Program Questionnaire

Provide a complete, succinct program description. This description should include the following information:

1. Programmatic purpose and content—

   - What is the core educational purpose of the program?

   Service, Leadership, and Africana Studies in Ghana is an experiential program that is cross-disciplinary in nature. Students spend three weeks in the city of Tamale in northern Ghana, working with Saha Global, a NGO that works with women in rural areas to set up small businesses in low-tech water purification. At the end of these three weeks, students transition south to Cape Coast for the remainder of the program where they will explore Africana Studies and complete a course entitled: "Africana Anthropology: The politics of race and culture in the Africana world" with faculty from Virginia Tech and the University of the Cape Coast (UCC) that will touch on African culture, music, history, literature, traditions, and more. The lectures will bring the various topics to life not only in the classroom, but also through visits to relevant cultural sites.

   Cape Coast provides a critical framework for understanding and reflecting on how the African continent came to destination for development oriented projects. Through the lenses of anthropology (which uses culture as its orienting concept) and Africa Studies (which focuses on the concept of race) students will be introduced to basic information and critical perspectives necessary to reflect on their involvement, as Americans, in a service-oriented study abroad experience in Ghana. Through lectures with UCC faculty, students will have a deeper appreciation for the forces that have shaped contemporary Ghana, and come to a deeper understanding of the lives of people in northern Ghana.

   - What student populations are served?

   The course will draw students from areas such as: Africana Studies, Anthropology, Sociology, History, Race, Gender Studies/Development, International Studies, Ghanaian Culture, Foodways, Music, Ghanaian Writers and Oral Tradition, Agriculture and Life Science, Food security, Public Health, Geography, Sustainability, Biological Systems Engineering, Water Resource Management.

   - To what majors/degrees and minors is program content is applicable? What Pathways or Destination Area requirements will it fulfill?


   The course complement ties into the Pathways Global Food Security and Health Minor with ALS/CSES 3954 Study Abroad or ALS 4994 Undergraduate Research. The Global Food Security and Health minor is an interdisciplinary program that explores the biophysical, technological, and institutional drives
that contribute to global food security and population health. The minor also provides students with directed, internationally-oriented experiential learning opportunities such as study abroad.

AFS 1714 Introduction to African American Studies is an approved Pathways course meeting CLE area 2, Pathways Concept 3 & 7, and Integrative Concept 11.

The program also fulfills Pathways core concepts for discourse, critical thinking in the humanities, critical analysis of identity and equity in the United States, and the integrative concepts of ethical reasoning and intercultural and global awareness.

In terms of Destination Areas, the program integrates with Global Systems Science as it fosters transdisciplinary study related to the dynamic interplay between natural and social systems. The field experience with Saha Global allows students to discover creative solutions to critical social problems emergent from human activity and environmental change, most noticeably in terms of access to clean water. Through that experience and the humanities exploration of Africana Anthropology, students will have the cultural understanding and historical knowledge of Ghana in addition to embracing equity in the human condition for those who lack access to safe drinking water. Students will also be confronted with critiques of service learning to analyze western volunteerism in Africa and ideas of development.

• If there are similar programs available on campus or abroad, how is this program distinct and what is its added value?

There are no other programs that combine these disciplines and area of studies offered on Virginia Tech’s home campus(es). What makes this program distinct is the collaboration with both an NGO, Saha Global, the educational institution, University of Cape Coast, with a specifically designed lecture series co-constructed with faculty to present this subject matter through a Ghanaian lens. These courses would not be the same offered in Blacksburg, and are truly integrated into the host-country context and site.

The home department of Sociology is planning to also offer a Women and Gender Studies program in India for the coming academic year; however, this is the only Africana Studies VT course offered abroad. In terms of ALS or CSES, students have other options to explore similar themes including crops and cropping systems in Australia, food security/water issues in South Africa, and environmental science/public health in both Ecuador and Peru. The Saha field experience closely relates to Dr. Hall’s Experience WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) in Malawi program, but this program adds a strong focus on history and anthropology intertwining science and the humanities.

Currently, this is Virginia Tech’s only faculty-led program to Ghana although the college has offered a Francophone studies summer program for a number of years in another West Africa country, Senegal.

• How does/do the selected site(s) add relevance or value to the programmatic objectives and targeted skills?

Students will spend part of their time immersed in local village community in northern Ghana where they will work in multicultural teams comprised of VT students, a Saha Field Representative, a translator, and local Ghanaians who work closely with village leaders and villagers in implementing
clean drinking water solutions where they will be continually guided by VT faculty in their reflection of: the state of Ghanaian water and world water; level of education about water quality and quantity; how local, regional, and global forces help to shape the lives of residents of rural Ghana; the role of NGOs and their own roles as outsiders. Following the immersive, field context, students will spend equal time in a more formal learning space hosted at a Ghanaian University with a lecture/seminar series on African culture, music, history, literature, traditions, and more. Working in teams in rural villages to implement water solutions in Tamale, cultural sites added as co-curricular learning spaces in Accra and Cape Coast, in addition to the seminar series from local professors and practitioners and VT program leader, is specifically designed to enhance the program goals and develop the following targeted skills:

- intercultural skills
  - (The ability to understand and respect different cultural contexts and viewpoints. Includes an openness to new ideas and ways of thinking.)

- interpersonal skills
  - (Having a positive attitude to get along with others that includes social awareness, the ability to listen, and display good etiquette.)

- flexibility & adaptability
  - (The ability to adjust one’s own behavior to changing circumstances and to work in ambiguous environments. This skill includes the ability to learn and be teachable.)

- problem-solving
  - (The ability to identify work-related problems; analyze problems in a systematic but timely manner; draw correct and realistic conclusions based on data and information; and accurately assess root cause before moving to solutions.)

- teamwork
  - (The ability to collaborate with a diverse team, work within a team structure, and negotiate and manage conflict.)

Some Co-curricular visits that demonstrate site specificity include:

- W.E.B. Dubois Center Accra - The W.E.B. Dubois Center is the former home and final resting place of American-born socialist, author, and civil rights activist, W.E.B. Dubois and provides an interesting point of comparison with American civil rights.

- Kakum National Park- Home to the central region of Ghana’s rainforest, Kakum National Park with a guided walk discovering trees and plants, their cultural and ethnic uses, economic values and local stories that connect to water and conservation issues.

- Elmina Castle - Built in 1482 by Portuguese traders, Elmina Castle was the first European slave-trading post in all of sub-Saharan Africa and provides a historic site to unpack race and the major social/cultural forces that shaped the asymmetrical relations between Africa and ‘the West’
- **Nzulezu** - One of the few ancient settlements on stilts and platforms left in the world to further examine a preserved wealth of local cultural traditions connected with the lake as a water source.

- **What advising resources are available to students to help them determine if the program will serve their educational goals?**

  *Key lines about the program and its integration into the curriculum will be shared with academic advisers within CLAHS and CALS:*

  - Sociology – Brenda Husser
  - History – Heather Gumbert
  - International Studies – Phoebe Peterson Jennifer Hanratty
  - Agriculture and Life Sciences - Susan Sumner

  *In addition, the program leader works closely with the GEO staff and peer advisers to build awareness and support for study abroad advising. The program leader and the multiple faculty involved also will serve as mentors or advisers to help students align educational goals.*

- **Outline the program’s recruitment strategy to reach the students who could benefit from it, including efforts to attract diverse populations.**

  *By the transdisciplinary nature of the program, recruitment efforts will be geared toward multiple departments and colleges, most specifically focused within CLAHS and CALS in order to reach a diverse range of majors.*

  *Africa as a destination of study is likely to resonate with students of color. As such, the program faculty will work closely with VT’s Cultural and Community Centers, especially the Black Cultural Center to reach student populations who are underrepresented in study abroad.*

  *The program’s design is such to help students be eligible and competitive for the Gilman International Scholarship which presents Pell grant recipients who often have high need or are first generation college students with funding to study abroad. Advising will occur in concert with GEO for national scholarship awards and opportunities.*

  *The program intends to have representation at the university-wide study abroad fair and college-specific fairs. A program page with program details will be updated on GEO’s website for full transparency and will include opportunities for students to attend info sessions to learn more. The program will be announced in fall classes and there will be will be a mix of in-person as well as online marketing tactics used to reach students.*

2. **Student preparation and experience**—

- **Outline how students will be prepared prior to departure. (It is recommended that this information be included in the syllabus.)**

  *In preparation for the program, students are required to enroll in one credit hour of HIST 3954 in the spring prior to summer travel taught by Dr. Brett Shadle, Professor of History. See syllabus for more information.*
There will also be three pre-departure sessions to address the following topics:

- Important procedures for study abroad: registration, financial aid, student requirements, etc.
- Programmatic and pragmatic content (passport & visa, flights, financial matters, immunizations, itinerary, travel considerations)
- Program expectations (course and behavioral) and how to make the most out of your experience
- Goals and skills development
- Cross-cultural sensitivity and understanding
- Identity, bias and intercultural empathy
- Staying healthy, safe, and secure while abroad
- Country-specific information

- What introduction and orientation to the new environment will students receive once on site? (It is recommended that this information be included in the syllabus.)

While on-site, students will receive an arrival orientation in both Tamale and Cape Coast led by the host organizations, Saha Global and UCC with input and guidance from Virginia Tech. On-site orientation will largely focus on health, safety and security topics with the addition of a communications plan and emergency response protocol. On-site orientation will also include community and cultural information and further details on housing and food, transportation, banking, etc.

- Describe the students’ engagement with the host culture as it aligns with the program’s goals. What intentional activities will students be encouraged to engage in with the host culture?

As a part of the Saha experience, students will have day-to-day interactions with locals, including Dagbani language exposure and need to go to the market to acquire supplies. They will be assigned teams and will be guided under the direction of a local field rep and translator. UCC will include a series delivered by local lecturers including activities and co-curricular site visits to engage students in local culture, history, and traditions. See syllabus and itinerary for more details.

3. Eligibility, application, and selection—

- What are the eligibility requirements for this program and what is the rationale behind them?

Open to all majors with a preference to upper class students or those with demonstrated maturity. Students must have a minimum GPA of 2.5 and maintain good academic standing. Must complete HIST 3954 in the spring prior as the required program pre-requisite, pre-departure course.

- Outline the application requirements of the program [e.g., statement of purpose, (un)official transcript, letter(s) of recommendation, resume or CV, portfolio, interview, special such as SCUBA cert., other].

The application will primarily be comprised of an application questionnaire including essay-based questions to gauge a student’s fit and dedication to key aspects of the program. Application will be followed by an interview.
Students must demonstrate the ability to be an effective member of the Saha Field Representative team while in rural Ghana which includes the following characteristics: passionate about social innovation and sustainable development, take initiative, give and absorb constructive feedback, take pride in their work and have a strong work ethic, approach problems with patience, dedicate themselves to constant improvement, help others to excel, are open to new experiences, possess the highest personal integrity, and approach projects with professionalism.

- Describe the selection process: indicate who will select participants and whether any applicant qualifications will be prioritized over others.

The three/four faculty involved in teaching courses related to the program will be involved in selecting applications. Those applicants will then be nominated and undergo Saha Global’s Field Representative application screening which includes an interview with the Saha Summer Program Coordinator.

Students who meet all eligibility requirements, and submit essay responses that demonstrate the above-mentioned characteristics will be prioritized.

- How will eligibility requirements, application process, and selection criteria be communicated to students?

Eligibility requirements, application process, and selection criteria will be clearly defined on the program’s page hosted on GEO’s website. Students will have access to the information prior to starting an application.

4. Practical matters—

- What are the plans for student lodging?

- What are the student meal arrangements for the program? Are all meals included in the program fee? If not, are economical nutritious meal options available to students?. (Estimated costs of meals not covered by the program fee should be shown on the tentative budget.)

- What are the in-country transportation arrangements for the program?

- Are there any extraordinary health, safety, or security risks of concern in the program’s location(s)? If so, what measures will be taken to eliminate or mitigate these risks?

- Is a visa required for the program’s leader(s) or participants? If visas are required, what is the time frame for applying for and receiving them?

For Tamale, students will stay at the GILLBT Guesthouse which is located in a quiet, residential area (School of Hygiene Junction, Bolga Road Tamale N/R, Phone: 0233 3720 22143) and in Accra they will stay at Pink Hostel (5th Crescent Asylum Down Accra, Mobile Phone: 0205654407). The guest house/hostels offer comfortable lodging and include Wi-Fi and other services. The GILLBT Guest House in Tamale will provide three meals a day for students during their stay that are safely and well prepared. Most meals will be rice, chicken or beef. Students with dietary restrictions should provide that information in advance for accommodation. Students are welcome to explore local restaurant at their own expense, if preferred.
At Cape Coast, students will stay in dorms on campus. The dorms will be the same as those used by local African students and are minimally furnished. Wi-Fi is available on campus. Students will have breakfast and lunch provided at the UCC cafeteria. Past participants noted the desire to have variety and so dinners in Cape Coast are excluded from the program fee. Students can eat at a range of local restaurants and should be prepared to cover the cost out of pocket at an estimate of $10-15/day depending on personal preference.

Saha Global will arrange transport by bus from Accra to Tamale. Day-to-day field visits are arranged by Saha and are taxi based. A UCC van will pick students up in Accra and transport them to the coast. Transport will be provided for program activities at UCC with campus vans.

There are no extraordinary health and safety concerns. Students will spend time in rural Ghana and so participants should be well-attuned with the expectation that the living conditions and program demands are that of a developing country (which will be iterated in the program admission interview, resources and information provided in the pre-departure course and orientation sessions as well as on-site). Students are required to have received (and show documentation for) a Yellow Fever vaccination. Anti-malarial medication is advised so reviewing CDC guidance and health-related preparation is necessary. Ghana’s US Department of State travel advisory is that of exercising normal precautions with specific note to crime (street crime and cybersecurity issues). Students will be advised about crime and security at multiple stages and be required to operate under the buddy system anytime they are exploring the local town outside of the Tamale guest house or UCC campus. 24/7 support from those with local expertise is in place in all locations.

Yes, a single entry visa is required: www.ghanaembassy.org. Students should start gathering visa application materials and applying for a visa at about 3 months prior to departure and no less than 6 weeks prior to travel.

• What is the minimum number of participants for the program to run, based on the budget and the projected tuition revenue/faculty compensation by the department?

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• If applicable, what is the maximum number of participants that the program can accommodate?

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