable to share your life in Hanoi with a guest, some past participants have also found it quite stressful to have visitors in town, as they tend to be highly dependent on their host for assistance with translation and day-to-day activities. In short, it is a good idea to talk with the RD – and your potential guests – to make sure you are ready to manage their trip during this intensive program.

Keeping Well Abroad

Prolonged overseas study is physically and mentally challenging, as participants must adjust to a new diet and daily routines. It also entails significant emotional stress stemming from jet lag, culture shock, and the daily demands of functioning in a foreign language. It is therefore very important that you consult with your physician and any mental health providers you may see regularly well in advance of the program to discuss your health needs and ways you can be supported overseas. Please also be sure to provide American Councils complete information about your mental and physical health – and your doctor's recommendations – by completing in detail the medical information form included in your acceptance packet. This information will help us work with you to ensure adequate resources are in place to help you succeed on SEAFLI.

The Challenge of Balancing Your Time

One of the most fundamental adjustments that SEAFLI participants must make concerns time. Keeping up with the intensive academic program while exploring Hanoi; socializing with host family members, language partners, and other Vietnamese people; and getting enough sleep can feel a little overwhelming. We therefore suggest that early in the program you focus first on academics and, once you feel comfortable, begin to build up your social and extracurricular activities. We understand that you do not want to spend all your time abroad in a classroom or studying, and the SEAFLI program is designed to give you space and time to explore Vietnam. But generally, we find participants benefit greatly by easing into the program. If you do begin to feel overwhelmed, consult your Resident Director.

Keeping Well: Physical Health Challenges

There is a good chance that at some point you will feel under the weather during your semester abroad – adjusting to a new diet and a new situation while overcoming a hefty dose of jet lag is not easy. If you are feeling unwell, be sure to let your RD know right away, even if you believe the problem is just minor. The RD can help with advice and resources and will ensure that you have access to medical help if you need it.

Travelers' diarrhea is the most common ailment suffered by SEAFLI participants. Therefore, it is a good idea to plan to bring with you a supply of Pepto-Bismol or a similar medication for an upset stomach. If you bring Imodium, be sure to avoid prolonged use, as it can control your symptoms while preventing your body from expelling the source of the problem, which can lead to larger issues.

It is very important to hydrate when treating an upset stomach -- and in general, you should pay close attention to your water intake throughout the semester. A reusable water bottle, to be filled with boiled, filtered, or purified water, is perhaps the best way to keep hydrated. Keep in mind that you should not drink tap water unless it has been thoroughly boiled or purified, and you should avoid ice, as well as produce that you do not peel to eat, unless you have washed it thoroughly with purified water.

Here are a few other basic tips to keep in mind:

Eat Well: Your host family will provide nutritional food based on the local diet, including fresh fruits and vegetables when possible. Be sure to wash fruits and vegetables with filtered or purified water to avoid consuming harmful bacteria.

Get Enough Sleep: Living and learning in a new situation can be exhausting. Be sure to give yourself enough time to sleep so that you're recharged and ready to go for each new day of the program.

Exercise: Be sure to maintain a minimal exercise routine. While outdoor exercise such as running is not as popular as it is in the US, it is becoming more common.

Wash Your Hands: Washing your hands regularly, especially before eating, is the best way to protect yourself from germs and stay healthy throughout the duration of your program. Having a small bottle of hand sanitizer with you is never a bad idea.

Vaccines and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Information: As soon as possible, please review closely the CDC's recommendations for vaccines and other measures to protect your health in Vietnam by visiting:

CDC Traveler's Health: Vietnam, https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/vietnam?s_cid=ncezid-dgmq-travel-single-001

American Councils recommends in the strongest possible terms that SEAFLI participants obtain all vaccinations recommended by the CDC in consultation with their physicians.

If you take medications, work with your doctor to ensure you have a sufficient supply for the program's duration.

Keeping Well: Mental Health Challenges

Occasionally, we hear from parents and students who believe that overseas study will provide a reprieve from mental health issues they are experiencing in the U.S. by offering a "clean break." Unfortunately, this is far from true. The daily stress involved in overseas cultural immersion is much more likely to exacerbate mental health conditions, particularly anxiety and depression, than it is to relieve them. Therefore, it is extremely important that you consult closely with your physician about your mental health needs, the stress inherent to prolonged overseas study, and the resources that we can develop together to make sure you succeed on the program.

- If you currently see a therapist, you should make arrangements to continue your sessions while overseas or discuss alternate plans with your therapist.
    - Simply interrupting therapy while you are abroad may lead to serious complications while on the program.

- If you recently completed counseling, develop a plan whereby you can quickly re-establish contact with your therapist from overseas in case conditions require that you resume counseling.
- **Important:** If you take medication, work with your mental health professional and American Councils to ensure you have a full supply of all necessary prescription medications for the duration of your time abroad (see *Prescription Medications* below)
    - If you have recently changed your medications or dosage, please be sure to inform American Councils directly.
- If while abroad you begin to experience mental health challenges, be sure to inform your RD as soon as possible. Arranging counseling may take some time, and we want to address your needs before they become severe or threaten to disrupt your progress on the program.
    - Through CISI insurance (see Your Health Insurance Abroad below), American Councils can arrange online counseling for you with a therapist.
    - Your home university may also provide remote counseling, depending on the state in which it is located, and American Councils can help with arrangements there as well.
    - Keep in mind that in-person therapy in Hanoi may be largely unavailable as cultural differences and language barriers tend to preclude SEAFLI participants from receiving appropriate therapy on site.

Culture Shock

As first defined by the anthropologist Calvero Oberg in 1954, culture shock is "precipitated by the anxiety that results from losing all our familiar signs and symbols of social intercourse. These signs or cues include the thousand and one ways in which we orient ourselves to the situations of daily life: when to shake hands and what to say when we meet people, when and how to give tips, how to make purchases, when to accept and when to refuse invitations, when to take statements seriously and when not… These cues, which may be words, gestures, facial expressions, customs, or norms, are acquired by all of us in the course of growing up and are as much a part of our culture as the language we speak or the beliefs we accept. All of us depend for our peace of mind and our efficiency on hundreds of these cues, most of which we do not carry on the level of conscious awareness. When an individual enters a strange culture, all or most of these familiar cues are removed. He or she is like a fish out of water."

While the severity of the culture shock you experience will vary from that of your fellow participants, you will quite certainly experience this disorienting sensation to some degree while abroad: it is a natural and understandable part of the entering and acclimating to a new culture.

One of the keys to managing culture shock effectively is to simply be aware of its existence and to recognize the symptoms when you experience them. These may include extreme homesickness, feelings of helplessness or dependency, disorientation and isolation, depression and sadness, extreme irritability and inappropriate anger or hostility, difficulty concentrating, disturbed sleep or eating habits (too little or too much), excessive negative reactions to your host culture, and extreme frustration with host-country norms.

In addition to recognizing these symptoms as the result of culture shock (and not a sign that you made a terrible mistake by coming to Vietnam), the following strategies can also be helpful:

- Set reasonable goals for yourself and celebrate your successes.
- Pay close attention to your physical health, diet, and especially sleep patterns; lack of sleep, in particular, tends to exacerbate stress and unhappiness.
- Remember the interests that first drew you to Vietnam and the Vietnamese language and spend time focused on them. For example, if it was an interest in music, ask your language partner to help you explore the music scene in Hanoi or go to a local concert. If it was the country's extraordinary flora and fauna, plan a visit with a friend or a host-family member to one of the many scenic places in and around Hanoi.
- Avoid withdrawing. You may want to take a brief break to stay home, quietly read a favorite book, and refocus. But be careful not to isolate yourself or withdraw for too long: ultimately, the only way to overcome culture shock is to engage more actively with the culture around you. While social media, text messaging, and video-chatting with friends in the U.S. may be tempting, be careful not to spend too much time in media limbo (in which you are physically in Vietnam and virtually back in the U.S.) Doing so may deepen your culture shock, limit your contact with the actual people around you, and distract from your language studies.
- Keep a sense of humor. One of the greatest gifts that overseas students can possess is the ability to find a little humor in their daily struggle to adapt and understand what's going on around them. Those who can laugh at the strange, confusing, sometimes absurd situations in which they find themselves are among those who adapt most easily to life overseas.
- Spend time with someone from the host country. The symptoms of culture shock almost always begin to dissipate as students become more connected to local people, who help them develop a new understanding of the society around them.

Your Health Insurance Abroad

UW-Madison will enroll you in international health insurance provided by Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI) for the length of your overseas program. A copy of your plan will be provided by UW-Madison. For full information on your international health insurance while abroad, see Overseas Medical Care and Insurance and Appendix H: Sample CISI Coverage below.

Note that CISI does not cover dental care other than that required for the treatment of injuries sustained in an accident. While dental care in Hanoi is available, we recommend that you visit your dentist well in advance of your departure for Vietnam. Be sure to inform your dentist that you will be living abroad for an extended period. Schedule your visit at least one month before your departure to ensure plenty of time to complete any necessary treatment before the program begins.

Medical Facilities

If you need to visit a medical facility while in Vietnam, we strongly encourage you to reach out to your RD for help in identifying the best provider and making an appointment; your RD will also be ready to accompany you to the clinic to facilitate your admission and to help make sure you are seen as scheduled. Your RD will have extensive experience in assisting students with medical issues and will maintain your privacy at all times. You should feel free to ask for the RD's assistance in arranging a medical visit without discussing your health needs in detail.

If you prefer not to inform your RD about a medical concern, you can contact one of the medical providers included in these materials (see Appendix I: Medical Facilities) in order to schedule an appointment on your own. We strongly encourage you to have a friend join you for the visit if possible. Keep in mind that our ability to assist you will depend entirely on the degree to which you inform us of a problem.

If at any time you experience a medical emergency or require evacuation, your RD must be informed immediately.

Prescription Medications

It is extremely important **that you bring a supply of prescription medications to last the entire time that you will be on the program**. To do so, begin making arrangements as soon as possible with your doctor to receive the necessary medications. You cannot fill prescriptions overseas and it is not possible to ship medications from the U.S. to your overseas site. Be sure to pack your medications in their original prescription bottles in your carry-on luggage (to guard against possible loss). We suggest that you also have on hand a letter from your physician confirming that the medications you are carrying have been prescribed to you for an extended stay overseas.

If you have difficulty obtaining insurance coverage for an extended prescription period, American Councils can provide a letter for your insurance company and your doctor, explaining why it is essential that you obtain the full supply of medications for your entire semester. Contact American Councils immediately if this issue arises. Please also feel free to contact American Councils directly if you have other questions about medications.

Sexual Health

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV, are present across Vietnam. While awareness around STIs is growing, prevention methods are still sometimes uncommon. Diagnosis and treatment options are also less accessible than what you may be used to in your hometown.

We urge SEAFLI participants to be extremely cautious if they engage in sexual intercourse while on program and to use condoms correctly and consistently to minimize the risk of exposure to STIs.

For more information about risks and prevention around sexual health, see:
Sexually Transmitted Infections in Vietnam | Travel Doctor Network

Public Health

American Councils closely monitors public health conditions and policies to ensure participant health and safety onsite. Monitoring includes close review of the most current information available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassies, the World Health Organization, and overseas staff and partners. We regularly confer with overseas partners and stakeholders to review conditions and protocols and to ensure student safety. For full information on American Councils public health policies, please see below:

Public Health Measures

Safety and Security Abroad

General Safety Tips

Your safety is our primary concern. While Hanoi is generally safe with low crime rates, unexpected incidents sometimes happen. There are certain strategies to adopt – and certain behaviors to avoid – that can help minimize the risk of becoming a crime victim. Here are three of the most important:

1. **Avoid Alcohol**. The overwhelming majority of safety incidents that occur on our overseas programs involve alcohol at some point. When you drink, your judgment becomes impaired, your situational awareness decreases, and you become an easy target for trouble. If you want to ensure your safety abroad – and avoid offending many of the people around you – don't drink.

2. **Pay attention to how local people conduct themselves**. While it is both unnecessary and unlikely for you to entirely pass as a local resident of Hanoi, the more you observe the ways in which local people conduct themselves and begin to adopt their habits, the less you will draw attention to yourself and stand out in a crowd. Consider how local people conduct themselves in public – how loudly do they speak and laugh? How much room do they keep between themselves? How do they minimize the space they occupy on a crowded bus? What do they wear? The more you pay attention to these details, and the more aware you become of the ways in which American announce themselves in public (and sometimes cause offense), the more easily you will blend in with the people around you.

3. **Spend your time with someone from the local community**. Finally, the more time you spend with your language partner, a member of your host family, or someone else from Vietnam whom you have met through the program, the far less likely you will be to encounter a safety issue, for these people will take great pains to ensure your well-being, and they will be keenly aware of any potential danger to which you might be exposed. They will also help you learn about Vietnamese culture, deepen your language skills, and in some cases, become lifelong friends.

These simple guidelines will go a long way toward ensuring your personal security throughout the semester. Here are several more specific safety tips to keep in mind as well:

- Just as you would in a large American city, be cautious at night and avoid being out late, especially when alone. Rather than walking or using public transportation after dark, consider taking a cab to get home safely. (Your RD will provide more details about safe transportation available in the city).
- When going out, take only as much cash as needed for the outing. If you don't need a credit card, leave it behind. The less you have in your wallet, pocket, or purse, the less traumatic it will be if you lose it. If you are carrying your passport, keep it in an inside pocket where you can always feel it. Generally, keep your bag or purse in front of you and close to your body to guard against pickpockets. Be mindful of your possessions while walking along busy streets.

- When using a debit card to obtain cash, use an ATM in a bank or hotel during the day (not when it is dark out); avoid ATMs that stand alone or are located in run-down locations. Have a friend accompany you, pay attention to your surroundings, and wait to use the machine if for any reason you feel you are being observed.

Nightlife

We strongly encourage you to be very cautious if you decide to go to a bar or nightclub in Hanoi. By going to these establishments, you are choosing to place yourself in a relatively high-risk location. If you do decide to go out to a bar or club, please keep in mind the following:

- You should always go with one or more friends. Never leave a member of your group behind, even if they have met someone or strongly insist on staying when the rest of your group wants to leave. Agree beforehand that everyone in your group will go home together, and demand that each group member upholds this commitment.

- If you choose to drink (and disregard the advice above), do not leave your glass unattended or allow someone you do not know to handle it. Like many bars in the U.S. and Europe, there have been reports of drinks being spiked in Vietnam.

- If you happen to meet someone you might want to get to know better, ask for their phone number and agree to call them later in the week to arrange a meeting in a public place during daylight hours (for lunch or coffee etc.). Never leave a bar, restaurant, or nightclub with a stranger or accept a ride from someone you've only recently met.

- Keep in mind that some bars will be frequented by sex workers and special employees who are paid to flirt with customers and encourage them to buy more drinks.

- Have a plan to return home safely before you go out (you should not plan on walking at night).

Drugs in Vietnam

Drug laws in Vietnam are strict. Penalties for possession or sale of illegal drugs in Vietnam range from fines to long prison terms to the death penalty. Lengthy prison sentences are not uncommon for position of small amounts of drugs in Vietnam.

For this reason, **any drug use on the SEAFLI overseas program is strictly prohibited**. Any participant who is found to have used, purchased, sold, or possessed drugs will be immediately removed from the program and sent home. If at any time someone near you is engaged in drug use, you should leave the location immediately: Vietnamese authorities will not take time to distinguish who was actively engaged in drug use and who just happened to be nearby. For your protection, you should immediately remove yourself from any location where drugs are in use.

As a reminder, neither American Councils nor the U.S. Embassy in Vietnam has the power to get U.S. citizens out of jail. Regardless of the status of drug laws in your hometown in the U.S., Vietnamese law takes precedence.

Social Media

Before leaving the U.S., we strongly suggest that you review your social media accounts. If you have a past or current affiliation with the U.S. military, we recommend removing from public view any photographs or posts in which this is evident (e.g., photographs of you in uniform or posts that clearly link you to the military). You may also want to consider other posts, if they are accessible to public view, and how they might be viewed by your host family and new friends in Vietnam. Many past Boren fellows have found it advisable to remove previous posts from public view before beginning their overseas studies. Please review the rules on Social Media posts in your Boren Handbook. Similarly, be cautious – just as you would in the U.S. – when it comes to posting information about your usual movements, habits, and future plans while in Vietnam.

Transportation

Transportation in Hanoi offers a variety of options making it relatively easy to navigate the city and its surroundings. The most popular means of transportation are buses, taxis, and motorbike taxis.

While many people use motorbike taxis for short trips or navigating through traffic quickly, and you will find this form of transportation on taxi apps, you should note that program participants **are not permitted to use this form of transportation.**

In Hanoi, you can use public transportation such as buses, the metro, and taxis easily.

For buses, you can install the application "Tìm buýt" (Find bus) on your phone to look up the bus routes you want to take. 	For taxis, you can install two common applications below to book a car conveniently. These are: "Grab" and "Xanh SM"

SEAFLI participants are not permitted to ride on motorbikes or scooters or operate any type of motorized vehicle at any time in Vietnam under any circumstances. Doing so may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the program, as this constitutes a potentially life-threatening violation of program policies.

Sexual Harassment and Assault

Vietnam has established legal frameworks to combat sexual harassment, outlined in its Penal Code, empowering victims to report incidents to law enforcement. However, the efficacy of enforcement and reporting procedures may fluctuate, posing obstacles to legal recourse. Over time, there has been an increasing focus on addressing sexual harassment in Vietnam, with collaborative efforts between civil society groups, activists, and governmental bodies aimed at raising awareness, delivering victim support services, and advancing preventive measures.

Harassment is never the fault of the person being harassed. However, there are steps that could reduce the potential for a harasser to engage. The following may also be useful to keep in mind:

- It is important to be aware of your surroundings, particularly if you are walking alone. If you are wearing headphones, make sure you remain alert and aware of what is happening around you. Avoid deserted areas. If you feel unsafe or are the subject of harassment on public transportation, sit near a female passenger and ask for assistance.
- Generally, trust your instincts: If something seems off, it probably is. If an acquaintance is overly aggressive, do not be concerned about whether you might cause offense: remove yourself from the situation immediately. (If need be, call the RD directly for assistance, regardless of the time.) If someone has made you feel unsafe or uncomfortable, you owe them no explanations.
- Take the initiative to support your classmates: If you are male, you might offer to walk a female student home, even if you are not asked to do so. Past participants report that such offers from their fellow students were often an important source of support.

If you encounter harassment, stalking, or assault, keep in mind the following:

- It is often best to completely ignore catcalls, or other forms of verbal street harassment. Any response, even a negative one, can be seen as encouragement.
- If you need to say something, especially in cases of stalking or assault, be stern and keep it simple. Repeat the same phrase loudly and clearly for example, “shame!” or “no!” or “leave me alone!” Make your body language and tone of voice match your words. The goal is to publicly humiliate your harasser and to draw public attention to your situation.
- Go to a store and tell the storeowner that someone is harassing you.
- Call your RD immediately.

If you experience sexual harassment or assault at any time, we strongly encourage you to immediately inform your RD, who will respond in keeping with the American Councils Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy (Title IX) to ensure you are safe, to help you access counseling and other support as needed, and to report the incident to key personnel who can further assist you. A complete copy of the policy is included in Appendix B: American Councils Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy; please be sure to review it closely.

If you plan to report an incident of harassment or assault to the police, American Councils will help you obtain legal advice to ensure you are fully prepared for police practices and Vietnam’s legal requirements regarding the reporting of these incidents. We strongly recommend consulting with a legal expert before approaching the police.

If you do not wish to report an incident to American Councils, please keep in mind that you may still access confidential resources that will provide essential counseling and support, including 24-hour chat lines. A list of those resources is included in Appendix B: American Councils Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy. Your home university may also offer remote counseling and support services through its student health system.

Additional Health and Safety Resources

For a full list of policies, including those related to participant health and safety, see Program Policies below.

For additional information related to traveling, health and safety abroad, visit:

- State Department Students Abroad Website: https://studyabroad.state.gov/study-abroad-resources
- State Department Travel Website: https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html
- Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) Website: https://step.state.gov/step/
- Centers for Disease Control for Travelers' Health Website: http://www.cdc.gov
- Safety Abroad First-Educational Travel Information (SAFETI) Website: http://www.globaled.us/SAFETI/

Etiquette and Culture Abroad

This chapter provides a few guidelines to help you navigate the complexities of Vietnamese culture; it also examines some of the challenges American students face when confronted with stereotypes all Americans face and stereotypes specific to Americans with certain characteristics.

A Few Cultural Guidelines

As discussed earlier in this guide, the challenges of entering a new culture are often overwhelming: all of the assumptions about polite behavior, good manners, humor, and social etiquette that we have learned throughout our lives at home are suddenly replaced by a completely new, often baffling set of dictates. For this reason, it is inevitable that you will make mistakes, feel confused, and sometimes resent the new culture you are struggling to absorb (see *Culture Shock*). It is impossible in this brief guide to prepare you for all of the cultural complexities you will encounter during the next several months, but below, we have briefly outlined a few major guidelines that may be helpful as you navigate your way.

Hospitality

One of the special things in Vietnam is the welcoming attitude of people. Not only do shop owners show their enthusiasm for selling goods, but people walking by, even children, often show a bright smile when passing a foreigner. This attitude is intended to make foreigners feel warm and welcome in Vietnam. Many Vietnamese citizens see themselves as a sort of "ambassador" of tourism.

Topics of Conversation

In general, Vietnamese people will be very curious about you and will want to make conversation. You will often be asked the same questions repeatedly. As noted elsewhere in this guide, questions may touch on topics that Americans do not consider part of polite conversation, including income, religion, and dating. Remember to ask questions as well – this is a good way to show your interlocutors that you are interested in them, and to get a respite from speaking.

Closeness and Personal Space

Vietnamese people often keep a relatively close distance with people when communicating. That is shown not only by the topics of conversation (age, marriage, income…) but also through their occasional physical collisions with each other. Family and friends touch each other frequently and may sit closer to each other than many Americans are typically comfortable with. You can also see girls walking arm-in-arm on the street, and when sitting and talking, they tend to sit together as close as possible, sometimes shoulder to shoulder. In shops, businesses, and lines, Vietnamese people may intrude on an American's standard of "personal space." It will be important to bear this in mind when dealing with these differing cultural perceptions.

Relationships Between Men and Women

If you are an American female, you are likely to find that you will be the object of frequent male attention, and it will be much less difficult to meet and socialize with local men than with women. It is certainly possible to have male friends (as opposed to boyfriends), but Vietnamese male friends might misunderstand your friendship, even if you have given them no such indication.

Dress

The dress code in Vietnamese culture can vary depending on the context, setting, and occasion. While traditional Vietnamese attire is still worn for special ceremonies and cultural events, modern Western-style clothing is prevalent in everyday life, especially in urban areas. Modesty is valued in Vietnamese culture, and revealing clothing is generally considered inappropriate, especially in more conservative or formal settings. It is advisable to dress modestly when visiting temples, religious sites, or attending traditional ceremonies out of respect for local customs and beliefs.

Some additional tips for clothing items to bring to Vietnam are:

- A pair of good, comfortable walking shoes will be essential.
- Items that are easy to keep clean and relatively wrinkle free are particularly good to bring.
- Generally, you will want light, modest fall or winter wear throughout your time in country because during your time studying in Hanoi, you will feel cool weather in September and October and a bit cool, especially in the evening, in November and December
- In your host family, you can choose comfortable but discreet clothes for home, such as pajamas or a t-shirt and shorts.
- You will appreciate quick-drying fabrics, as many homestays will air dry your clothes.
- Avoid wearing clothes that are too short and revealing when going to school.

Gifts

Giving gifts is an important way to show your appreciation to your host family, language partners, and community members. When deciding what to bring, it is better to buy gifts that can be enjoyed by several members of the family (or the family as a group) rather than individual presents for specific family members. Don't feel you need to spend large sums of money: your presents should not be extravagant. A few ideas include:

- Picture books (particularly of the city, region or state where you live), art books, or cookbooks;
- Keychains or magnets;
- Gifts for children, including books, crayons, Legos, matchbox cars, action figures, Frisbees, foot bags, soccer balls (inflate after you arrive), computer games; stickers, art supplies;
- Quality coffee, tea, chocolate or other sweets;
- Cooking utensils or apron;
- T-shirts, caps, or sweatshirts, especially those with pictures or insignia;
- Local food from your area: Vermont maple syrup, Louisiana Cajun seasoning, Maryland Old Bay seasoning, ingredients for a key lime pie or chocolate chip cookies, etc.

Connecting with Vietnamese People

It is a challenge for foreign students to connect with local people in any country, and Vietnam is no exception. Even if you have quite advanced language skills, you may find it difficult at times to strike up new friendships in Vietnam. SEAFLI is designed to help you overcome this challenge in part by connecting with host family members and language partners. We strongly encourage you to invest time and effort into these relationships, even if at first you have trouble understanding one another or finding topics to discuss. If you are planning a trip, invite a family member or your language partner to join you. Alternatively, when you are invited to join a trip or participate in an activity, say "yes" as often as you can, even if you are a little tired and might prefer to relax alone. The more time you put into these relationships initially, the more likely you are to develop connections and find new friends, whereas if you repeatedly signal disinterest, invitations will eventually stop coming.

It is also a good idea to ask American friends who have been to Vietnam before for the phone numbers of friends that they made during their own stay. These are good contacts to have during your first weeks in the country; the Vietnamese people, in turn, will be happy to have first-hand news of their American friends.

Your RD will provide you detailed information upon your arrival about cultural events, activities, clubs, and sports teams that you might consider becoming involved in depending on your personal interests – all of which will help you meet Vietnamese peers with interest similar to yours. The RD will also keep you up to date with events taking place around the city throughout the program.

Cultural Adaptation and Stereotypes

Prolonged immersion in any overseas culture invariably entails encounters with preconceived notions, stereotypes, and assumptions about you as foreigner that can run the gamut from endearingly naive to painfully offensive. Within the SEAFLI program community – that is, among the ULIS faculty, your host

family, and your language partners – you will probably find far less tendency to generalize about Americans or to ascribe specific traits on the basis of your personal characteristics – but even here, you may be surprised at times by the assumptions people make. In the wider community of Hanoi, you may at times be frustrated by the ways people view you and the assumptions they make. Deciding when and how to respond to stereotypes and generalizations is a deeply personal decision, which you will want to weigh carefully. We strongly encourage you to speak with your RD and your peers as well as language partners, host family members, and faculty as you negotiate these challenges.

When confronted with negative stereotypes, it is important to keep in mind that most, if not all, of these attitudes stem chiefly from a lack of experience and understanding, naiveté, and ignorance rather than a deeply held belief system, anger, or deliberate cruelty. While they may sound very much like the kinds of negative stereotypes one might encounter in the U.S., it is important to keep in mind that here, you are meeting them in an entirely different context, in which the person promulgating them has been shaped by historical factors and cultural forces completely unlike those of the U.S. Despite all outward indicators, the person making these statements is, in fact, entirely unlike the people we may have heard make similar statements in the U.S., and therefore, our response to these moments may not be the same as our response to them at home.

In the sections that follow, we have tried to briefly summarize some of the ideas and attitudes that may prove challenging for you as an international student. Please keep in mind that to present these ideas, we ourselves are engaging in our own form of stereotyping by speaking in broad, simplified, overly general terms about the thinking of the Vietnamese people – a complex population that defies any generalization. Therefore, you should by no means assume everyone – or even anyone – whom you meet will necessarily hold these views; however, the summaries below do accurately represent some of the common themes and ideas encountered by previous program participants.

Socioeconomics

Many people you meet may have very little sense of the socio-economic differences of the American people, believing, in essence, that all Americans are wealthy. Vietnamese people are often surprised to learn about disparities in the US, and to hear from students who must work to support themselves and their families while studying, who are taking on debt to pay for their educations, or who grew up in low-income families.

Religion

Officially, Vietnam is an atheist state. Most Vietnamese people identify as being irreligious or engaging in “folk religion” practices. There are significant communities of adherents to Buddhism and Christianity (mostly Catholicism), and small minorities of Muslim, Hindu, and Baha’i community members.

Heritage Students

Heritage students may sometimes encounter particular challenges when studying overseas, as their appearance, and sometimes pronunciation, may lead people they encounter to assume they are locals, and therefore, to be far less forgiving of cultural miscues or linguistic errors. Others may assume that heritage students are inordinately wealthy, having made it to the U.S., and therefore, groundlessly resent them. When placing students in host families, American Councils – with students’ consent – will clarify that the participant is a heritage speaker to ensure the host family is understanding and supportive. However, if at any time you are made to feel uncomfortable due to questions from your

host family or language partner due to your heritage, be sure to inform your RD. In responding to questions about heritage, it may be useful to emphasize the purpose of the SEAFLI program, your interest in Vietnam and your longstanding commitment to learning the language.

Practicalities: Money & Communication Abroad

In this chapter, you will find information on such topics as money, banking, Internet, phone, and email to help you navigate daily life in Hanoi.

Money

Currency in Vietnam is known as a dong. In the wake of reunification in the late 1970's, the Vietnamese dong suffered skyrocket rates of inflation. As a result, it is today one of the lowest valued currencies in the world. As of May 2026, the exchange rate was approximately 26,345 Vietnamese dong to 1 U.S. dollar.

The cost of living in Vietnam is cheap compared to the United States. While living with a host family, $100-200 a month for spending money should suffice, although this will largely depend on your lifestyle, how much travel you wish to do, and how many souvenirs you plan to buy.

Never forget that, once identified as an American, you will likely immediately be associated with wealth, and people may attempt to overcharge you wherever you go. Remember that many items are negotiable at open-air markets (do not bargain in stores with labeled merchandise, however).

In addition to bringing $100-200 USD in cash, we also encourage you to bring a debit card with which you can withdraw money from ATMs in-country and a credit card that can be used to cover initial medical costs and other potentially large expenses in an emergency. Here are some rough estimates on a few basic costs, to give you a sense of what you might need to budget for the program:

- Meals: $3 at a fast food, and roughly $10-25 at a fancy restaurant
- Students are expected to pay for their own breakfast and lunch 5 days/week and breakfasts on weekends.
- Clothes: $15-$20 (European style clothes). To have something made by a tailor: around $20 (fabric not included)
- Doctor's Visit: $20-30 (medicine not included)
- Laundry: $2-5/kg
- Transportation:
    - Bus: $0.30
    - Taxi: from ULIS to homestay – $3-$4. The cost varies around the city - $3-$10
- Internet Data:
    - Basic monthly subscription for internet on phone: $10-15
- Phone:
    - Basic phone with no internet: under $30
    - Smartphone: $140+

Be sure to bring new, clean bills – you may need to go to a U.S. bank specially to request them prior to going abroad, as banks and exchange offices will not accept bills that are old, torn, dirty, or marked in any way.

Withdrawing and Exchanging Cash

ATMs can be found throughout Hanoi. Although withdrawing from ATMs is the most common way to replenish your cash supply in Hanoi, we also advise you to bring $100-200 in US cash with you to use as an emergency fund if your ATM card gets lost or stolen. It is best to bring new $20 or $100 bills. $100 bills are given a more favorable exchange rate, while other bills ($1-50) are calculated at a lesser rate. Furthermore, older bills usually have 2-10% of the value deducted.

Currency exchange offices are also all over the city and can offer better rates than banks. You may need to present your passport when exchanging money. Most exchange offices are licensed only to exchange; they cannot perform other bank functions. For ATMs, it is preferable to use only ones that are attached to their associated bank.

When withdrawing or exchanging money, please keep in mind:

- Go with a friend when you exchange money or use an ATM.
- Bring identification with you when exchanging money because you may be asked for it.
- Avoid exchanging or withdrawing money when it is dark.
- Do not call attention to yourself by speaking loudly when dealing with money.
- If using an ATM to exchange currency, note the exact amount you put into the ATM in the event of an issue with the machine.
- Count your money before stepping away from the exchange counter. There have been reports of exchange workers not giving foreigners the proper amount of money in exchange. Use your cell phone calculator to figure the exchange rate and be sure you received the right amount of money.

Credit Cards and Debit Cards

While Vietnam is still a mostly a cash-based economy, this is steadily changing in bigger cities like Hanoi, and American Councils strongly encourages all students to take some form of major credit card or debit card with them. Even if you do not use the card for purchases, it will serve as an emergency backup. Overall, we would still encourage you to use cash as much as possible, especially for small purchases.

Be sure to keep in mind the following regarding credit and ATM cards:

- You must inform your credit card company that you will be using the card in Vietnam before you leave the U.S., otherwise, the card may be shut down as soon as you use it overseas.
- Find out if your credit card company allows you to call collect from abroad to report loss, theft, or fraud. Be sure to take with you the number to call from Vietnam.
- Before you leave the U.S., write down information on your credit cards, including number, expiration date, and security code and leave this information with someone you trust in the U.S. If a card is lost or stolen, it may be easier to ask this person to call the credit card company for you directly from the U.S.
- Check that your credit card company does not charge fees for purchases made abroad/bank does not charge extra for international ATM withdrawals.

- Find out terms on cash advances. These can cost you a lot, so make sure you understand the terms before requesting a cash advance.
- Always check the total and do the math on the exchange when using your credit card. Some places prey on foreigners who sign the receipt without checking the accuracy.
- Make sure you are signing only one credit card charge sheet, not one with carbon copies beneath that may be used to make multiple withdrawals from your account.
- Regularly check your credit card accounts online to make sure nothing suspicious has occurred with your account.
- Ensure you have an additional method to log into your bank account if it uses two- factor authentication, as your US phone number may not work in your host country.

Managing Cash

Exchange small amounts of cash frequently, rather than large amounts all at once. This will mean that you get a current exchange rate. Likewise, withdraw modest amounts from the ATM to avoid having large amounts of cash on hand at any given time.

If you need to carry money, wear it under your clothes in a concealed money belt or pouch. Never carry more money—Vietnamese currency or dollars—than you need for the immediate occasion or than you can afford to lose (and if you do not need to take a credit card, leave it at home as well).

You can trust your host family entirely, but it is possible that guests will visit whom you know less well. Therefore, always keep your money and valuables out of sight, preferably in a locked suitcase in your room. Be aware of your possessions and their whereabouts; in general, be discreet with cash in your home stay residence.

Getting Money from Home

Wire transfers can be conducted using MoneyGram or Western Union, which are available in Vietnam. This is the safest but most expensive way to get money from home. Withdrawing money from a checking account with your ATM card is generally cheaper and simpler. If you run into cash flow, problems at any time and need help, inform your RD.

Communications While Abroad

While you are on program, you will want to be sure to give periodic updates to family, friends, and loved ones back home. While it is important to spend your free time exploring and living in the host culture and community, communicating with your familiar networks can provide comfort and help you stay connected during your time abroad. In some ways, contacting people in country (other program participants, language partners, your host family, etc.) may look similar to how you would do so while in the U.S., and in other ways, it may differ.

Telephones and International Calls

All program participants are required to have a cell phone with a local number on them, either one they bring from the United States (make sure it is unlocked before leaving for Hanoi– you should contact your provider to confirm) or one they purchase in Hanoi. Smartphones are widely used in Vietnam, and many locals use the popular messaging app such as Zalo, Facebook, and WhatsApp.

For international phone calls to Vietnam, Vietnam's country code is +84.

The Hanoi city code is 024 (024 if calling from a local cell phone).

In case of emergency, the local numbers to call are as follows:
Fire – 114
Police – 113
Ambulance – 115

Internet Access

Students will have access to Wi-Fi in their homestays and in the SEAFLI office at the university. Most cafes and restaurants in the city also offer Wi-Fi, and you could access your email through cellular data on your smartphone if you choose such a plan (data and calling plans are cheaper than in the US). You can buy this data package at Viettel, Mobile phone or Vina phone internet service stores near school.

Mail

Incoming mail is largely unreliable, taking anywhere from three weeks to months to arrive. The best way to receive mail is having a personal contact deliver it to you. American Councils uses DHL international mail or FedEx to send and receive most packages.

It is recommended that care packages be registered before being sent. They must be checked at customs however, and occasionally certain items have been known to "disappear" from them. It is therefore not advised to send valuables of any kind.

Before You Go

In this chapter, you will find useful information on luggage, packing, airline requirements, STEP registration, and customs, as well as a checklist to review as you prepare to depart the U.S.

Checked Luggage

American Councils purchases one checked bag for both your outbound and return flight; a second checked bag is at the student's own expense and is not reimbursable by American Councils or Boren. Be sure to check with your airline to see the baggage weight limits on your flight. Keep in mind that overweight and excess baggage fees are high - often over $100 - and are your own responsibility. Students often end up taking too much luggage, and we strongly recommend that you pack lightly: one checked bag, one carry-on suitcase, and one personal item (backpack/purse). Again, American Councils will only cover the cost of one checked bag.

Many participants purchase souvenirs and gifts during their stay, so also keep this in mind when packing before leaving.

Carry-on Luggage

In addition to checked baggage, each traveler can bring on board the plane one bag and one personal item such as a purse, briefcase or laptop.

Please check the TSA website at http://www.tsa.gov/travel/security-screening/prohibited-items

Your carry-on bag should contain a change of clothes and anything else necessary to survive for a day or two in case your checked bags go astray. Likewise, **you should not include in your checked baggage prescription medicines, important documents, or anything else whose loss you could not afford**. You should carry your passport, visa, airline ticket, and money with you at all times, and we recommend a money belt or pouch that can be worn under your clothes to carry cash and documents.

Security Checks

Be prepared for security checks on both domestic and international flights. Security checks can be quite extensive, so allow extra time when checking in for flights. When you pack your bags, pay attention to which things should and should not be in your carry-on bags. Students should keep up to date with the regulations and requirements of travel any travel to the US by checking the TSA website before departure (www.tsa.gov).

As airlines change their baggage restrictions often, we suggest you check the airline's site directly to confirm the allowable weight and costs for extra or overweight luggage. Please note that all baggage fees and any charges imposed for overweight bags on your flight are your responsibility. Participants are responsible for all non-program travel-related expenses incurred throughout the duration of the program.

Packing Considerations

PREPARING FOR A CHANGE OF TEMPERATURE AND WEATHER CONDITIONS
In Hanoi, September is the last month of the rainy season, the transitional period between summer and autumn. Although the temperature is still about 25°C-30°C (77°F-86°F, it feels cooler and more comfortable than in June and July. In the following months, the temperature tends to gradually decrease, and the weather becomes cooler. Especially in December, the temperature is likely to only vary between 14°C - 19°C (57°F-66°F), which for Vietnamese people is quite cold.

Therefore, it is suggested to bring jeans, t-shirts, long-sleeved shirts, jackets and thin sweaters. You should also prepare a hat, umbrella, and mask, as Hanoi can be dusty. If you're not used to it at first, wearing a mask can help you keep your airways clear. You should also wear shoes instead of sandals to feel most comfortable when using public transportation.

In your host family you can use a washing machine to wash clothes. Some families may have an additional dryer.

What to Pack: Suggested Packing List

Below are some suggestions for packing. Use these suggestions as guidelines when considering what to pack. Think about the activities you plan on taking part in while in Vietnam and adjust your packing accordingly.

Someone planning on going to the gym or go hiking often will have different packing requirements than others going to Vietnam. Also, if you are trying to save space, consider purchasing bulkier items in Vietnam, such as large dictionaries and hairdryers.

General Clothing Suggestions

- 1 pair of dress shoes for in-country orientation, for class, and for formal events; Men can wear loafers or oxfords, while women can wear flats.
- 1 pair of walking shoes, preferably with water-resistant soles
- Socks and undergarments
- 6-8 tops/shirts
- 3-4 pants or skirts
- 1-2 sweaters or sweatshirts
- Some pairs of modest pajamas/loungewear
- 2-3 sets of country-appropriate workout clothes
- 1-2 jackets
- 1 country-appropriate bathing suit and cover-up
- 1 small, sturdy bag for weekend trips
- 1 lightweight scarf
- Hat
- Sunglasses

Medical

- complete supply of necessary prescription medicines, properly labeled (**To be packed in your carry on)**
- prescription medicine for urinary tract infections (consult your physician)
- contraceptives for birth control and disease prevention
- aspirin or other pain reliever
- cold & allergy relief medicine (antihistamine)
- digestive aids or antacids
- anti-diarrheal
- laxative
- throat lozenges
- topical hydrocortisone
- decongestants

Personal

- extra glasses or contact lenses
- disinfectant wipes
- tampons or other hygiene products
- eye drops
- multivitamins (with iron)
- dietary supplements (fish oil, etc.)
- anti-bacterial hand wash gel
- insect repellant with deet (during the summer, mosquitoes and other biting insects can be a problem)
- Sunblock

- canvas shopping bag for unexpected purchases as many chain supermarkets will charge an extra fee for plastic bags
- whistle (*to wear or carry as an alarm)*

Appliances/Electronics

- Smartphone (if you have one) and charging accessories (make sure your phone is unlocked – contact your provider before leaving the US)
- Camera, battery, cables, memory cards, charger
- Laptop, cords, flash drive
- Kindle (if you like to read, it's much easier to use a kindle rather than carrying heavy books)
- Hair appliances, electric shavers
- Adapter for your electronic devices

Miscellaneous

- Small gifts for your host family/language partner/teachers

Identification & Banking

- Passport
- Photocopy of your passport
- Credit card
- ATM card
- Cash
- Money belt or pouch, if desired

The following items are readily available in Hanoi— if you do not pack them, you will be able to buy them when you arrive:

- Lip balm
- Sunscreen
- Mosquito repellent
- Shaving supplies
- Soap, shampoo, conditioner
- Skin moisturizers or lotion
- Toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss, mouthwash
- Band-Aids

Do Not Bring (The following are items will be supplied by your host family):

- Pillows
- Bed linens
- Bath towel

Customs Regulations

Upon entering Vietnam, you must pass through customs. Flora and fauna, arms, ammunitions, narcotics, explosives, toxic or radioactive materials, and materials that are racist, pornographic or anti-Vietnam are

not allowed into Vietnam. You are permitted to carry in up to $5,000 in Vietnam, but you are required to declare all money. You may be taxed if you bring in over 1.5 liter of hard alcohol, 2 liters of wine, up to 20 cigarettes, 250g of tobacco and any items or gifts exceeding a total of $5,000. As customs rules may change without notice, please confirm the current rules and regulations before your flight if you plan on bringing any of the above items.

Customs officials are more likely to hassle local citizens than foreigners. However, they are known to tax items from abroad which appear new or appear to be gifts. So, if you are bringing gifts (such as for members of your host-family), make sure that all gifts are out of box/wrapping you bought them in, and if questioned on any items, claim these as your own not as gifts. Upon your return to the United States, you will be subject to U.S. customs regulations (see https://www.cbp.gov/). You are responsible for familiarizing yourself with them.

Checklist: Things to Do Before Leaving the U.S.

- ❑ Review this handbook with family members or loved ones
- ❑ Review Department of State travel information for Vietnam: Vietnam International Travel Information (state.gov)
- ❑ Review CDC recommendations or travel to Vietnam: Vietnam - Traveler view | Travelers' Health | CDC
- ❑ Generally, the CDC suggests that travelers see their doctor 4 to 6 weeks prior to travel and make sure that their routine vaccinations are up to date.
- ❑ Visit your doctor to:
    - arrange for a full supply of prescription medicines to last your entire time abroad
    - discuss any physical or mental health concerns that may require support and resources abroad
    - discuss with American Councils medical needs that may require additional support/resources overseas
    - arrange to receive CDC-recommended vaccinations or others recommended by your doctor
- ❑ Visit your dentist
- ❑ Arrange power of attorney for a friend/relative if you have financial affairs that must be addressed while you are away
- ❑ Begin researching and reading about Vietnam
- ❑ Call your bank and credit card company or companies to:
    - Find out about fees for overseas purchases, cash advances, and ATM withdrawals
    - Inform them of the dates of your trip so that your cards are not frozen due to unusual activity
- ❑ Browse your options and download free instant messaging/video conference programs you can use to contact your family and friends while abroad (Skype, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.)
- ❑ Contact the airline to arrange a special meal if you are a vegetarian or have special dietary needs.

Program Policies

The policies explained here have been developed by American Councils in close collaboration with its in-country partners, with the University of Wisconsin-Madison and with the Institute of International Education (IIE) and the National Security Education Program (NSEP). Please take time to closely review these policies, as they may directly impact your personal plans. We also encourage you to discuss these policies with those closest to you (family members and loved ones), so that they too understand these requirements before the program begins, as they may impact your shared plans. In reviewing these policies, it may be useful to keep in mind that your program is designed to prioritize language study and language gain rather than travel or tourism. It is your responsibility to be familiar with these policies and to plan accordingly.

Travel To and From the Program

Round-trip travel from a participant's home city in the United States to the program site will be provided by American Councils. Program participants may not purchase tickets independently. American Councils will attempt to accommodate individual travel requests, but our ability to do so may be limited in some cases. Airline tickets for the SEAFLI program come with several important conditions mandated by Congress, the U.S. government, and the program administrators. Please note that participants will not have the option of planning stopovers or additional travel legs as part of their flights in either direction: instead, they will be required to fly from the U.S. to their program site and from their program site to the U.S. on the ticket provided to them. Participants may select a return city that is not the same as their departure city, but both must be in the U.S. Participants should bear in mind that the Fly America Act requires that only U.S. airlines be used for travel, including international flights, where possible, if a ticket is to be purchased with U.S. federal funding. For this reason, we are required to use U.S. carriers wherever possible in arranging participant flights. Please note that the program-provided ticket cannot be cancelled. Participants are provided with exact travel dates and are asked to designate their departure/return cities in the U.S. during the online registration process (AIS). After the ticket is issued, any flight change charges will be the responsibility of the participant (with the exception of the one flight change paid for by your Boren award for Spring Extension students only). There are no allowable flight changes for students who are the Fall Semester program only (with the exception of emergencies).

STEP Enrollment

All participants are required to enroll in the U.S. Department of State's online trip registration system, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at: https://step.state.gov/step/ Travel registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to U.S. citizens and U.S. Nationals who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows the Department of State to assist in case of an emergency.

American Councils will register each student into STEP. If students have already registered for STEP, they are required to send the STEP confirmation to American Councils at seafli.vietnamese@americancouncils.org.

Independent Travel During the Program

Under normal conditions, you are welcome to travel within your host country during the semester under certain conditions. The independent travel policy requires adherence to the following restrictions:

- Participants are prohibited from departing the host country during the program.
- All participants must remain in the host city for the first two weeks of the program.
- All participants must also remain in the host city for the final week of the program.
- Participants may not miss class or other required program activities due to independent travel.
- Participants are expected to return to the host city and program-provided housing arrangement the evening before program activities resume. Returning in the morning prior to the start of classes or other program activities is not permitted.
- The RD must review and approve all independent travel itineraries ahead of time.
    - Participants are required to submit travel requests via email or in person at least five business days before the planned trip.
    - Participants should wait for approval before finalizing reservations or buying tickets.
    - Note: American Councils may require participants to change or cancel itineraries if deemed to interfere with the academic program or due to safety and security concerns.
- Participants must inform their host family in advance of plans to travel overnight.

While participants are allowed to travel independently, it is highly recommended to travel with a host country companion (i.e., language partner or host family member).

Note on Accommodations: Renting Property is Not Permitted

During independent travel, participants may not stay in short-term rentals, including but not limited to online hospitality services (e.g., VRBO or Airbnb) or private house rentals. Participants should stay in hotels or other similar commercial housing accommodations. Students traveling with host families may stay in accommodations arranged by their family. All independent travel plans are subject to approval by the Resident Director and American Councils staff.

Visas

A visa is essential for program participants to enter and remain legally in their host country during the academic program. To obtain a visa, American Councils and the host university officially confirm that participants are entering the country to study; they also, in essence, vouch before the state authorities for participants' good character and integrity. If a participant's conduct leads to arrest or questions about their purpose for being in country, the host university and American Councils will be called on to explain their decision to help them enter the country for an extended stay. Ultimately, such issues can impact the ability of American Councils and the host organization to invite future foreign students to the country. In this way, participants' personal conduct in country can have profound implications for American Councils and the host university.

The program will provide participants with instructions on how to complete the visa processes prior to, and in some cases, during the program. Please be sure to follow these instructions closely and to return the visa forms on time. Please reach out directly with any questions. Keep in mind that participants are

required to follow all instructions related to securing and maintaining valid visas for the duration of the program.

Boren funding and admission to the program do not guarantee that participants will receive a visa, and none of the program's stakeholders, including American Councils, UW-Madison, the local partner, and Boren, can in any way influence the final outcome of visa applications. Participation in the overseas portion of the program requires successfully obtaining a visa. In the event of a visa denial, American Councils will refund all recoverable costs associated with the overseas program. The cost of the visa application and some other program expenses may be non-recoverable.

When the program ends, all participants must return to the U.S. on the program-purchased flight (for students continuing activities in the host country on a Boren scholarship or fellowship in the spring, please see below). The sponsorship of participant visas ends with the completion of the program, and staying beyond that point will constitute a visa violation.

Spring Semester Visa

For participants awarded a Boren scholarship or fellowship to continue activities in the host country during the spring semester with any agency other than the fall semester host institution, please note the following important information:

- Participants must arrange to receive a SECOND VISA for the period and purpose of the stay in country beyond the program. This process can be complex and time consuming.
- Participants should consult closely and early with their Boren advisor about the process of obtaining sponsorship for a second visa to support any additional time in country.
    - Keep in mind that it may take several weeks to arrange a new visa sponsor for the spring semester in country.
    - Participants will likely need to apply for and obtain the new visa while outside the host country.
- Participants must depart the host country immediately after the program ends.
- Participants must then re-enter the country on the new visa, sponsored by the organization with which they will be affiliated for the remainder of their time in country.
- Participants cannot remain in country on the visa provided you by their host organization for the current program unless they will be continuing to study with the same organization; the host organization must explicitly confirm with American Councils that it approves such a plan.
- American Councils will play no role in the administration of the second semester program and can offer no onsite assistance to students or research fellows who are continuing on independently. Be sure to make plans for support (including comprehensive health insurance) during the additional stay.

Overseas Medical Care and Insurance

Program participants are strongly encouraged to maintain their current healthcare coverage during their overseas program. Participants' primary medical insurance coverage will be supplemented by a limited emergency and accident medical benefits plan from the Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI). A copy of past CISI coverage is available in Appendix H: Sample CISI Coverage. The updated coverage

specific to the current year will be provided closer to the start of the program. Please be sure to review that coverage closely.

CISI covers participants only during the fall overseas portion of the program, beginning upon departure from the United States and ending upon arrival back in the United States. If a participant withdraws from the program early or the award is terminated, all CISI benefits cease. CISI health benefits are not provided during domestic travel within the U.S. In the event that an accident or illness sustained while on the program requires that you return to the U.S., continued treatment in the United States may not be fully covered by CISI benefits. **Therefore, students should be sure to maintain their U.S. domestic insurance.**

Please note that CISI coverage is provided on a reimbursement basis: therefore, you should be prepared to pay with cash or credit card for medical treatment, and then submit receipts for full reimbursement. The process for submitting claims is straightforward, and CISI will promptly refund your costs. No pre-approval for treatment is required, and there is no network of approved services. If you were to require a surgery or other high-cost treatment overseas, American Councils will work with the care provider and CISI to arrange direct payment so that you are not required to cover potentially large initial costs. But, we recommend you have with you at least one credit card that could be used to cover initial costs for medical treatment if necessary.

The program, American Councils, local institutes, and host families are not responsible for any medical bills incurred by a participant. On rare occasions in the case of financial need, the program may issue a temporary payment on a participant's behalf, with the understanding that the student will be responsible for repayment, regardless of decisions regarding reimbursement on the part of CISI or a participant's primary insurer.

Medical care abroad will often differ in terms of standards, quality, and procedures commonly found in the United States. While American Councils shares with participants information available to it regarding the quality of available care so that participants can make informed choices about their treatment overseas, American Councils has no ability to affect the quality of care and bears no responsibility for any complications and/or negative results associated with medical treatment or decisions relating to whether to obtain medical treatment.

Duty to Inform

Finalists acknowledge that they must inform American Councils of changes in contact information, academic standing, medical issues, travel plans, or other circumstances that may affect participation in the program.

Any changes in physical and/or mental health status following the submission of the application and medical evaluation prior to the start of the program, or during the course of the program, must be reported immediately to American Councils.

Program participation may be terminated if a finalist a) fails to meet or maintain eligibility requirements, b) fails to complete pre-program requirements c) fails to provide requested information by stated deadlines, or d) exhibits behavior that may pose a risk to the standing of the Program, including, but not limited to charges or convictions for crimes of moral turpitude (e.g., fraud, theft) or inappropriate behavior or social media activity. Finalists who cannot meet the placement or visa requirements of the

program's host institution and host country government will not be able to participate in the program. In keeping with its accommodation policy (see below), American Councils provides reasonable accommodations and reviews accommodation requests on a case-by-case basis. American Councils reserves the right to request additional independent medical examinations, evaluations, or other appropriate information from finalists.

Permission for Emergency Treatment

On rare occasions, emergencies will develop that require medical care, hospitalization, or surgery for a participant. So that such treatment can be administered without delay, participants agree to the following: In the event of incapacitating injury or illness to a participant, representatives of American Councils are authorized to secure any necessary treatment, including the administration of an anesthetic and surgery.

Public Health Measures

American Councils closely monitors public health conditions and policies to ensure participant health and safety onsite. Monitoring includes close review of the most current information available from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the U.S. Department of State, U.S. Embassies, the World Health Organization, and overseas staff and partners. We regularly confer with overseas partners and stakeholders to review conditions and protocols and to ensure student safety.

National and local laws in the United States and/or in the host country/location and/or institutional requirements may change at any time to reflect public health conditions, including regulations related to COVID-19. In the event of public health threats, participants may be required to quarantine, undergo testing and temperature checks, wear face masks during class and group activities, limit travel, maintain social distancing, and take other steps in order to mitigate the risk of infection for themselves and other group members. In consultation with the program funders, American Councils may also shorten or alter the dates of your overseas program in response to public health concerns.

Please do not hesitate to contact American Councils directly with any question you have about conditions in your host country and American Councils health and safety policies.

Non-Fraternization Policy

All American Councils affiliates, including participants, are expected to maintain a professional level of conduct at all times. Romantic and/or sexual relationships are not allowed between participants and staff, participants and the Resident Director or Associate Resident Director, participants and instructors, and participants and others who have a formal or professional relationship with the program. Romantic and/or sexual relationships are also not allowed between participants and their language partner(s), roommates, and any host family member. If a romantic or sexual relationship exists between participants and any of these parties prior to the start of the program, both parties are required to disclose the relationship prior to the arrival date and must maintain a professional level of decorum during the program. If a relationship is discovered during the program, the American Councils affiliate (staff, instructor, host family, roommate, language partner, or other party with a formal relationship to the Program) may be immediately removed from their role on the program.

Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention

Program finalists are urged to review the American Councils Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy (SAHPP). The policy expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, which includes sexual abuse, sexual coercion, and stalking on all American Councils-administered programs and at all of their locations, including homestays and social settings where students gather as part of their participation in the program. This policy applies to the conduct of all students, staff, and third parties that work with participants on the American Councils Overseas Programs.

If American Councils staff members learn of possible sexual harassment or violence, they will take immediate appropriate steps to first ensure participant safety and to provide prompt support and assistance, including access to professional medical care and counseling as requested by the participant. If it is determined that a violation of the SAHPP occurred, American Councils staff will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile situation, and prevent the harassment from recurring. American Councils Program staff, including the Resident Director, are required to report any incident of harassment or assault to their supervisor or program director. Known incidents must also be reported to the victim's home institution and the program funders. For a full copy of the American Councils SAHPP policy and reporting requirements, please see Appendix B: Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy.

Personal Conduct Code

The success of any overseas program depends on the readiness of each participant to follow essential norms of responsible, mature behavior. By joining the program administered by American Councils for International Education, participants acknowledge that the following may be cause for immediate dismissal from the program, the loss of academic credit, the revocation of visas, and/or their early return to the United States:

- As determined by American Councils, any behavior that significantly impairs the ability of one or more of their fellow students to participate in and benefit from the American Councils overseas program;
- As determined by American Councils, any behavior that impairs the ability of the Resident Director, other American Councils staff, or host institution instructors to meet their responsibilities to the overseas program group at-large;
- As determined by American Councils, any behavior that exposes them, other program participants, the Resident Director, other American Councils staff, or host institution instructors/staff to possible physical injury, assault, arrest or detainment;
- As determined by American Councils, any behavior that impairs future relations between American Councils for International Education, Flagship Language Initiative Programs and the host institution or organization;
- Any evidence of dishonesty with regard to some material fact or withholding relevant information from American Councils before or after selection for participation in the program;
- Participation in such activities as independent research, teaching, volunteering, public speaking, giving or conducting interviews, proselytizing, and performing missionary outreach without prior approval from American Councils and the host institution;

- Employment, with or without compensation, to perform any service in any capacity whatsoever for any private or governmental person, organization, or agency of any kind, other than an unpaid internship approved by American Councils;
- Violation of local, regional, or federal law or university/institution rules of conduct, including all visa regulations;
- Possession, manufacture, distribution or use of illegal drugs, or presence during illegal drug use by others;
- Consumption of alcohol or substances leading to physical injury, endangerment, arrest, detainment, or academic underperformance;
- Failure to submit required forms and information, including visa applications and extensions, travel itineraries, and medical evaluations in accordance with deadlines established by American Councils;
- Failure to inform American Councils immediately of any changes in my status at my home university, including sanctions for or claims of academic or personal misconduct;
- Destruction of property in the host country;
- Violation of the American Councils academic honor code, language policy, attendance policy, travel policy, host family contract, or other program policies.

Classroom Conduct

Learning can be uncomfortable; embrace grappling with your thoughts. Communicate with us after class, during an appointment, in a written note, or over email when you feel uncomfortable about an event or discussion relevant to class.

The classroom should be a safe environment that encourages the participation of everyone. With this goal in mind, we can agree and disagree about ideas or viewpoints.

Take pair work or small group work seriously. Remember that your peer's learning is partly dependent upon your engagement. The point of language learning is to practice, perform and discuss what you have worked on or learned from the assigned tasks and apply what you have learned to express your ideas, and also learn what your peers think.

We will not, however, tolerate personal attacks, or blatant sexist, racist, homophobic, or antagonistic language in the classroom or during any program activity, including language partner sessions and excursions. Do not insult each other or your instructor. Please respect one another's prior experiences and viewpoints.

SEAFLI Community Standards and Group Conduct

SEAFLI is a small, intensive program in which every participant's engagement, attitude, and behavior directly affects the learning environment for the entire group. As a member of the SEAFLI community, you are expected to:

- Treat all fellow participants, instructors, language partners, host family members, and program staff with respect and courtesy at all times.

- Contribute to a positive and productive learning environment both inside and outside the classroom.
- Engage constructively in group activities, pair work, and excursions, recognizing that your peers' learning depends in part on your active participation.
- Refrain from behavior that is disruptive, demeaning, hostile, or bullying, including but not limited to personal attacks, persistent negativity that undermines group morale, and disrespectful language directed at instructors or peers.
- Raise concerns or frustrations through appropriate channels (your RD, instructors, or the American Councils U.S. Team) rather than through disruptive behavior in the classroom or group settings.
- Demonstrate the same standards of respectful conduct during excursions, cultural activities, service-learning activities, and all other co-curricular programming as in the classroom. Disengagement, disrespectful behavior toward guides or hosts, or refusal to participate during program activities will be treated the same as in-class conduct violations.

Consequences for violations of community standards:

First instance: Verbal warning from the RD or the Academic Coordinator and a private meeting to discuss the behavior and expectations going forward.

Second instance: Written warning placed in the student's program file, with notification to the student's home institution and Boren advisor.

Third instance or a single severe violation: Meeting with the RD, the Academic Coordinator, and the American Councils U.S. Team to determine further action, which may include a grade deduction, probationary status, or dismissal from the program.

Behavior that creates a hostile or unsafe environment for other participants, or that significantly impairs the ability of instructors or staff to fulfill their responsibilities, may result in immediate escalation regardless of whether prior warnings have been issued.

Academic Honor Code

Participants are expected to approach their academic work and program requirements such as pre- and post-program testing, with dedication and integrity, understanding that they are responsible for enhancing their own learning through personal effort. Participants agree to be fully prepared for each class session and refrain from engaging in disruptive, offensive, or distracting behavior. Further, because the program is designed to integrate classroom work with excursions to local sites, attendance at all classes and cultural activities is mandatory. Participants who fail to attend program sessions without prior explicit permission of program staff may be subject to immediate disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the program.

The following is prohibited and may be grounds for dismissal from the program:

- Plagiarism: Submitting material that in part or whole is not your own work without attributing those same portions to their correct source (including from automatic translators and artificial intelligence (AI) applications).

- Cheating: Using unauthorized notes, study aids, or information on an examination; altering a graded work after it has been returned, then submitting the work for reevaluation; allowing another person to do your work and submitting that work under your own name; submitting identical or similar papers for credit in more than one course without prior permission from the course instructors.
- Obtaining an unfair advantage: (a) stealing, reproducing, circulating, or otherwise gaining access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by the instructor; (b) stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use; (c) unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment; (d) retaining, possessing, using, or circulating previously given examination materials, where those materials clearly indicate that they are to be returned to the instructor at the conclusion of the examination; (e) intentionally obstructing or interfering with another participant's academic work; or (f) otherwise undertaking activity with the purpose of creating or obtaining an unfair academic advantage over other participants' academic work.
- Fabrication: Falsifying or inventing any information, data, or citation; presenting data that were not gathered in accordance with standard guidelines defining the appropriate methods for collecting or generating data and failing to include an accurate account of the method by which the data were gathered or collected.
- Falsification of record and official documents: Altering documents affecting academic records; forging signatures of authorization or falsifying information on an official academic document.
- Unauthorized access to computerized academic or administrative records or systems: Viewing or altering computer records, modifying computer programs or systems, releasing or dispensing information gained via unauthorized access, or interfering with the use or availability of computer systems or information.
- Recording class sessions and other program activities: Recording classes, cultural activities, group meetings, language partner sessions, or other program activities is not allowed unless a specific disability accommodation has been approved by the Flagship Program. If participants are interested in recording or photographing other program participants, language partners, or host family members/roommates, they should ask for permission before doing so.

Attendance Policy

This program is first and foremost an academic experience. Participants are expected to participate to the fullest extent. Attendance at all scheduled classes, program cultural activities, and excursions is mandatory, unless explicitly excused by program staff due to illness, bereavement, or religious holiday. Full program participation includes, but is not limited to, complete attendance at all classes, completion of work assigned as part of the academic program, attendance at all mandatory cultural activities, attendance at weekly group meetings and requested meetings with the RD, on time arrival at all mandatory events and activities, and adherence to the specific language policy of the program.

Unexcused absence: Any absence without prior approval from the instructor/RD. Unanticipated medical/other emergencies may require additional documentation and approval from SEAFLI administration to be considered “excused.”

Absence Policy: Course instructors and the RD will track attendance in all classes. A first unexcused absence will result in a warning and a referral to the RD. A second unexcused absence will result in a grade deduction for that semester and a referral to the RD. Three or more absences in a semester may lead to an additional grade deduction or automatic failure of the course. Participants who reach this point must speak with either the SEAFLI site director or the RD to discuss how to proceed.

Important notes regarding absences:

- Unexcused absences on days of exams, projects, presentations, etc. will lead to failure of that coursework. There will be no make-ups of exams, projects, presentations, etc. due to unexcused absence.
- Pre-program requests for absences will not be granted.
- Students with extenuating circumstances must discuss the situation with the RD. Absences, other than illness, will be worked out on a case-by-case basis.

Tardiness Policy: Given the intensive nature of language classes, punctuality is essential:

- Tardiness is defined as arriving more than 5 minutes late to a class session, language partner session, excursions, or any other scheduled program activity.
- Excessive tardiness is arriving more than 10 minutes late to any class session, language partner session, excursions, or any other scheduled program activity.
- Tardiness in excess of 30 minutes will be considered an unexcused absence for that session.
- Three instances of tardiness will result in a warning. After a fourth instance of tardiness, students will be required to meet with the RD and Academic Director to create a written plan to manage these issues in order to remain in good standing on the program. A fifth or more instances of tardiness will be counted as an additional excessive tardiness at each instance.
- Three instances of excessive tardiness (arriving more than 10 minutes late but less than 30) will be counted as one unexcused absence. A fourth or more instances of excessive tardiness will be counted as an additional unexcused absence.
- Repeated tardiness in excess of 30 minutes will then be subject to the SEAFLI absence policy. Continued tardiness or excessive tardiness may result in further penalty or dismissal.

We understand that unforeseen circumstances can occur. Please communicate any tardiness or absences to the course instructor/RD as soon as possible.

While the UW-Madison attendance policy serves as a framework for all our SEAFLI course attendance policies, program participants should also closely review course syllabi to learn about specific attendance requirements for each of their classes. Participation and punctuality with regards to cultural programs arranged by the program Resident Director will also factor in course grades. Program participants enter their host country explicitly for the purpose of academic study and may not legally remain in-country if they are not actively participating in an academic program. Therefore, participants whose grades fall below passing due to repeated absences or poor academic performance may be dismissed from the program and required to return to the U.S. before the overseas program's end.

Illness and Emergencies: In the case of illness or bereavement, the student is required to notify the RD before class that they are unable to attend that day. If a physical ailment is the cause of repeated

absences, program participants will be required to actively seek treatment in order to manage their condition and resume class attendance. If anxiety, insomnia, or similar ailments repeatedly prevent a program participant from attending class, the participant will be asked to develop a plan to manage these issues so that class attendance is not further negatively impacted. To develop an effective plan, participants may be asked to work with a mental health professional or wellness counselor.

Homework

Homework includes exercises from the textbook as well as pre-class and post-class assignments. All assignments must be submitted by the specified due dates. Both handwritten and typed submissions are acceptable. Late submissions will incur a 5% deduction for each 24-hour period past the deadline. Assignments submitted more than three days late will not be accepted.

Make-Up Quizzes and Exams

Students may be excused from quizzes or exams only with valid written documentation (e.g., medical note, official notice). The instructor is not obligated to provide make-up assessments and will do so at their discretion.

Pre-Class Preparation

Students are expected to come to class prepared. This includes reviewing vocabulary and grammar notes and completing pre-class assignments.

Office Hours

Students are encouraged to discuss any points of confusion with the instructor after class during office hours.

Language Policy

Language immersion is a key component of the overseas program's philosophy and design; it is also an essential source of participants' linguistic growth and development. In order to create and preserve an immersion experience, all participants are required to uphold the program's language policy which requires them to communicate in the target language at all times, unless experiencing an emergency or severe distress. The language policy is in effect at all times, including when participants are:

- In class;
- On the grounds of the host institution (including common areas);
- Interacting with host institution staff, officials, students, and teachers;
- Participating in group excursions and trips; and
- Present at community engagement sites.

The Language Policy also applies in the homestay environment. Participants are expected to use the target language with host family members in all interactions, except in genuine emergencies.

Speaking English while on the program runs contrary to the basic purpose of the program and lessens

the learning opportunity for all participants by disrupting the immersion critical to their language growth. Doing so is also deeply disrespectful of host-country nationals, particularly faculty.

Therefore, host institution staff and American Councils personnel who hear a participant speaking English* will remind the participant that doing so constitutes a violation of the language policy and will request that the participant immediately switch to the target language.

Repeated, deliberate disregard of the language policy will be treated as a violation of the personal conduct code and may result in formal sanctions, including the notification of Boren and potential dismissal from the program.

*As noted above, students who are experiencing an emergency or severe distress are temporarily excused from the language policy. If unsure, ask the RD if it is appropriate to use English.

Non-Employment Policy

The SEAFLI-Vietnamese fall program is a full-time language study program with expressed language goals. Therefore, employment and any commercial activities are prohibited. Upon beginning the program, participants must not be employed, and pledge not under any circumstances to become employed, with or without compensation, to perform any service in any capacity whatsoever for any private or governmental person, organization or agency of any kind. Agencies or representatives of the United States government should not solicit any service to be performed by participants during your stay in the host country on a language study program sponsored by American Councils for International Education. This includes, but is not limited to, internships or volunteer opportunities. Participants agree to inform the Resident Director immediately if anyone solicits any such service and acknowledge that any violations of this pledge may result in immediate dismissal from the program, their return home from the host country at their own expense, and financial responsibility for any costs incurred on their behalf. Participants acknowledge that they understand the purpose of this program to be language study and, therefore, agree not to engage in private research, journalism, or religious proselytization at any time while on the program.

Personal Bills Agreement

Participants are responsible for paying all personal bills incurred during participation in the program. This includes telephone, credit cards, and insurance deductibles. Unpaid bills will be forwarded to participants upon their return to the United States, and they must reimburse the payee upon receipt. Under no circumstances will American Councils pay an outstanding bill during or after the program; it is the participant's responsibility to resolve issues related to unpaid bills before departure from the host country. Any outstanding bills will result in participants being deemed ineligible for participation in future programs or events.

Mobile Phone Policy

All students are required to maintain a local mobile number and to keep their phones charged and available at all times. Program participants must provide their RD with their local number and update them immediately with any changes so that they are reachable in case of emergency.

Technology Policy

There are many helpful online tools available to language learners, and it is expected that these tools are used responsibly and in alignment with UW-Madison expectations of academic integrity and guidelines on generative artificial intelligence. Do not use translation software, AI-powered writing or language tools, or other automated assistance unless your instructor explicitly directs you to do so for a specific assignment or activity. This includes, but is not limited to: Google Translate, DeepL, Papago, ChatGPT, Claude, Microsoft Copilot, Grammarly, and any similar translation, paraphrasing, or generative AI tools. When an instructor permits the use of such tools, they are only to be used in the manner and to the extent specified by the instructor. Ask your instructor for clarification if you have any questions about what is allowed.

Using prohibited tools to complete assignments, generate text, or otherwise produce work that is not your own constitutes a violation of the SEAFLI Academic Honor Code and may result in failure of the assignment, a grade deduction, or further disciplinary action.

Do not use your mobile phone or laptop devices in the classroom unless your instructor directs you to. Use of mobile phones to send private messages or check social media during class hours, language partner sessions, excursions, or other program activities is not permitted. Continued use of mobile devices in the classroom will warrant meetings with the RD and the Academic Coordinator and may affect participation scores.

Visitor Policy

While participants are permitted to have guests visit them during the program, students are required to attend regular classes and other program activities at all times. Participants should therefore consult with their Resident Directors before finalizing any plan for a visitor to arrive onsite in order to ensure specific scheduled program activities will not severely limit their ability to interact with their prospective guest. American Councils and the program cannot provide emergency aid or logistical assistance with visas, housing, insurance, or travel for visitors. Host families are **not** expected to host visitors and should not be asked to do so. The program participant and any prospective visitor are fully responsible for making all arrangements, including hotel accommodations, for the length of their stay.

Dangerous Activity

Participants are not permitted to engage in dangerous activities such as parachuting, skydiving, hang-gliding or bungee jumping while on the program. Activities such as skateboarding, rollerblading, skiing, snowboarding, biking and boating are allowed as long as participants use adequate safety gear and exercise reasonable precautions. Given the dangers of driving or operating motorized vehicles in the host country, driving or renting cars or renting or operating motorcycles is not permitted while on the fall program. Program participants are not permitted to operate any type of motorized vehicle, including cars, ATV/4-wheelers, motorcycles/motorbikes, and electric scooters. Due to the additional dangers inherent to these other forms of vehicles, participants are not permitted to ride as a passenger on motorbikes/motorcycles or electric scooters. Please note that the life, health, and accident insurance from CISI does not cover injuries or death as a result of such dangerous activities; it also does not cover

injuries or death as a result of engaging in criminal activity. Consult the insurance policy for a full list of such excluded activities.

Participants are required to refrain from any participation in or attendance at local political activities/events and to refrain from visiting areas local staff may deem unsafe. Participants are not permitted to attend or participate in any form of public demonstrations while in country. Program participants are required to immediately leave any area at the first sign of a demonstration taking place. Remaining in the vicinity of public demonstrations, even to observe or photograph, represents a direct risk to personal safety, including physical violence or arrest, and it is strictly prohibited.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a global problem. Not only are human trafficking, prostitution and related offenses federal crimes in the US, which carry severe penalties, these also violate the laws of your host country. Any involvement in human trafficking by a participant is grounds for their dismissal from the program.

Medical or Bereavement Temporary Leave Policy

Program participants are expected to remain in-country for the full length of their programs. If a student must return temporarily to the United States for medical treatment or bereavement due to a death in their immediate family, the student should inform their Resident Director and their Boren Advisor as soon as possible in order to request academic leave. In consultation with University of Wisconsin-Madison, American Councils will then work with the student to develop a comprehensive, written plan for their absence and eventual return to the program. This plan should include an agreed-upon date on which the student will return to the program-site and a description of how the student will manage their coursework during their absence (for further details on maximum allowable absences on academic leave please see below).

The plan must be approved in writing by American Councils, other appropriate stakeholders, and IIE. It is important to note that the development of a plan for academic leave and the approval process for a proposed plan may require considerable time. Therefore, students who feel they may need to return to the U.S. are strongly encouraged to begin talking with their Boren advisor and their onsite Resident Director or other American Councils staff as soon as possible. Participants who request academic leave on medical grounds may be asked to provide written documentation of their medical condition and/or a signed statement by their treating physician in support of their request. Any review of this documentation will be strictly limited to professional staff directly involved in evaluating the request for academic leave.

As the curriculum model is based on intensive language study and prolonged cultural immersion, its projected learning outcomes depend wholly on the active presence of its participants in-country and onsite. Therefore, a participant can spend no more than **ten (10) classroom days*** away from the program site on academic leave and still complete the program. During this time, the participant may be excused from academic study for a maximum of five (5) classroom days; for the remainder of their time offsite, the participant must be engaged in academic study either through online instruction or asynchronous study according to a schedule determined as part of their plan for academic leave. Participants whose absences from academic study exceed five (5) classroom days, or who remain offsite

for more than ten (10) classroom days, will be withdrawn from the program. When preparing an academic plan as part of their request for leave, participants will be required to specify how many days of academic study they intended to miss, five (5) being the maximum allowed, and how many classroom days total they will spend outside the program site, ten (10) being the maximum allowed. Participants who must depart the program site but are unable to meet these requirements should inform both American Councils and their Boren advisors immediately in order to begin planning for their withdrawal from the program.

*Classroom days are Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday. If a student departs their program site on a Friday, and resumes class the following Friday, the student will have missed five classroom days (Friday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday).

Early Withdrawal and Departure Policy

Participants are expected to remain in-country for the full length of their programs.

If a participant wishes to withdraw and depart their host country before the end of the program, they should immediately inform American Councils and their Boren advisor. The participant should continue to coordinate closely with both American Councils and IIE/Boren in order to obtain written approval for any early withdrawal. Please note that if a student withdraws from the overseas program early:

- The student will not be allowed to return to the program.
- The student may be liable for program costs incurred on their behalf, including but not limited to non-refundable tuition fees (see *Participant Financial Liability* below).
- The student may be denied academic credit.

Failure to obtain written permission to withdraw before departing the program may result in additional monetary obligations and sanctions as determined by Boren/IIE.

Participant Financial Liability in the Case of Withdrawal or Dismissal

If American Councils has incurred costs on a participant's behalf, and the student subsequently withdraws from the program before arriving in the host country, the student will be liable for any costs that are not recoverable. If, after arrival in the host country, the student is unable to complete the program, they should expect:

- to cover all costs associated with their participation in the program period, and
- that any monies that have already been paid are not recoverable.

Participants should settle all obligations to American Councils before departing the host country. Please note that other financial obligations must be cleared with Boren/IIE directly.

Accommodations Policies

In keeping with an organizational philosophy that prioritizes openness and inclusion American Councils makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate applicants and participants with disabilities. Conditions in the countries hosting American Councils programs may severely limit our ability to meet some accommodation requests, even if these accommodations are provided at the participant's U.S.

educational institution or place of work. For more information, please see Appendix C: Disability Accommodation Policy.

For complete information on American Councils Religious Accommodation policy, please see Appendix D: Religious Accommodation Policy.

Appendices

Appendix A: Liability Release

You understand that you are responsible for your own behavior at all times while participating in the program. You accept the authority of American Councils to dismiss you from the program and/or send you home at any time without reimbursement if your behavior interferes with the group's goals and objectives. You understand that if you are dismissed or voluntarily withdraw from the program for non-medical or non-emergency reasons, American Councils may not reimburse you for tuition, travel, insurance, and other expenses spent on your behalf during your enrollment in the program.

American Councils assumes no responsibility for any injury, accident, illness, loss of personal property, or other contingencies that may befall a participant during, or as a result of, participation in an American Councils program. American Councils will not be liable for any claim or claims resulting from a participant's failure to enter upon or to complete his or her program, even though the failure is beyond the participant's control, including without limitation any failure resulting from a revocation, termination, or suspension.

You hereby release and promise not to sue the American Councils, the host institution, or their respective directors, officers, employees and agents, for any damages or injury (including death) caused by, deriving from, or associated with participation in your program.

You understand that, although American Councils will attempt to maintain your program as described in its publications and brochures, it reserves the right to change the program, including the itinerary, travel arrangements, or accommodations, at any time and for any reason, with or without notice, and that neither American Councils nor its employees or agents, shall be responsible or liable for any expenses or losses that you may sustain because of these changes.

You understand and acknowledge that American Councils assumes no responsibility or liability, in whole or in part, for: any sickness, disease, injuries (including death), losses, damages, weather, strikes, acts of God, circumstances beyond the control of American Councils, force majeure, war, quarantine, civil unrest, kidnapping, public health risks, criminal activity, terrorism, expense, accident, injuries, damage to and lost property; inconveniences, cessation of operations, mechanical defects, failure or negligence of any nature howsoever caused in connection with any service beyond American Councils' control, with or without notice; or for any additional expense occasioned by any of the foregoing.

You understand and acknowledge that American Councils will not be liable for any costs incurred by you in connection with any criminal, civil or administrative proceedings. Under no circumstances will costs resulting from violations of, alleged violations of, or failure to comply with Federal, state, tribal, local or foreign laws and regulations be covered by American Councils. Should you choose to hire an attorney, you will be responsible for facilitating the process and covering all costs, including but not limited to fines and fees.

You, individually, and on behalf of your heirs, successors, assigns and personal representatives, hereby agree to indemnify, defend, and hold harmless American Councils and its employees, agents, officers, trustees, and representatives (in their official and individual capacities) from any and all liability, loss, damage or expense, including attorneys' fees, that may result from your negligent or intentional act or

omission, which arise out of, occur during, or are in any way connected with your participation in your program, any related or independent travel, any activities or field trips, irrespective of whether they are sponsored, supervised or controlled by American Councils.

In the event of a denial or non-issuance of a visa by the host country government or a restriction on travel to the host country imposed by the government of the USA, the responsibility of American Councils shall consist exclusively of reimbursement of tuition and fees according to the American Councils refund policy. Please see policy on *Participant Financial Liability in case of withdrawal or dismissal* above.

Appendix B: Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy for American Councils for International Education

American Councils for International Education (American Councils) is an equal opportunity organization that operates in compliance with applicable laws and regulations both in the U.S. and in the countries where it works. American Councils does not discriminate in its programs and activities. The American Councils Sexual Assault and Harassment Prevention Policy (SAHPP) expressly prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, which includes sexual abuse, sexual coercion, and stalking, in all of its programs and at all of its locations, including homestays and social settings where students gather as part of their participation in the program. This policy applies to the conduct of all students, staff, and third parties who participate or work with participants on the Southeast Asian Flagship Languages Initiative (SEAFLI) program administered overseas by American Councils (AC).This policy is intended to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, the Violence Against Women Act, implementing regulations, and federal guidance, as applicable.

When American Councils staff members know of possible sexual harassment, including sexual violence, they will take immediate appropriate steps to first ensure participant safety and to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. If an investigation reveals that a violation of this policy took place, AC staff will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile situation, prevent the harassment from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

DEFINITIONS

Sexual Harassment is unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature, which includes unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal, nonverbal, or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates a hostile environment, including rape, sexual assault, and sexual exploitation. Conduct is considered "unwelcome" if the participant did not request or invite it and considered the conduct to be undesirable or offensive. Participation in the conduct or the failure to complain does not always mean that the conduct was welcome. This policy prohibits sex-based harassment by peers, employees, or third parties that is sufficiently serious to deny or limit a participant's ability to participate in or benefit from American Councils' education programs and activities (i.e., creates a hostile environment). Harassing conduct may take many forms, including verbal acts and name-calling, as well as non-verbal behavior, such as graphic and written statements (including the use of cell phones or the Internet), or conduct that is physically threatening, harmful, or humiliating. Unwelcome conduct does not have to include intent to harm, be directed at a specific target, or involve repeated incidents. The more severe the conduct, the less need there is to show a repetitive series of incidents to prove a hostile environment, particularly if the conduct is physical. Indeed, a single or isolated incident of sexual violence may create a hostile environment.

Examples of sexual harassment include: making sexual propositions or pressuring a program participant for sexual favors, touching of a sexual nature, writing graffiti of a sexual nature, displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, or written materials; performing sexual gestures or touching oneself sexually in front of others; telling sexual or dirty jokes; spreading sexual rumors or rating other participants as to sexual activity or performance; or circulating or showing e-mails or websites of a sexual nature.

Sexual violence is a form of sexual harassment and refers to physical sexual acts perpetrated against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent (e.g., due to the participant's age or incapacitation). A number of different acts fall into the category of sexual violence, including rape, sexual assault, sexual battery, sexual abuse, sexual coercion, dating violence, domestic violence, and stalking.

Consent is a voluntary agreement to engage in sexual activity. Someone who is incapacitated cannot consent. Incapacitation can occur due to the use of drugs or alcohol, when a person is asleep or unconscious, or because of an intellectual or other disability that prevents the participant from having the capacity to give consent. Past consent does not imply future consent, and silence or an absence of resistance does not imply consent. Consent to engage in sexual activity with one person does not imply consent to engage in sexual activity with another. Consent can be withdrawn at any time, and coercion, force, or threat invalidates consent.

REPORTING

Program participants who are victims of sexual assault or harassment, or who witness or learn of assault or harassment, are urged to inform AC staff. In addition to their resident directors, participants are encouraged to contact the following staff, who have been designated as Coordinators for this program, and who are required under this policy, at any time, to report harassment or assault:

Graham Hettlinger
Managing Director, Higher Education Programs
American Councils for International Education
1828 L Street NW, Ste. 1200, Washington, DC 20036;
office: (202) 572-9158;
cell: (240) 888-4844;
email: GHettlinger@americancouncils.org

Carl Jaramillo
Program Manager, SEAFLI
American Councils for International Education
1828 L Street NW, Ste. 1200, Washington, DC 200236
office: (202) (202) 572-9138;
cell: (917) 403-2663;
email: cjaramillo@americancouncils.org

Nichole Springer
Program Officer
American Councils for International Education
1828 L Street NW, Ste. 1200, Washington, DC 200236
cell: 920-960-3196
email: nspringer@americancouncils.org

If a participant reports to AC staff that they have suffered sexual assault or harassment on the program, or if American Councils otherwise learns of sexual assault or harassment, AC staff will provide immediate support and assistance, including access to professional medical care and online or on-site counseling, depending upon availability, as requested by the participant. While taking direct, immediate

action to address complaints of assault or harassment, American Councils will also report these complaints to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the administrator of the SEAFLI program. American Councils will closely guard student privacy and will report incidents only to appropriate staff who play a direct role in providing the student proper assistance.

Participants may also access the following resources, which are independent of the SEAFLI program:

> Pathways to Safety (formerly Sexual Assault Support and Help for Americans Abroad): Pathways to Safety provides sexual assault prevention strategies & response regardless. For information and referrals within 72 hours, write: crisis@pathwaystosafety.org. For more information and resources, visit the Pathways website: https://pathwaystosafety.org
>
> Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN): This is the largest anti-sexual violence organization in the United States. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (+1-800-656-HOPE) in partnership with providers across the United States. (https://www.rainn.org/). RAINN also operates a 24-hour chatline that can be accessed from anywhere abroad. For more information, visit: https://www.rainn.org/get-help

Contact information for these organizations is also provided to all participants in program materials and during pre-departure orientations. These confidential resources will not report information to American Councils, program sponsors, or students' home universities.

Participants may also contact the sexual assault response center at their home university; these centers are typically confidential.

If a participant reports only to these confidential resources, American Councils, the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and the participant's home institution will be unable to conduct an investigation or pursue disciplinary action against the alleged perpetrator. While confidential counselors and advocates may maintain a victim's confidentiality vis-à-vis American Councils and the home institution, they may have reporting or other obligations under state law, such as mandatory reporting to law enforcement in the case of minors; imminent harm to self or others; or requirement to testify if subpoenaed in a criminal case.

American Councils will also provide participants with information about how to seek medical treatment during pre-departure orientation. In the event of a sexual assault, it may be important to obtain immediate medical treatment and to preserve evidence in order to press charges against the assailant.

However, participants who seek to report incidents of harassment or assault to local police should be informed of local laws, investigatory procedures, and courtroom rules governing such cases, as these may differ significantly from those of the U.S. and in some cases may compound the victim's trauma.

American Councils recommends that participants first consult with AC staff to learn about possible resources, including professional legal advice, to help them fully understand local laws and procedures before deciding to report incidents of harassment or assault to local police. Participants may also wish to contact the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to learn more about available resources and local laws. AC staff are prepared to assist in the process at all times.

NON-RETALIATION AND AMNESTY

American Councils prohibits retaliation against program participants and other members of our community for filing a complaint of sexual violence or harassment, for assisting in the filing of a complaint or advocating for another person's rights under this policy, or for participating in an investigation, hearing, proceeding, or the resolution of a complaint. Retaliation includes, but is not limited to, threats, intimidation, coercion, and adverse actions in relation to evaluation or program participation. American Councils will investigate allegations of retaliation and will take strong responsive action if retaliation occurs. In the case of retaliation engaged in by participants, such behavior will result in disciplinary action up to and including immediate dismissal from the Program.

INVESTIGATING COMPLAINTS

Upon receiving a report of sexual assault or harassment, American Councils will take immediate, interim measures as needed to ensure the safety and freedom from retaliation of all parties. Examples of interim measures include separation of the parties, no-contact directives, and alternative arrangements for housing, classroom locations, class schedules, and other program components. Such arrangements will be made to the fullest degree possible while recognizing the reasonable limits imposed by each program's financial resources, faculty and staff availability, housing availability, and visa requirements.

To initiate the formal investigation of an incident, participants should submit a written complaint, including a detailed description of the conduct, any supporting documentation, and the names of any witnesses or others with relevant information to one of the Coordinators for this policy identified above (see REPORTING).

American Councils may also begin an investigation on its own initiative depending on the severity of the incident and the need to mitigate a significant risk to an individual or the community. While pursuing resolution through American Councils internal processes, complainants may also file a criminal report with the local police department or other appropriate law enforcement agency (see above recommendation for consulting with American Councils staff and contacting the U.S. Embassy in the host country to learn about possible resources to help you understand local laws and procedures). American Councils will not delay its investigation if criminal charges are filed. However, the investigation may be delayed at the request of criminal investigators while they gather evidence.

INVESTIGATION AND RESOLUTION

American Councils encourages but does not require informal resolution, when possible, in cases of sexual harassment that do not include sexual violence. Informal resolution, such as mediation, will never be used in cases of sexual violence. In addition, the informal resolution process may be bypassed in sexual harassment cases depending on the severity of the allegation or the complexity of the complaint. A participant who brings forth a complaint is under no obligation to engage in informal resolution and will not be pressured to do so under any circumstances. Possible conclusions for the informal resolution process include but are not limited to the creation of a no-contact environment between the two parties, the referral of one or both parties to counseling, targeted trainings for one or both parties, or other remedies for the individual harmed by the alleged discrimination or harassment.

If informal resolution is unsuccessful or inappropriate given the nature of the complaint, a formal complaint may be filed in writing to one of the Coordinators listed above who will consult with the Managing Director of Higher Education to designate an investigator or investigators to conduct a thorough and impartial review of the complaint. No more than two investigators may be assigned.

Depending on the nature of the allegations, the formal investigation may include interviews with the complainant, the respondent, and any witnesses; review of written documentation and policies; and any other reasonable steps necessary to investigate the allegation to the fullest degree possible. (However, American Councils does not have the resources to collect forensic evidence as part of any investigation or inquiry.) During the investigation, the complainant and respondent will have an equal opportunity to identify witnesses and provide evidence. The investigator will not consider evidence about the complainant's prior sexual conduct with anyone other than the alleged perpetrator. In addition, evidence of a prior consensual dating or sexual relationship between the parties by itself does not imply consent or preclude a finding of sexual misconduct.

Upon completion of their review, the investigator(s) will submit a written fact-finding and report to the Review Committee for Higher Education Programs ("review committee"); the Review Committee will then determine a) whether there was a violation of this policy; and b) the appropriate response. The Review Committee will include the coordinator who manages the program attended by the participant reporting the incident (listed above), the Managing Director of Higher Education Programs, and the Vice-President for Language Programs.

The review committee will use a preponderance of the evidence standard when evaluating the facts and making a determination regarding violations of this policy. A violation of this policy may be found based on a majority vote of the review committee.

American Councils will seek to complete its formal investigation within 60 calendar days of receiving a written complaint and the review committee will seek to complete its determination within 14 calendar days of receiving the results of the fact-finding. However, all of the timeframes stated in this policy may be extended solely at the discretion of AC Overseas Flagship.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the committee will notify the concerned parties simultaneously in writing of the outcome of the investigation and the option to appeal, as described below.

American Councils will take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end the harassment, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent the harassment from recurring, and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

SANCTIONS

Potential sanctions include, but are not limited to, verbal or written warning, mandatory counseling, ban from location or area, loss of privileges, probation, suspension or dismissal from program. Sanctions are determined at the discretion of American Councils and there is no requirement of progressive discipline.

APPEALS

Appeals may be filed in writing to Lisa Choate, President, American Councils for International Education at:

Lisa Choate
President
American Councils for International Education
1828 L Street NW, Ste. 1200, Washington, DC 20036;

telephone: (202) 833-7522;
email: choate@americancouncils.org

Either party may file an appeal within 14 calendar days of notification of the review committee's decision. Appeals may be filed only when there was a material failure to follow procedures or when significant evidence was not considered that would have altered the outcome of the investigation. The other party will be given an opportunity to respond to the appeal within 7 calendar days. The President will make the final decision regarding the appeal and may decide: 1) to support the full results of the investigation and resolution; 2) support the results of the investigation but recommend different corrective action; 3) reach a different result and/or corrective action; or 4) require additional fact-finding.

FALSE OR FRIVOLOUS CHARGES

This policy shall not be used to bring false or frivolous charges against employees or participants. Those bringing such charges may be subject to disciplinary action.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND OBLIGATION TO RESPOND

American Councils encourages participants to speak with their resident director and/or other American Councils staff listed in this policy in order to address any concerns they have regarding sexual assault or harassment. American Councils recognizes that reporting sexual assault or harassment is a painful, deeply personal matter. When discussing sexual assault or harassment, students should be aware that American Councils staff are not confidential resources and are required to share any report of sexual assault or harassment with appropriate professional staff at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, the administrator of the SEAFLI program. Information regarding a reported incident will be shared only with professional staff who play a direct role in responding.

American Councils staff will preserve a participant's confidentiality to the fullest degree possible consistent with the need to respond appropriately to allegations of sexual assault or harassment. When a participant reports to an American Council employee about an incident of sexual harassment or sexual violence, American Councils will take immediate and appropriate steps to investigate what happened and to resolve the matter promptly and equitably. Unless required by law, American Councils will not report an incident to law enforcement without a participant's consent.

During the investigation of an incident of sexual assault or harassment, confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest degree possible and within the limits imposed upon American Councils by its duty to ensure a safe environment for all program participants.

RECORDS

Records of all complaints will be maintained by the Managing Director of Higher Education pursuant to the applicable record retention policy. Disciplinary actions will become part of a participant's record.

HOME INSTITUTION INVESTIGATION

The home institutions of both the respondent and the complainant may choose to begin their own investigations into the complaint upon receiving notification from American Councils, if such notification has been required. American Councils will assist to the fullest degree possible in the conduct of these

investigations within the reasonable limits imposed by each program's financial resources, faculty and staff availability, housing availability, and visa requirements.

COMMUNICATION WITH RESPONDENT'S HOME INSTITUTION

If a participant is found responsible for sexual assault or harassment while on an American Councils program, American Councils will report this information to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, the administrator of the SEAFLI program.)

PREVENTION AND EDUCATION

American Councils informs participants of this policy and available resources through its orientation program, which is conducted at the beginning of each study abroad program. AC staff working with participants are trained on this policy. Those who respond to, investigate, and adjudicate complaints under this policy also receive training.

TRAINING

American Councils staff are trained on this policy. Those who respond to, investigate, and adjudicate complaints under this policy also receive training.

Appendix C: Disability Accommodation Policy

In keeping with an organizational philosophy that seeks to ensure that all parties have equal access to its programs, American Councils makes all reasonable efforts to accommodate applicants and participants with disabilities seeking to join its programs. Applicants and participants are strongly encouraged to inform appropriate staff of potential accommodation requests as early as possible in order to maximize the time available to develop resources, manage logistics, and collaborate with overseas partners, as necessary, in order to meet such requests. Information regarding medical and mental health, as well as accommodation requests, is not included in program application files and is not reviewed during program selection.

To request disability accommodation while on program, a participant must complete and upload the Disability Accommodations Request Form during the online registration process. A participant must also upload documentation supporting the accommodation request. Documentation may vary by situation, but may include educational or medical records, reports and assessments created by health care providers and student disability offices, school psychologists, teachers, or the educational system, including documents that reflect accommodation history. If an enrolled student, the participant must include written documentation demonstrating that the accommodation in question is currently provided at his or her home university or school; this documentation must be provided by the disability services office of the participant's home university or the equivalent administrative office of the participant's high school if he/she is not currently enrolled in a higher education institution. If the participant is not an enrolled student, he/she must provide a written request for accommodation from his/her treating physician. Information provided will be handled consistent with applicable program privacy practices.

Firmly committed to ensuring broad access to its overseas programs, American Councils makes every effort to provide reasonable accommodation to all participants. When evaluating requests for accommodation, American Councils considers the participant's disability, history, experience, request, and the unique characteristics of the course, program, program location, and program requirements in determining whether a specific accommodation is reasonable. However, the requested accommodation cannot fundamentally alter the character of a study program or present an undue hardship for American Councils or its overseas partners. Therefore, accommodation cannot be guaranteed, and in some instances, additional requirements may be associated with an accommodation. While awareness and understanding of the needs of people with disabilities continue to grow throughout the world, many countries lack accessible infrastructure, services, and laws similar to those supporting people with disabilities in the U.S. Therefore, conditions in the countries hosting American Councils programs may severely limit our ability to meet some accommodation requests, even if these accommodations are provided at the participant's U.S. educational institution or place of work. When possible in such instances, American Councils will provide alternative placement or deferred admission to a program.

Emotional Support Animals

The program is committed to meeting all reasonable requests for accommodation. Please note that at this time, emotional support animals are not an approved accommodation for the program. The intensive nature and the living-learning requirements of the program; local customs, conditions, and laws in our partner countries; concern for the health and well-being of the animals involved; and cultural

and religious considerations rule out this accommodation for participants. Please contact your mental healthcare provider and the program implementer to discuss other available resources and support.

Appendix D: Religious Accommodation Policy

American Councils makes good faith efforts to provide reasonable accommodation to program participants whose genuine religious beliefs conflict with program schedules and requirements, provided such accommodations do not fundamentally alter the character of a study program or present an undue hardship for American Councils, its overseas partners, or other program participants.

To request a religious accommodation, a participant must complete and submit the Request for Religious Accommodation Form with program acceptance materials. Participants who are currently enrolled in an institution of secondary or higher education must also provide documentation confirming that their academic institution currently provides the same accommodation that they are requesting during their participation on an American Councils program. Participants who are currently employed are also strongly encouraged to provide written confirmation of religious accommodation from their employers if it is available to them. If a participant is not able to provide documentation demonstrating that they currently receive the requested accommodation at the place of work or study, the participant should explain why in the Request for Religious Accommodation Form.

In reviewing religious accommodation requests, American Councils weighs factors that include but are not limited to: the specific requirements of the participant's program and the degree to which the requested accommodation would alter the nature of the participant's proposed program or impact the participant's ability to fully participate in the program; the potential impact of the accommodation upon other American Councils program participants, staff, faculty, or partners; the potential financial impact of the accommodation; the availability of alternative accommodations; and the duration and frequency of the requested accommodation in relation to resources and staff available to provide accommodation.

All accommodation requests are reviewed individually and answered in writing. American Councils seeks to ensure the confidentiality of all participants seeking religious accommodation; however, American Councils reserves the right to discuss such requests with the participant, relevant staff, and relevant institutional partners (including funders, home universities, host families and overseas institutions) in order to determine our ability to meet specific requests.

Appendix E: Notice of Disclosure/FERPA Policy

Under the *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)*, which American Councils follows, students who are 18 years or older or who attend a post-secondary institution at any age (collectively "Student or Students") have certain rights with respect to their education records. These rights include: (1) the right to inspect and review the Student's education records within 45 days after a written request; (2) the right to request the amendment of the Student's education records that the student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of the Student's privacy rights; (3) the right to provide written consent before the disclosure of personally identifiable information, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent; and (4) the right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures to comply with FERPA.

The name and address of the office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office
US Department of Education
400 Maryland Ave SW
Washington DC 20202

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can be disclosed to outside organizations without a student's written consent. If you do not want the American Councils SEAFLI fall program to disclose any or all of the types of information designated below as directory information without your prior written consent, you must notify American Councils in writing by submitting the attached Directory Information Opt-Out Form to the RFLI fall program. American Councils considers the following information to be directory information:

- Student name
- Home address
- Language of study on the SEAFLI fall overseas program
- Location of the SEAFLI fall overseas program
- Dates of participation
- Current enrollment status
- Photographs
- General study abroad program information

American Councils works with the following partners to administer the SEAFLI programs: the National Security Education Program; the Institute of International Education; The University of Wisconsin-Madison and the overseas host institution (collectively, the "Program Partners"). The partners use student record information including personal contact information and other information, including, but not limited to, medical information, emergency contact information, financial information, academic information, education records, criminal records, and conduct information ("education records"), related to participation in the program to the extent that they deem reasonably necessary in order to administer the program, to facilitate participation in the program, and to protect participants' health and safety and the health and safety of others.

The SEAFLI fall program will not share student record information, including academic progress, general health and well-being, program activities, and other components of the student's application, as defined by FERPA, with third parties other than those listed above unless the student submits a completed Consent to Release Educational Records form. A copy of the Consent to Release Educational Records form can be obtained by contacting American Councils at:

Graham Hettlinger
Managing Director, Higher Education Programs
American Councils for International Education
1828 L Street NW St 1200
Washington DC 20036
(202) 833-7522

Student also understands that in the event of an emergency, the SEAFLI program partners may disclose information necessary to protect participants' health and safety and the health of safety of others, including to others not listed herein, irrespective of any prior authorization.

More information about FERPA is available at: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) https://www2.ed.gov/policy/gen/guid/fpco/ferpa/index.html

Appendix F: Host Family Contract for Students

As a participant in the American Councils for International Education Host Family Program, I wish to be a productive member of my family and to gain the maximum amount from my experience. Therefore, I will:

Language

Make a genuine effort to have regular meaningful conversations in the target language with my host family on topics of mutual interest;

Living Conditions

Respect my host family members and follow their household rules, including dress code;

Understand that the host family moral norms and values may be different or more traditional than the values I might have experienced in my home country or in other study abroad experiences;

Have realistic expectations about what my family can do for me;

Recognize the effort that my family puts forth in hosting me;

Be flexible and understanding of my family and their customs, diets, and schedules, and understand that they aren't expected to alter their lives because of me;

Respect my host family members' privacy;

Keep my room neat and help with family chores;

Be prepared to do my own laundry, which includes providing my own laundry detergent; if my host family insists on doing this, recognize that they are doing so out of kindness, not obligation;

Have my own copy of the key to the house/apartment. In case I lose the key, I will be responsible for the costs incurred to replace the door lock and key;

Make every possible effort to discuss mutual likes and dislikes with my family early on in order to avoid possible misunderstandings and conflicts;

In the event that something in the host family makes me unhappy, provide my host family with polite, but clear suggestions on ways to resolve the issue;

In the event that an issue cannot be resolved quickly and to the mutual satisfaction of the student and the host family, promptly report the issue to the Resident Director/Associate Resident Director and Homestay Coordinator;

Meals

Understand that my family is being compensated in order to provide one meal a day for me on weekdays, and two meals a day on weekends, but other expenses are my responsibility;

Understand that my host family is being compensated for my room and board directly by American Councils at a set monthly fee. Regardless of my actual needs, the amount of this fee cannot be changed. Also, no individual financial arrangements between the host family and me that violate or change the

arrangements between the host family and American Councils are allowed (for example, I cannot request a part of the room and board fee from the family in order to buy my own food, but instead have to work with the family on setting my dietary requirements);

Communication

Inform my family in advance if I won't be coming home for a meal, coming home later than usual, spending the night elsewhere, or traveling away from the host city;

Visitors

Understand that I may not be permitted to invite guests to the house; I must always ask for my family's permission prior to the visit;

In case my guest/s participate in meals with my host family, I understand that the compensation that my host family receives covers my expenses only and, therefore, I or my guest/s should make a reasonable contribution to the joint meal through the purchase of fruits, dessert, etc.; and

Understand that I may not have overnight guests at any time.

Disputes over Damages and Financial Responsibility

I understand and accept that I will be financially responsible for all damage that may be done to my host family's dwelling and personal and other property that results from my negligence and/or deliberate action. In the same manner, my host family will be financially responsible for any damage to my property that may occur as a result of negligence and/or deliberate action of a family member or family guest. Should I lose the keys to my host family's apartment, I will be responsible for the cost of replacing the old locks with new ones of similar value.

By agreeing to host a student, the family accepts reasonable wear and tear to the premises and items that I will be normally using during my residence with the family. I will not be held responsible for such normal wear and tear. A family is responsible for notifying me of any items that I should not use or should use with higher-than-usual care. The family is required to promptly alert me of any noticed damage to the items/premises that is believed to be caused by my inappropriate use. The family that notices such damage, but does not clearly bring it to my attention and, in case of my inaction, to the attention of the Homestay Coordinator, forfeits its right to a financial claim against me.

Any possible financial dispute between the host family and I will be mediated by the Homestay Coordinator or the Resident Director and must be resolved before the end of the program.

I also understand that I will immediately lose the opportunity to continue participating in the program if I:

Engage in rude, inconsiderate, abusive, or offensive behavior with my hosts; and/or

Fail to abide by the rules of the host family with which I have been placed.

Biweekly Survey

I will complete a brief check-in form regarding my host family in order to record any concerns I have regarding my living arrangements; the form will be reviewed by the American Councils Resident Director and Program Manager.

Changing Host Family

American Councils staff monitors participant homestays closely throughout the academic year. Issues between participants and their hosts are usually detected early and resolved in good time. Where possible, American Council staff will first seek to help both participants and their families work through these challenges. However, both you and/or your host family have the right to request that you be moved to a new host family due to unresolved differences. In these instances, the American Councils Program Manager, Resident Director and Associate Director will work with the participant and Host Family Coordinator to arrange a new host family placement.

In the extremely unlikely circumstance that a student feels distressed or unsafe in their host family, the student should contact the Resident Director or Associate Resident Director, who will immediately arrange alternative housing while the participant's concern is investigated and fully addressed and/or the participant is placed in a new family.

Appendix H: Sample CISI Coverage

This coverage represents the policy for 2026 and is provided here for your general reference. The full CISI policy will be provided to participants prior to departing for the fall program.

SCHEDULE OF BENEFITS

COVERAGE AND SERVICES	MAXIMUM LIMITS
TRAVEL ACCIDENT INDEMNITY INSURANCE	
Accidental Death and Dismemberment Per Insured Person	$25,000
ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE	
Medical expenses (per Covered Accident or Sickness):	
Deductible	zero
Benefit Maximum	$500,000 at 100%
Extension of Benefits	90 days
Home Country Coverage Limit	30 days
TRAVEL ASSISTANCE INSURANCE	
Emergency Medical Reunion	$10,000 (incl. $300 lodging/$100 meals, max $100/day)
Quarantine	$4,200
Trip Cancellation	$5,000
Trip Delay	$4,200 ($300/day)
Trip Interruption	$2,500
Chaperone Replacement Benefit	$2,500
PERSONAL PROPERTY INSURANCE	
Baggage Delay	$500
Lost Checked Baggage	$200 max (deduct. $50, $100/item)
EVACUATION AND REPATRIATION INSURANCE	
Emergency Medical Evacuation	100% of Covered Expenses (Antarctica $250,000 max)
Repatriation of Mortal Remains	100% of Covered Expenses (Antarctica $250,000 max)
Security Evacuation (Comprehensive)	$100,000
NON-INSURANCE SERVICES	
Team Assist Plan (TAP): 24/7 medical, travel, technical assistance	

PERSONAL LIABILITY COVERAGE (Primary Insureds only)			
Maximum Benefit Per Claim	$200,000	Additional Living Expenses	$10,000
Deductible per Personal Property Claim	$100	Payment of Deduct. under Homeowner's Insurance	$1,000
Medical Payments Coverage	$25,000	Aggregate Limit per Insured/Policy Aggregate	$200,000

Appendix I: Medical Facilities in Hanoi

HANOI FRENCH HOSPITAL
1 Phuong Mai So 1 100000 Hanoi VIET NAM
Tel: +842435771100

- Map: https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=21.00372,105.84035
- Assistance direct coverage: Yes
- House Call: No
- Open 24/7: Yes
- Web: http://www.hfh.com.vn/
- Languages: English, French, Vietnamese
- Med. specialties: Emergency medicine, Allergology, Cardiology

FAMILY MEDICAL PRACTICE- INTERNATIONAL CLINIC
289I P. Kim Ma, Hanoi Viet Nam
Tel: +842438430748

VINMEC TIMES CITY INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL
458 P. Minh Khai Hanoi Hà Nội VIET NAM
Tel: +842439743556

- Map: https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=20.99621,105.86691
- Assistance direct coverage: Yes
- House Call: No
- Open 24/7: Yes
- Web: https://en.vinmec.com/
- Languages: Viêtnamese, English, French, Japanese
- Med. specialties: Emergency medicine, Allergology, Cardiology

HONG NGOC GENERAL HOSPITAL
55 P. Yen Ninh, Hanoi Viet Nam
Hanoi VIET NAM
Tel: +842439275568

- Map: https://www.google.com/maps/search/?api=1&query=21.02776,105.83416
- Assistance direct coverage: Yes
- House Call: No
- Open 24/7: Yes
- Web: http://hongngochospital.vn/
- Languages: English, Vietnamese
- Med. specialties: Allergology, Cardiology, Dentist

Thu Cuc Hospital (English available)
Add: #216 Tran Duy Hung, Cau Giay, Hanoi
Telephone: 0936 388 288

E Hospital
Address: #89 Tran Cung, Nghia Tan, Cau Giay, Hanoi
Telephone: 0868 891 318

Bach Mai Hospital
Address: 78 Giải Phóng, Phuong Dinh, Dong Da, Hanoi
Telephone: 024 3869 3731

Please note: Your Resident Director is available at all times to assist you in case of emergency. They can also provide additional information and assistance for other medical facilities in Hanoi.

Appendix J: Contact Information

U.S. Team Contact Information

American Councils U.S. Team
1828 L Street, NW
Suite 1200
Washington, DC 20036-5104

Telephone: (202) 833-7522
Fax: (202) 833-7523
Emergency Telephone: (202) 744-5214
(800) 621-9559

Flagship Program Staff

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Flagship Language Initiatives

Nichole Springer, Program Officer — nspringer@americancouncils.org
Flagship Language Initiatives

University Contact Information

The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS)
Room 508, A1 Building, No 1, Pham Van Dong Street, Cau Giay District
Hanoi, Vietnam

Local Program Staff

Dr. Tran Huu Tri — t2ha2008@gmail.com
Dean of Faculty for Vietnamese & Southeast Asian Language and Culture
The University of Languages and International Studies (ULIS)

U.S. Embassy in Vietnam

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7 Lang Ha Street, Ba Dinh District
Hanoi, Vietnam
Telephone: +84-24-3850-5000
Email: VnEmbassyWebMaster@state.gov