



Request for Proposals (RFP) for IDEAS Virtual Institutes

RFP Issuance Date: **January 18, 2024**

Closing Date/Time: **March 15, 2024, 11:59pm EST**

At the direction of the U.S. Department of State’s USA Study Abroad branch within the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA), the [IDEAS \(Increase and Diversity Education Abroad for U.S. Students\) Program](#) seeks accredited U.S. college and university partners to conceptualize, develop, and host a NEW virtual capacity building training series: IDEAS Virtual Institutes. The IDEAS Program offers a variety of in-person and virtual trainings for faculty and staff at U.S. colleges and universities with the goal of helping to increase their institutions’ capacity to administer study abroad programs. As the field continues to adapt and evolve, the IDEAS Program is committed to offering initiatives and activities that address the most pressing needs of the broad range of U.S. higher education institutions and key U.S. foreign policy goals.

IDEAS Virtual Institutes

The IDEAS Program invites accredited U.S. higher education institutions to submit proposals to host one of two IDEAS Virtual Institutes between July 2024 and August 2025. Unlike IDEAS webinars and workshops*, IDEAS Virtual Institutes are long-form, cohort-based opportunities for faculty and administrators to engage with experts and each other around a common topic and develop study abroad resources for their institutions. Over a period of four to six weeks, approximately 30 participants will engage in asynchronous and synchronous content developed by the host institution and its partners focused on the proposed topic. Participants will engage with this content via a collaborative and comprehensive virtual learning platform, as organized by the host institution. At the end of the virtual institute, participants will have developed a tangible end-product that will assist them in expanding and broadening study abroad on their campus.

The goal of the IDEAS Virtual Institutes is to provide faculty and administrators at U.S. colleges and universities with best practices and resources to address current challenges and opportunities as they work to expand and broaden the U.S. students they send abroad and the destinations where they study. In addition to directly benefitting the participants selected for each institute, the materials developed will also be shared in the [IDEAS Library of Resources](#) to serve the wider U.S. study abroad community.

Applicant institutions may collaborate on their proposal with other colleges, universities, organizations, and/or external speakers or consultants to supplement their own expertise. At least 50% of the content should be developed and delivered by U.S. college and/or university representatives. The award will be issued to the primary host institution.

Additional details for these events can be found below.

Participants:	Approximately 30 U.S. college and/or university study abroad administrators and faculty
Length of Training:	12-16 hours total over 4-6 weeks
Location:	online, synchronous and asynchronous, centralized in a virtual learning platform
Dates:	July 2024 – August 2025
Budget:	Up to \$20,000 per institute



**Institutions interested in submitting an application to host a workshop can view more details [here](#).*

In coordination with ECA and IDEAS Program staff at World Learning, the selected institutions will develop and execute program activities under the resulting contract. Activities may include, but are not limited to, synchronous and asynchronous sessions, large and small group seminars, regular assignments, and/or networking events. All applicants must identify one or more potential final projects that participants will develop. The IDEAS Program anticipates awarding approximately two institute contracts to accredited U.S. higher education institutions with a preference for geographic, institutional, and topic diversity among institute hosts.

General Information

The topic of the proposed institute should fall into one of the following areas. This list is organized alphabetically and does not reflect a rank ordering of topics.

1. Assessment and Evaluation
2. Building Cross-Campus Partnerships and Support for Study Abroad
3. Developing Institutional Financial Strategies for Expanding Study Abroad
4. Developing Study Abroad Programs Linked to Local Industry and Job Needs
5. Establishing Effective Partnerships with International Host Institutions
6. Integrating Study Abroad into STEM Curricula
7. Recruiting, Preparing, and Engaging Faculty as Program Leaders
8. Study Abroad 101: How to Build Your First Programs
9. Virtual and Hybrid Programming: Strategies for Engaging New Students and New Destinations in Study Abroad

This competition is open to all accredited U.S. colleges and universities physically based in the United States or its territories. The program seeks to engage the broad range of U.S. higher education institutions, including community colleges, Minority Serving Institutions, rural-serving institutions, and higher education institutions in [states with low study abroad participation](#).

U.S. higher education institutions may submit proposals as individual institutions, or multiple U.S. colleges and universities may collaborate to facilitate institute implementation and resource development. If multiple institutions will collaborate on the institute facilitation and/or the resource development, one lead U.S. college or university must submit the proposal noting which additional higher education institutions and/or other external entities will act as partner(s) and what their role will be in institute implementation. U.S. colleges or universities submitting proposals to host as individual institutions are encouraged, but not required, to include representatives from other institutions as possible and relevant so that institute content reflects a range of institutional perspectives and capacities. Applicants may also engage partners and speakers from organizations that are not institutions of higher education if their areas of expertise align with the goals of the institute, such as relevant study abroad non-profits or providers, but at least 50% of the content should be developed and delivered by U.S. college and/or university representatives.

Questions or requests for additional information should be directed to Rachel Rice at IDEAS@worldlearning.org by February 15, 2024. All answers will be shared publicly via the studyabroadcapacitybuilding.org website by February 23, 2024.

Interested hosts may also ask questions during RFP office hours, hosted by the IDEAS Program at the following times in the IDEAS Program [Zoom meeting room](#):



- Tuesday, January 30, 2024, 2-3pm Eastern
- Wednesday, January 31, 2024, 3-4pm Eastern

Proposals submitted in response to this RFP should be emailed to IDEAS@worldlearning.org by 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time on March 15, 2024. Successful applicants will be notified by April 1, 2024. Proposals should be submitted in electronic format with the following subject line: IDEAS Virtual Institute Proposal – [Your Institution’s Name]. Please include all required documentation as outlined below (cover page, executive summary, technical proposal, institute schedule, and budget). If all required documentation is not received, the proposal will be deemed ineligible.

The U.S. Department of State will have final approval of all funding decisions. In addition to the evaluation criteria described herein, the U.S. Department of State reserves the right to consider that the funded Institutes reflect a broad range of topics, institutions, and regions in the United States, among other factors.

Background

The IDEAS (Increase and Diversify Education Abroad for U.S. Students) Program is a program of the U.S. Department of State with funding provided by the U.S. Government and supported in its implementation by World Learning. The program aims to increase the capacity of U.S. higher education institutions to expand and broaden study abroad programs for U.S. students through the provision of small grants and other capacity building initiatives. The program seeks to engage the broad range of U.S. higher education, including community colleges, Minority Serving Institutions, rural-serving institutions, and higher education institutions in [states with low study abroad participation](#), in all program components.

Description of Need

In order to offer the most relevant study abroad capacity building trainings, the IDEAS Program conducted a national needs assessment of the U.S. study abroad community in summer 2023. Based on the results of this needs assessment and U.S. foreign policy goals, the IDEAS Program invites proposals from U.S. higher education institutions to host virtual institutes from July 2024 to August 2025. If an institution has expertise in multiple topical areas and wishes to apply to host multiple institutes in more than one topical area, a separate proposal must be submitted for each topical area. The IDEAS Program anticipates funding approximately two institutes.

In coordination with ECA and IDEAS staff at World Learning, each selected institution will virtually administer the training to approximately 30 study abroad administrators and/or faculty from a range of U.S. colleges and universities.

Pursuant to the authorizing legislation of the U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the institutes must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the broad range of American political, social, and cultural life.

Program Proposal Components

Cover Page

Please include a cover page with the following information:

- Name of Institution
- Location of Institution (city/state)
 - Please note if your institution is located in a state with historically low study abroad



participation numbers¹

- Institution Type (public or private; 2-year or 4-year)
- [Minority Serving Institution Type](#), if applicable
 - Historically Black College or University, Predominantly Black Institution, Hispanic-serving institution, Tribal College or University, Asian American Native American Pacific Islander-serving institution, Alaskan Native-serving institution, Native Hawaiian-serving institution, Native American-serving non-tribal institution
- [Rural-serving institution](#), if applicable (self-identify)
 - *Congress defines rural-serving institution as "an institution of higher education that primarily serves rural areas."*
- Applicant Contact's Name, Title, Office, Email, and Phone Number
- Proposed dates the host institution is available to administer the institute during the months of July 2024 – August 2025. If the host institution is aware of any months or dates it cannot host, it should note them.
- Proposed Institute Format
 - Applicants must propose 12-16 hours of content, over the 4-6 weeks of the training, including synchronous and asynchronous sessions and assignments, digital resources, and/or videos. Applicants may include additional time in the schedule for asynchronous, individual participant project development.
 - All sessions and assignments should be spaced out over multiple weeks (not to exceed six weeks) between July 2024 and August 2025.
- Proposal Topic Area (select one):
 - Assessment and Evaluation
 - Building Cross-Campus Partnerships and Support for Study Abroad ^{2, 3}
 - Developing Institutional Financial Strategies for Expanding Study Abroad
 - Developing Study Abroad Programs Linked to Local Industry and Job Needs
 - Establishing Effective Partnerships with International Host Institutions
 - Integrating Study Abroad into STEM Curricula ⁴
 - Recruiting, Preparing, and Engaging Faculty as Program Leaders
 - Study Abroad 101: How to Build Your First Programs ^{1, 3}
 - Virtual and Hybrid Programming: Strategies for Engaging New Students and New Destinations in Study Abroad ¹

¹ Please reference this study abroad participation by state data: <https://www.nafsa.org/sites/default/files/media/document/State-by-State-19-20-study-abroad-statistics.pdf>. States below the average of 0.83% are considered states with low participation.

² Applications under this theme should propose to focus on one or more less-common areas for study abroad and highlight strategies for developing virtual and/or hybrid international programming in those areas. For example, areas of focus could include, but are not limited to, Southeast Asia, South America, South and Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, etc. Please reference <https://opendoorsdata.org/data/us-study-abroad/> for study abroad destinations statistics and trends. Applicants under this theme should include at least one session on risk assessment when expanding to new destinations and exploring new partnerships.

³ Applications under this theme should include content on risk assessment and management for study abroad in at least one session.

⁴ Applications under this theme should include content on accreditation and credit transfer in at least one session.



USA Study Abroad



World Learning
EDUCATION | DEVELOPMENT | EXCHANGE

IDEAS

INCREASE & DIVERSIFY
EDUCATION ABROAD
FOR U.S. STUDENTS

Program Overview/Executive Summary: One page

Please provide an overview of the proposed activities, designate which topic area the proposal falls into, and how it will be tied to the overarching goals of the IDEAS Program to build U.S. higher education institutions' capacity to establish, expand, and broaden study abroad opportunities for U.S. students. Describe your institution's motivation to host an IDEAS Virtual Institute, topical knowledge, logistical capabilities, and overall capacity to implement this training in close collaboration with the IDEAS Program. Please also briefly describe the resources and materials to be developed for the training and adapted for public sharing with the wider U.S. study abroad community on the IDEAS Program website following the training, as well as the final project institute participants will develop. Examples of final projects will vary based on the topic of the proposed institute, but may include an evaluative tool for students on short-term programs, a faculty handbook or guide, template checklists for building a new program, etc.

Technical Proposal: Up to five pages

Describe how this training will advance participants' knowledge in the selected study abroad capacity building topic, detail the sessions and activities you propose to include during the training, and describe the campus resource the institute will help participants develop. Please see below for information requested on your proposed Personnel, Facilitator(s), Public Resource Development, Logistical Arrangements, and Publicity Plan. A full list of host institution responsibilities can be found in [Attachment A](#).

Please include the following information in the proposal:

- A brief description of the proposed facilitator(s)' and/or institution(s)' experience and best practices for building study abroad capacity in the selected topic area.
 - Resumes/CVs of the proposed facilitator(s) should be included in your proposal as an attachment, including a general overview of the expertise of the individual(s).
 - Indicate each individual's name, current role, relevant past roles, and explanation of their qualifications as they relate to the selected institute topic. CVs do not count towards the page limit but should be no more than five pages each.
 - Applicant institutions may collaborate on their proposal with other colleges, universities, organizations, and/or external speakers or consultants to supplement their own expertise. At least 50% of the content should be developed and delivered by U.S. college and/or university representatives.
- A description of the proposed institute design including a balanced cadence of synchronous and asynchronous content in a reasonable timeframe.
 - The institute should be highly participatory, involving interactive activities, discussion, and sharing of experiences among participants. Opportunities for discussion boards, small group projects, and other collaborative opportunities are encouraged.
 - Time for processing and application of learning should be incorporated. Solely lecture-style sessions are strongly discouraged.
- A description of the strengths, experiences, best practices, and/or resources that the facilitator(s) and, if applicable, the broader the institution, will bring to the proposed training.
- A description of the online learning platform(s) that will be used to disseminate assignments, provide feedback, and engage participants in a virtual learning community. Examples include but



are not limited to:

- Widely available and user-friendly virtual *synchronous* platforms, such as Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or similar.
- Widely available and user-friendly virtual *asynchronous* hosting platforms, such as Canvas, Moodle, Coursera, Google Drive, or similar.
- A description of the final project participants will develop throughout the course of the institute. This end product may vary based on the topic of the institute, but should be a tangible resource, action plan, template, or similar that participants can take action on to build study abroad capacity at their institution.
- A description of resources that will be developed for the institute and will ultimately be made publicly available to the wider U.S. study abroad community. Please also include information on how best practices shared during the training(s) will be captured and included as part of the developed resources. Please include information on the expertise of the staff members that will be involved in the resource development, if different from – or in addition to – the proposed facilitator(s). See [Attachment A](#) for more information on resource development.

Training Schedule:

Included is a [sample template to plan an institute schedule](#). The content should include a balance of speakers, collaborative synchronous sessions, asynchronous assignments, and knowledge sharing. The schedule should highlight key goals and institute content, as well as personnel responsible for leading sessions. The opening session should reserve time for the U.S. Department of State and the host institution to give an official welcome to participants, followed by attendee introductions and/or an icebreaker activity. If any one synchronous session is longer than 90 minutes, breaks should be included throughout the event’s schedule.

Budget:

Total proposed budget should not exceed \$20,000 for virtual institutes and include all program and administrative costs, as well as costs for developing study abroad capacity building resources related to the proposed topic to be made publicly available on the IDEAS website following the institute. [A budget template is included](#). Cost sharing is not required but is encouraged. Funding cannot be used for the purchase of alcohol or gifts. Please see [2 CFR 200](#), which host institutions must comply with, for additional guidance on [cost sharing](#) and other unallowable costs.

Potential budget categories include but are not limited to:

- Personnel costs (salaries, wages, and fringe) necessary to develop and deliver institute content
- Contractual costs, including speaker stipends and/or honoraria for external consultants or organizations
 - Honorarium guidelines are \$250/day per presenter, which may include preparation time
- Direct costs associated with virtual delivery of content (subscriptions, user licenses, etc.)
 - Note that participants will not be charged any fees to participate in this event. Likewise, participants will not be financially compensated for participating; these costs should not be included in the proposed budget.
- Editing and/or design costs associated with processing video recordings and other institute resources
- Indirect costs

There are not specific guidelines or limitations regarding institutional indirect cost rate, provided your



institution has an established NICRA with the U.S. Government and can apply the appropriate indirect cost rate. If your institution does not have an established NICRA with the U.S. Government and you plan to include indirect costs, you may elect to charge a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). As described in [2 CFR 200.403](#), costs must be consistently charged as either indirect or direct costs but may not be double charged or inconsistently charged as both.

Evaluation and Selection

The IDEAS Program will evaluate all proposals based on their responsiveness to the elements outlined in the RFP with final approval from the U.S. Department of State. Please see the chart below for more information on the weighting of evaluation criteria. Note: proposals will be judged on both the institution’s topical knowledge and logistical abilities.

Topic	Description	Points Available
Host Institution’s Capacity and Expertise	Assessment of the host institution’s demonstrated capacity for hosting the training. Assessment of the host institution’s staffing plan for this activity and the expertise of the individuals included.	25
Program Design	Assessment of proposed approach to completing the IDEAS Virtual Institute objectives. Assessment of proposed schedule and potential for developing and sharing materials for institute participants and the wider higher education community. Assessment of value of proposed final participant project and feasibility in the timeframe allotted.	35
Logistical Design	Assessment of proposed delivery format and related logistics, including virtual learning platform.	20
Cost Efficiency	Assessment of the overall cost of the proposal, including cost-share. Higher scores will be awarded to the most cost-effective budgets.	15
Engaging Underrepresented Institutions	All institutions are encouraged to apply, but the IDEAS Program encourages applications especially from institution types that are generally underrepresented in study abroad. Five additional points will be awarded to community colleges, Minority Serving Institutions, rural-serving institutions, and higher education institutions in states with low study abroad participation .	5
Total Points Available		100

The IDEAS Program may enter negotiations with, or request additional information from, one or more potential institute hosts prior to making a selection, and may cancel this RFP at any time or choose to make no awards. This RFP does not obligate World Learning or the U.S. Department of State to accept or contract for any expressed or implied services, nor does it obligate the vendor to accept or contract for



any expressed or implied services. World Learning and the U.S. Department of State reserve the right to reject any or all proposals, to select multiple providers, or to select no providers.

Questions

Questions or requests for additional information should be directed to Rachel Rice at IDEAS@worldlearning.org by February 15, 2024. All answers will be shared publicly via the studyabroadcapacitybuilding.org website by February 23, 2024.

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Attachments

- [Summary of Responsibilities](#)
- [IDEAS Virtual Institute Budget Template](#)
- [IDEAS Virtual Institute Schedule Template](#)

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Any incidence of fraud, inappropriate conduct, or irregularity in the solicitation process, including but not limited to the solicitation of gratuities, kickbacks, or bribes in connection with this RFP, or the existence of organizational or individual conflicts of interest, may be reported to World Learning’s ethics and compliance hotline. You may reach the hotline by calling 1-800-461-9330 or make a report online at www.MySafeWorkplace.com. All allegations of improper or illegal behavior will be investigated promptly and thoroughly.



Attachment A: Summary of Responsibilities

Responsibilities of Host Institution:

For IDEAS Virtual Institutes:

- Design an institute agenda in a format appropriate for the event.
- Ensure all branding guidelines are followed, as provided by IDEAS staff. In addition to the host institution's logo, required U.S. Department of State branding must be included on all digital and print materials developed for the institute. Host institutions do not need to add U.S. Department of State branding to preexisting resources that are not developed under this contract.
- While the IDEAS Program will manage marketing and promotion (see below), hosts are also asked to publicize the event through any consortiums or contact lists the host institution has with study abroad stakeholders at U.S. higher education institutions that may benefit from attending.
- Secure virtual hosting platform
 - ADA-compliant, with captioning capabilities.
 - Widely available and user-friendly virtual *synchronous* hosting platform, such as Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or similar.
 - Widely available and user-friendly virtual *asynchronous* hosting platform, such as Canvas, Moodle, Coursera, Google Drive, or similar.
 - Includes option for use of online tools to encourage participation such as break-out rooms, live polls, collaborative documents, etc.
 - Designated staff member(s) to manage all technical aspects of the program, including day-of troubleshooting.
- Send final agenda and all final handouts and materials needed by participants to World Learning via email one week prior to each event for dissemination to attendees.
- Conduct management of synchronous events, including participant login and access, troubleshooting, and any interactive components such as breakout rooms and Q&A moderation.
- Record institute sessions as appropriate. Edit any recorded video footage and/or photos from the event as needed and submit them to IDEAS in the form of a public-ready product. IDEAS will review products before they are posted to ensure that they meet U.S. Department of State branding guidelines.
 - All recordings should include closed captioning.
- Share a press release with campus and local media and invite media to attend the relevant institute events such as opening or closing sessions.
- Submit an after-action report in a provided template noting challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future institutes.
- Participate in a debrief call with IDEAS staff to discuss any challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future institutes.



Responsibilities of Institute Facilitator(s) and Presenters:

- Develop interactive institute content according to the required components (keynote speakers, large and small group sessions, and asynchronous assignments.)
- Lead and facilitate institute sessions and components.
- Coordinate with guest speakers, and other invited experts on logistics and content, ensuring different sessions build upon each other to address the institute goals comprehensively and cohesively.
- Develop topical institute materials (handouts, worksheets, etc.) to be shared with participants to complement session content. Following the conclusion of the institute, the host institution will gather the resources developed for the institute, information on best practices, lessons learned, and challenges on the topic that arose and were collected during the institute, and other non-institute resources requested after consultation with IDEAS. This information will be adapted as necessary to be publicly shared in the IDEAS Program [Library of Resources](#) as a study abroad capacity building resource available to the wider U.S. study abroad community.
- Participate in regular check-in calls with IDEAS before the institute to discuss logistics and content development.
- The facilitators, via IDEAS, may send the institute participants assignments and/or requests for information and/or institute materials in advance of the institute.
- Send IDEAS the draft institute session content three weeks prior to the relevant institute session(s).
- Participate in a debrief call with IDEAS staff to discuss any challenges, lessons learned, and recommendations for future institutes.

Responsibilities of IDEAS Program Staff:

- Work closely with facilitator(s) to finalize all aspects of the institute including roles, responsibilities, and timelines, providing support wherever necessary.
- Work closely with the facilitator(s) to ensure institute sessions meet U.S. Department of State expectations.
- Market and promote institutes to the U.S. study abroad community, receive applications from interested participants, and select institute participants in consultation with the U.S. Department of State.
- Provide final list of participants to institute host institution. Beyond the staff implementing the institute, the host institution(s) will be allotted up to four guaranteed slots for their own faculty and staff to participate in the Institute.
- Manage pre-institute registration of institute participants.
- Communicate with selected participants before training. Share virtual logistical and other important information (to be provided by the institute host institution) with participants.
- Ensure that any participants who have requested accommodations for disabilities are accommodated, including but not limited to physical, audio, and visual accommodations. IDEAS will cover additional costs associated with these services if they are requested.
- Attend all synchronous event sessions and provide hands-on support wherever necessary.



- Conduct an online survey of attendees following the institute, the results of which will be shared with the host institution.
- Post and disseminate the materials developed by the institute host institutions before and/or after the IDEAS Virtual Institute. The materials may also be made publicly available on both the [IDEAS website](#) and/or the [studyabroad.state.gov](#) website. The hosting institution is also welcome to distribute the materials to its own networks but is not required to do so.
- Compose evaluation report on findings from the online survey to be shared with the host institution and the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs on best practices, lessons learned, and changes suggested for future institutes.