

FLORENCE ETHNOGRAPHIC FIELD SCHOOL

RESPONSES TO THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

STANDARDS OF GOOD PRACTICE QUERIES

STANDARD ONE: MISSION AND GOALS

The organization has a mission statement and articulates clear goals for its education abroad programming.

What is your mission statement?

The mission of the Florence Ethnographic Field School is to provide students with credit-bearing courses in ethnographic research methods, with effective qualitative research design, data collection, and data analysis as the learning goals, alongside practical and transparent guidance towards an eventual career in the social sciences, with the utmost respect for the host society, and absolute commitment to the values of collectivism and cooperation, ethical management, and social justice.

Does it define the scope, goals, and aspirations of your organization's work?

Yes: the scope "is to provide students with credit-bearing courses in ethnographic research methods," the learning goals are "effective qualitative research design, data collection, and data analysis," and the aspirations are to provide "practical and transparent guidance towards an eventual career in the social sciences, with the utmost respect for the host society, and absolute commitment to the values of collectivism and cooperation, ethical management, and social justice."

In what ways do you continually foster understanding and support of your mission statement?

First and foremost, by putting the values contained therein into practice with the students, the School of Record, and representatives of sending institutions. Building the program's identity as a values driven, specialized offering continually reinforces awareness of the program's mission. This effort is further supported by featuring the mission statement prominently on the program's website and appropriately incorporating it into communications.

What are the learning goals of each of your programs?

The Florence Ethnographic Field School (FEFS) learning goals include leading students to an awareness of methodology's role in generating scientific knowledge, and supporting their development of effective skills for the collection and analysis of qualitative data based on appropriately designed research.

Do you regularly evaluate the extent to which you are achieving your mission and goals?

Yes, not only through continual monitoring of the aforementioned communication and interactions, but also by maintaining contact with students as they continue the course of their professional development and their eventual entry into the social sciences.

How do you use the results of these assessments to improve the quality of your programming?

By making annual adjustments to the structure of the program, including updates or changes to the curriculum, facilities, and/or the administrative organization, to ensure that the FEFS continually maintains a positive and respectful engagement with the host society, compliance with all relevant laws and regulations, and an operational structure that embodies the principles of collectivism and cooperation, ethical practices, and social justice.

STANDARD TWO: STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The organization's mission, goals, and operations prioritize student learning and development.

In what ways do you prioritize student learning and development in the design and management of your programs?

The design and management of the FEFS follows the classic developmental trajectory of ethnographic fieldwork, a format which is naturally adapted to the study abroad experience and supports both curricular learning goals and personal development. The premise of a Field School is learning by doing: in this way, student learning is continually highlighted through the program focus on research methods. Because ethnography is a technique focused on culture and society, students also develop skills for intercultural and cross-cultural encounters and exchanges: problem solving, overcoming communication challenges, and increased awareness of the influential role played by cultural, social, and personal contexts.

How do you measure student learning and development outcomes?

Structured forms of assessment are based on the stages of qualitative research: design, data collection and analysis, and reporting findings. Students receive traditional letter grades, corresponding to number percentages, on the following forms of assessment:

- Participant-Observation and Fieldnotes, worth 15% of the final grade. At the beginning of the class students learn to take fieldnotes through a combination of theory provided by the assigned readings, and practice carried out during their time onsite. Fieldnotes are assessed twice during the course on the basis of quantity and frequency (they must be recorded on a daily basis), and the extent to which they conform to the theory covered in the assigned readings by Bernard and Geertz.
- A written Research Proposal of five to seven pages, worth 15% of the final grade. This must include an explanation of the data sought, how it builds on existing scholarship (with references cited), the specific choice of methods based on the type of data sought, and how any potential ethical concerns will be addressed. The criteria for assessment include the extent to which the proposed research is situated in the existing scholarship, the appropriateness of the methods chosen based on assigned readings, and the extent to which the ethical standards of the American Anthropological Association and the American Sociological Association are reflected in the research plan, worth 15% of their final grade.
- Data Collection, worth 20% of the final grade. This requires extracting data from their fieldnotes, as well as conducting at least four formal, semi-structured interviews, transcribing them, and memoing them. The criteria for assessment include the content of the interview as developed by the interviewer, and the extent to which their transcription and memoing reflects

- the procedures outlined in the Bernard reading and reflected in the Counihan and Low readings.
- Data Analysis, worth 20% of the final grade. This requires processing the extracted data using the methods outlined in the assigned readings by Bernard and Law. Criteria for assessment include the extent and the accuracy of the coding, and the extent to which the procedures specified by Bernard and Law are followed (the specifics will vary based on the topic; the suitability of the chosen methods is assessed as part of the Research Proposal).
 - Final Project Write-Up of minimum fifteen pages, worth 30% of the final grade. This is assessed on the basis to which it follows the models provided by the ethnographic texts about Italy covered in the course (Coluzzi, Counihan, Belmonte, and Pine), as well as other sources specifically relevant to the student's topic, insofar as they are ethnographic as discussed by Krauss. The writing itself must be ethnographic in the sense discussed by Geertz, Clifford, and Behar in assigned readings, which addresses the aspects of personal development, and it must engage the urban dimension of Florence as discussed by Savage and Park. This is due the week following the conclusion of the course meetings onsite.

How do you use student learning and development assessments to improve your program design and management?

By focusing on the outcomes demonstrated by student performance, the effectiveness of the program design and execution can be ascertained. This is monitored on an ongoing basis throughout the course of the program, allowing for adjustments to be made as needed during the course to ensure that students are able to maximize the opportunities presented while they are abroad. During the off-season in between summer sessions, the overall structure of the program is reviewed together with the syllabus to ensure that any substantive changes can be made in response to the outcomes of the assessments.

How do program offerings support academic objectives of students and their home institutions?

The FEFS supports the academic objectives of students and their home institutions first and foremost by offering a credit bearing course with a transcript from a U.S. state university. Offering a qualitative research methods course supports important academic objectives because of the central role that participant-observation plays in social science research. The natural affinity between the principal ethnographic technique of participant-observation and the experiential education paradigm central to study abroad creates an opportunity for students to make valuable progress towards meeting their academic objectives.

To what extent is your program curriculum integrated with curricula of the students' home institutions?

Research methods is typically a required course for undergraduates and graduates across the social sciences, and field schools are an important component of a fully developed curriculum for anthropology and sociology majors. Because of the setting, both Italy and urban settings figure prominently in the syllabus, with the urban context providing a platform for comparative and cross-cultural approaches.

In what ways do your pre-program, on-site, and post-program offerings support the continuity of student learning and development?

The pre-program and post-program phases mirror the typical fieldwork trajectory, with pre-departure preparations including learning about host society norms and expectations, language issues, and engaging the famous narratives of departure and arrival in the field from the seminal ethnographic

texts. By the conclusion of the program, students have moved on to the latest innovations in contemporary ethnographic writing, which include the struggle with re-entry, return, and how to articulate the realities of the experience abroad to those who have not shared the experience.

STANDARD THREE: ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK

The organization delivers academic content appropriate to its stated mission and goals, ensures adequate academic supervision and evaluation, and maintains clear and transparent academic policies.

In what ways does the program curriculum support your program's stated goals?

Ethnographic research is defined by its use of participant-observation, which is perfectly adapted to the experiential learning that is intrinsic to study abroad. The course offering draws on the rich tradition of historic and contemporary ethnographic writing about Italy to help support students in the development of their own participant-observation skills, as well as incorporating historically marginalized voices into the course content.

In what ways does the curriculum leverage the unique learning opportunities of your host context?

Florence is one of the Western world's archetypal cities, as well as an important contemporary destination for tourism, industry, and education. The course brings together key texts from urban studies with methodological guides for systematic approaches to learning by doing and innovative recent ethnographic texts produced from Italian cities to guide students towards the completion of their own research project. Their research project requires them to engage ethnographically with the host society, taking them out of the classroom and into their own experiences as a basis to develop their comprehension of concepts covered in the course materials.

Are faculty credentials and background appropriate for your program? Do they meet local standards or U.S. institutional expectations for higher education?

The faculty credentials and background are perfectly suited to the program and they meet both local standards and U.S. institutional expectations for higher education. The professor holds a PhD in Anthropology from a US university, and taught in the US before relocating to Florence, where he has been based since 2006. During that time, he has maintained an active research agenda based on ethnographic work in the city, in addition to working as a professor and an administrator for various other programs in Florence.

Where appropriate, have faculty been trained to teach in your education abroad context?

The faculty has pursued extensive professional development related specifically to study abroad, including experiential learning pedagogy, the development of intercultural competence, and supporting students through culture shock at the start of the program and re-entry preparations at its conclusion.

Is student work supervised and fairly evaluated by faculty?

Student work is assessed at regular intervals over the course of the program. Each individual assignment is designed to support the student's development of their final project, so that if students do not initially succeed in achieving the first learning goals they have integrated opportunities to do so as

the course continues. All students are evaluated on the basis of the same criteria, which is explicitly presented in the syllabus.

Are your policies and procedures related to evaluation, awarding of credit, grade appeals, research ethics, and academic integrity clearly stated and accessible?

The policies and procedures related to evaluation, awarding of credit, grade appeals, research ethics, and academic integrity are contained in the syllabus and the Policies and Procedures document, both of which are publicly available from the FEFS website.

STANDARD FOUR: STUDENT SELECTION, PREPARATION, AND ADVISING

The organization maintains fair and ethical recruitment and selection processes, adequate student preparation and advising, and ongoing student support.

Describe how your recruiting and admissions procedures are fair, ethical, and transparent.

Recruitment is done through direct outreach to academic departments, study abroad offices, and the Director's own professional network. Additionally, the program is listed in the guides of professional scholarly and study abroad associations, and promoted through social media platforms. No third parties, agencies, or fee-based relationships are employed. The criteria for selection and the admissions procedures are explained on the website. All applications receive equal consideration and are based on a comprehensive overview of the applicant's academic and individual profile.

How do you confirm that students have sufficient academic preparation before enrolling in the program?

Students submit a transcript and include an explanation of the social sciences courses they have taken prior to the program, as well as the basis for their interest in such a specialized program.

In what ways do you prepare students for the challenges of the education abroad context?

The first two class meetings are online and they frame the education abroad context as a form of ethnographic fieldwork, a principal method employed across the social sciences, which requires learning by doing through systematic participant-observation. The content of the course itself addresses topics such as cultural differences, intercultural interactions, language barriers, and strategies for overcoming those challenges in such a way that allows for meaningful exchanges between the students and members of the host society.

How do your pre-departure training and on-site orientation equip students to achieve academic success and broader program goals? How do you help students prepare for personal, health, and safety issues that might arise?

The online pre-departure meetings present students with a broad context for the both the scholarly pursuit of social scientific and cultural knowledge and the specific role that ethnographic methods play therein. Clear expectations are provided to the students, and they are advised on how to prepare for the differences from classes at their home institution, including smaller class size, an active relationship between the course content and their experience outside of the classroom, and their role in the host society. To help them prepare for personal, health, and safety issues that might arise, we review the

kinds of issues that tend to arise most frequently for foreign students in Florence and appropriate strategies for minimizing the risk. Additionally, students are provided with tools for helping them to identify potential issues based on their individual circumstances. Students are advised in advance of what kinds of resources are available onsite and how to access services covered by their included insurance. Resources for handling routine health and wellness concerns, as well as how to respond to emergencies, are covered in the pre-departure session, as well as provided in the student handbook.

How does pre-departure and on-site advising encourage academic and professional planning?

Students are provided with honest and realistic perspectives on the prospects for career development in the social sciences and related fields. Because these careers require an advanced degree, this includes information about pursuing graduate study and choosing an appropriate program to support the student's career goals.

What kinds of re-entry programming are offered to address student needs?

Re-entry preparation is framed in terms of the classical anthropological concern with return from the field. Narratives of departure and return are essential components of ethnographic writing, and the format of the program supports a continual, reflexive engagement with the students' own personal and professional development. In other words, preparation for re-entry is incorporated into the content delivered throughout the duration of the program.

STANDARD FIVE: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES **The organization articulates clear and accessible guidelines for student behavior and consequences resulting from violations.**

What are your policies for student behavior and how are they made accessible?

The policies governing student behavior are intended to help students avoid behavior that is socially acceptable in English speaking countries but not in Italy. Many visitors to Italy, including study abroad students from the U.S., tend to ignore certain local social standards in Florence, often without realizing it. The code of conduct and how to engage positively with the local community are covered during the pre-departure sessions and revisited throughout the duration of the program.

Students may be expelled from the program if: they violate local laws, even if they are not arrested for doing so; if they are present for any class or school activity under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including being hungover to an extent that impacts their performance; if they are drinking in a public space: on the street, in a plaza or square, on the steps of a building, in a park, etc., at any time during the program's duration; if they are visibly intoxicated by alcohol or drugs in public at any time during the program's duration; if they use or are in possession of any illicit substances during the program's duration (illicit substances include legal or prescription substances used illegally or by someone other than the intended recipient); or if they fail to adhere to the ethical codes governing ethnographic research presented in the course, including but not limited to the University of Montana's Institutional Review Board requirements.

Policies governing student behavior are included in the Policies and Procedures document, freely available from the website, and in the Student Handbook distributed to enrolled students in advance of their departure. Relevant policies concerning academic behavior are also reproduced in the syllabus,

which is also freely available from the program website.

Do your policies effectively represent your expectations concerning drug and alcohol use, culturally-appropriate behavior, sexual harassment or assault, travel and housing, or any other behavior that might result in disciplinary action?

FEFS policies explicitly communicate expectations concerning drug and alcohol use, making specific reference to socially acceptable behaviors as opposed to legally permitted behaviors; for example, it is legal to drink alcohol from open containers on the street in public, but it is considered highly inappropriate by local standards, and thus is subject to disciplinary action. Sexual harassment or assault are crimes under Italian law, and any occurrence of them between program participants and/or program faculty or staff will be reported directly to the relevant Italian authorities. Students deal directly with the housing agency, and must sign a legally registered rental contract that enumerates their rights and responsibilities as renters in Italy; the FEFS provides support, but students are responsible directly to the agency/landlord for any costs incurred or violations of the apartment building's code of conduct (noise, trash disposal, etc.).

Do you inform students about your behavioral guidelines both before departure and on-site?

The behavioral guidelines are included in the Policies and Procedures document, freely available from the website, and are also included in the Student Handbook that is provided to enrolled students prior to departure. They are covered during the pre-departure sessions, and reiterated on-site throughout the program's duration.

Do students understand the potential sanctions they would face for disciplinary violations?

The program makes every effort to ensure that students understand the potential sanctions they would face for disciplinary violations: the consequences for violating the code of conduct are included with every iteration of the code itself.

What is the appeal process for decisions about code of conduct violations?

In the interest of respecting the host society, code of conduct violations that involve violation of local laws result in immediate program dismissal and cannot be appealed. Students wishing to appeal other disciplinary actions may do so by indicating the basis for their appeal in writing to the Director, who will notify the Advisory Council. An ad hoc committee made up of three members of the Advisory Council will make a determination to either support the disciplinary action taken, or rescind it.

STANDARD SIX: POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The organization has well-defined and clearly-articulated policies and procedures that govern its programs and practices, ensures that they are fairly and consistently implemented, and conducts regular reviews to assess their effectiveness.

How are your policies governing student affairs detailed?

References to specific policies are included throughout the overall presentation information about the program in outreach, communications, and throughout the website and social media presence. Additionally, specific policies governing student affairs are included in the Policies and Procedures

document, the Student Handbook, and the syllabus.

How are program costs and financial policies made available to students and other stakeholders?

A dedicated page on the website, “Tuition, Dates and What’s Included,” explains all program costs and what is and is not included therein. Financial policies and disclosures regarding the handling of financial data (required by local law) are included in the Policies and Procedures document and the application form itself. Applicants must sign to confirm that they have read, understood, and agree to bound by, the Policies and Procedures.

In what ways do you make financial aid and scholarship sources accessible to students?

The FEFS offers no direct financial aid or scholarships. Students are referred to their major department and study abroad advisors at their home institutions for assistance in locating appropriate funding solutions compatible with their home institution financial aid conditions.

What are your policies governing staff and faculty hiring, training, compensation, benefits, evaluation?

Because the FEFS offers a single summer course, it is currently staffed by a single individual, approved by the School of Record to teach the course on the basis of academic qualifications, and qualified to administrate the course by having served as onsite Academic Dean for an important study abroad provider in Florence.

Future growth beyond the current Director/Professor will follow policies and procedures based on the values of collectivism, cooperation, and shared responsibility. The maximum degree of program growth would be that which allowed the teaching faculty to share the administrative and operational responsibilities for the program, with no non-teaching staff. Compensation would be based on a share of the divided revenue remaining after the fixed costs are covered, and would increase proportionally with enrollment, so that every individual involved would earn on a per-student basis, rather than a per-course basis, with no revenue accruing to any institutional entity. Rather than being hired as employees, the faculty collective would represent a free association of individuals who are legally self-employed, sharing their expertise and resources to provide a study abroad experience that maximizes the potential of being abroad and the specific learning opportunities offered by the host society. Evaluation of individual faculty performance would be carried out collectively on a term-by-term basis, with periodic evaluation of the overall program carried out by the School of Record.

How do you ensure that these policies are fairly and consistently implemented, and regularly reviewed?

Because the FEFS is currently operated by a single individual, there is no practical implementation of policies regarding hiring, training, compensation, and benefits. Review and development of policies takes place in advance of, and again following, each annual program session, in consultation with the School of Record and members of the Advisory Council.

What are your organization’s guidelines governing marketing practices, partnerships, and institutional relations?

Institutional relations with the School of Record are guided by the SOR’s policies governing external partnerships and the Forum on Education Abroad Guidelines for School of Record Relationships. The

FEFS does not engage in any paid advertising or fee-based marketing or promotional activities. Marketing is done through direct outreach to relevant units within sending universities, promotion through professional and academic associations, and through professional and academic networks.

STANDARD SEVEN: ORGANIZATIONAL AND PROGRAM RESOURCES
The organization ensures that its programs are adequately funded and staffed.

What are your staffing and faculty needs? How do you determine the appropriate qualifications and training to fill those needs?

Because the FEFS currently offers a single summer course annually, the staffing and faculty needs are met by a single individual, whose qualifications and training both as a professor and as an administrator were vetted by the School of Record during the establishment of their partnership.

Are your positions structured to provide staff and faculty reasonable workloads and enough time to support the goals of your program?

Currently the scale of the program is such that a single, qualified individual can successfully manage all aspects of the program's operation. Planning for future growth is based on a shared distribution of administrative responsibilities across the teaching faculty. The scale of the program's potential growth will be determined by the capacity of the teaching faculty to successfully manage the operational aspects of the program and support the program goals.

Do you compensate staff and faculty fairly, taking into account local standards and cost of living?

The principle guiding compensation is not that of a salary, but rather an equitably shared distribution of revenues. Planning for future program growth is based on this approach.

Are your programs sufficiently funded at all times, including times of low enrollment?

Because the program only operates during the summer, and each enrolled student covers their own fixed costs, the program necessarily funds itself sufficiently, even when operating at minimum enrollment.

Does your operating budget ensure safe, clean, hospitable housing; activities that support the program's educational goals; and responsible health, safety, and security measures?

The operating budget is based on a per-student calculation, so once the minimum enrollment is reached, then program goals, including health and safety, are appropriately funded. Housing is provided by an established agency and students sign legal rental contracts which are registered with the city, ensuring that housing is up to program standards and in compliance with local laws and regulations.

What facilities and infrastructure are needed to realize the goals of the program?

An appropriately equipped classroom in a university facility, which is leased locally for the month of the program and housing, which is provided by a local agency, in full compliance with local law.

Do these facilities provide a safe environment that is conducive to learning and can accommodate

students of varying needs and abilities?

The academic facility and housing are accessible, centrally located, and reputable. The academic facility hosts students and faculty from throughout Europe and North America, creating a dynamic and international campus environment. Apartments are shared with international students from other programs, creating an overall environment conducive to learning and consistent with the program goals.

STANDARD EIGHT: HEALTH, SAFETY, SECURITY, AND RISK MANAGEMENT

The organization prioritizes the health, safety, and security of its students through policies, procedures, advising, orientation, and training.

What are the health, safety, and security risks that your students face? How are these risks considered in program development, implementation, and management?

Florence is a major city in a highly developed, stable European country, so the health, safety, and security risks that students face are no greater, and in some cases decidedly lesser, than those they would face in a U.S. city of a comparable size. These everyday risks are potentially heightened by unfamiliarity with the host society on the part of the students, so program development, implementation, and management takes into consideration the exacerbating effects of language barriers, unfamiliar institutional practices, differences in cultural standards, and legal and juridical differences.

Do you regularly conduct risk assessments for program sites and activities?

Formal risk assessments are produced for the School of Record. Risks are monitored continuously onsite as they change in response to current political, social, and environmental conditions.

Do you maintain written emergency plans and protocols, and do they utilize both U.S. and local authorities and resources?

The facility from which the FEFS leases a classroom provides a written emergency evacuation plan. The FEFS has its own written emergency plan and protocols, which rely on the U.S. Department of State as represented through the Florence Consulate and Italian law enforcement and emergency services, including the *Polizia Municipale* (City of Florence Police), the *Carabinieri* (National Police), the *Vigili del Fuoco* (Fire Department, also responsible for building and infrastructural emergencies), depending on the specific type of emergency. Versions adapted to student needs, including in the case of telecommunications failures or incapacity of the Director, are provided in the Student Handbook and in dedicated handouts during onsite orientation. These include warning signs for students to be aware of in themselves and their own behavior, and information about how to access local medical and mental health resources in such a way that protects their privacy.

How does your organization routinely access a range of resources, including but not limited to, the U.S. Department of State and other applicable U.S. and in-country governmental agencies, to monitor and advise on health, safety, and security issues? How do you ensure that all participants receive timely updates on health, safety, and security issues?

The Director regularly monitors the U.S. Department of State's travel advisory information for Italy, as well as major media outlets in Italy, to remain continually aware of local developments that could

impact public safety, security, or health. Additionally, the Director receives security updates and emergency notifications from the U.S. Embassy in Rome. Additionally, the provider of the mandatory health and safety insurance included with the program requires participants to complete a health and safety orientation that includes a range of student appropriate resources, including the U.S. Safe Traveler Enrollment Program. In addition to the emergency information that participants receive directly from the U.S. Department of State through email alerts and STEP, the Director provides email and text message alerts based on his daily monitoring of local news for information regarding any local risks to health and safety.

How are staff trained to anticipate and respond to student health, safety, and security risks?

The program is currently staffed by an individual who, in addition to having been trained by other programs over the years, continually follows the latest developments in best practices through active participation in international education associations and as an active member of the field. Future faculty or staff who may join the program will be trained to maximize their risk awareness and provided with strategies for minimizing risk. Beyond simply knowing warning signs, effectively anticipating risks requires an awareness of the specific context of student behavior in the host society so that future staff can effectively anticipate risks and help students avoid them. Strategies for responding to these risks include requiring that students be appropriately insured, appropriately planning activities and excursions, educating students about site-specific risks, and cultivating a culture of personal responsibility throughout the program.

How are your students trained to responsibly manage their own health, safety, and security while abroad?

Students are trained to responsibly manage their own health, safety, and security while abroad through pre-departure orientation sessions and continually supported in the development of their risk awareness over the course of the program. They are provided with a series of practical strategies that they can apply during their time to minimize their risk of injury, assault, or arrest, with a special focus on cultural and legal differences that can lead to problematic misunderstandings.

What measures are in place to routinely monitor and advise students on health, safety, and security risks?

The Director reviews local news daily and communicates directly with students to alert them of public health issues or alerts, food recalls, transportation and other strikes, predicted weather events, planned demonstrations, and political or sporting events that bring increased risk of public violence between groups. Students are instructed during Orientation sessions to monitor their principal email daily for updates. Emergency notifications are sent by SMS.

Do you maintain appropriate kinds of insurance for your programs at recommended levels?

Appropriate insurance is carried by the organization from which the FEFS leases its classroom facility, and students individually carry the level of insurance required by the School of Record.

Do you operate in compliance with local laws and regulations?

The program operates in full compliance with all local laws and regulations, including both Italian and European Union regulations governing financial reporting, privacy, and data protection.

What are your procedures for reporting critical incidents? Are these procedures aligned with best practices and applicable laws?

Critical incidents that require emergency services, medical treatment, or involve violations of local law or other criminal activity are reported to the appropriate authorities. Otherwise, students are in control of who receives reports of critical incidents. Only in the case that a student is incapacitated is information shared on their behalf, and then only to their designated emergency contact. This is a best practice for compliance with the European Union General Data Protection Act, which governs the use of individual's private information by third parties.

STANDARD NINE: ETHICS

The organization operates its programs in accordance with ethical principles, and trains its staff and students in ethical decision-making and practices.

Does your organization have a code of ethics? How have you trained your staff to adhere to it?

The FEFS Code of Ethics is based on the American Anthropological Association and American Sociological Association Codes of Ethics, and the Forum on Education Abroad Code of Ethics. The current staff developed the Code and future staff will be trained by using a series of hypothetical scenarios that present potential dilemmas for ethical practice and a collaborative, discussion-based set of training exercises to establish the best possible decisions to make in response to such challenges.

Do you advise students in an ethically responsible manner?

Paramount to the FEFS, and enshrined in its Mission Statement, is the provision of realistic and accurate information to students about what a career path in the social sciences entails, and the prospects in today's national and international job markets for such degrees. In respect to the course itself, ethical research practice figures prominently in the course content.

Do your faculty follow ethical practices in teaching and student research?

In their teaching and research faculty are governed by the ethical and conduct codes of their professional associations and the FEFS Code of Ethics. Student research is governed by the codes of ethics of the American Anthropological Association, the American Sociological Association, and the Institutional Review Board of the School of Record.

In what ways do you sensitize students to the ethical implications of their academic work and activities abroad?

Because of their long tradition of dealing with cross-cultural encounters and subaltern, socially stigmatized, and otherwise vulnerable populations, the social sciences have developed robust and progressive ethical standards for researchers working in communities which are not their own. Consistent with the premise of an ethnographic field school, FEFS students are encouraged to conceive of their own presence in the host society in terms of being a field researcher, complete with all of the responsibilities and obligations that go along with entering a community for the purpose of gathering data. Ethical research design, IRB compliance, and the potential for ethical conflicts of interest in future career settings are all incorporated into the course content.

How do you actively promote respect for the cultures and values of the communities in which you operate?

Cultural relativism, the perspective that acknowledges that each culture has its own set of values, beliefs, and practices that is experienced as entirely natural by the people of that culture, no matter how different or bizarre it may seem to others, is one of anthropology's greatest contributions to the human sciences. This is the foundation of all successful intercultural interactions and because it is a central technique of ethnographic methodology, it features prominently in the Field School curriculum. Ethnography seeks to understand people's lived experiences, and becoming aware of the current political and social issues facing Florence are an essential part of doing so. U.S. students are a major issue facing the community, and the relative worth of their presence is frequently debated in local media. The reflexive perspective that has emerged as an essential component of contemporary ethnographic writing compels students to engage with the difficult questions about what they themselves are doing to ameliorate what has become a troubled relationship between Florence and study abroad.

How are your partnerships with local institutions mutually beneficial, and how do you support your partners in their pursuit of their goals?

By leasing classroom space that would otherwise go unused during the summer from the Accademia Europea di Firenze, the FEFS both satisfies its own needs and provides both revenue and the public image benefits of having an additional partnership with another type of international education program. Placing students in housing through Help Firenze also satisfies an important program need, while facilitating their accomplishment of their mission to provide quality, affordable housing to international students. Beyond these essential service providers, local partnerships are with individuals more than institutions, because of both the small size of the program and because of the ethnographic format, which seeks engagement with individuals more than institutions. The goals of these individuals frequently include improving their English skills, publicizing their own initiatives, and enjoying the personal and social satisfaction of quality interactions with international students and professors.