

Health Outcomes of Student Travel Abroad:

Joint project of the Int'l Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM) and the CDC

The Student Travel Abroad interest group within the ISTM is devoted to promoting healthy international travel for students. It is a committee comprised of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and nurses from around the world. Many of the members provide student health services at colleges and universities.

It has become apparent that research is needed to develop effective interventions and best practices for students who travel abroad. This study is designed to gather baseline data on the health-related outcomes (if any) for students who study abroad.

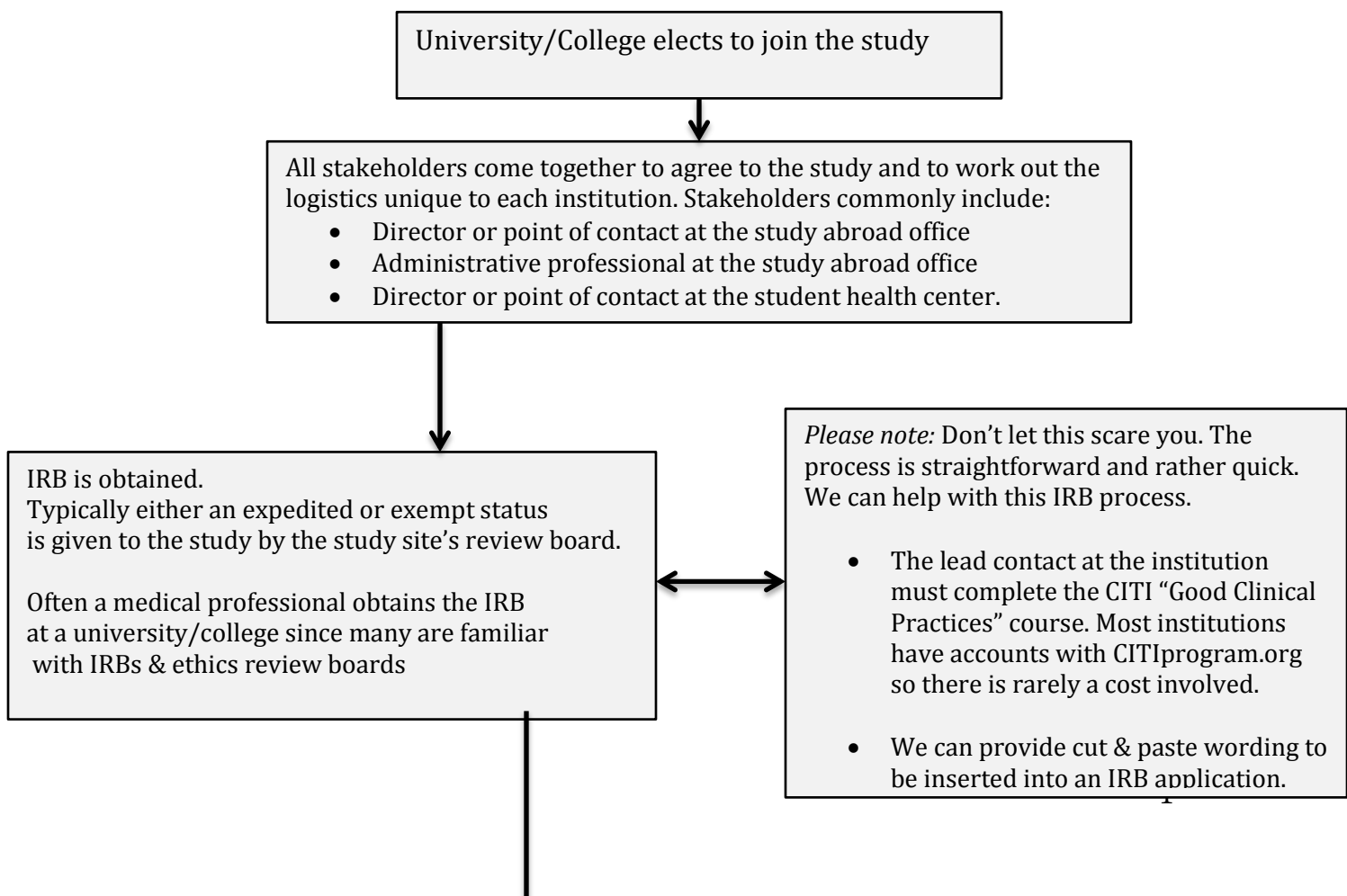
Thank you for considering the Student Travel Abroad research study. Please contact info@athna.org if you have an interest or a question.

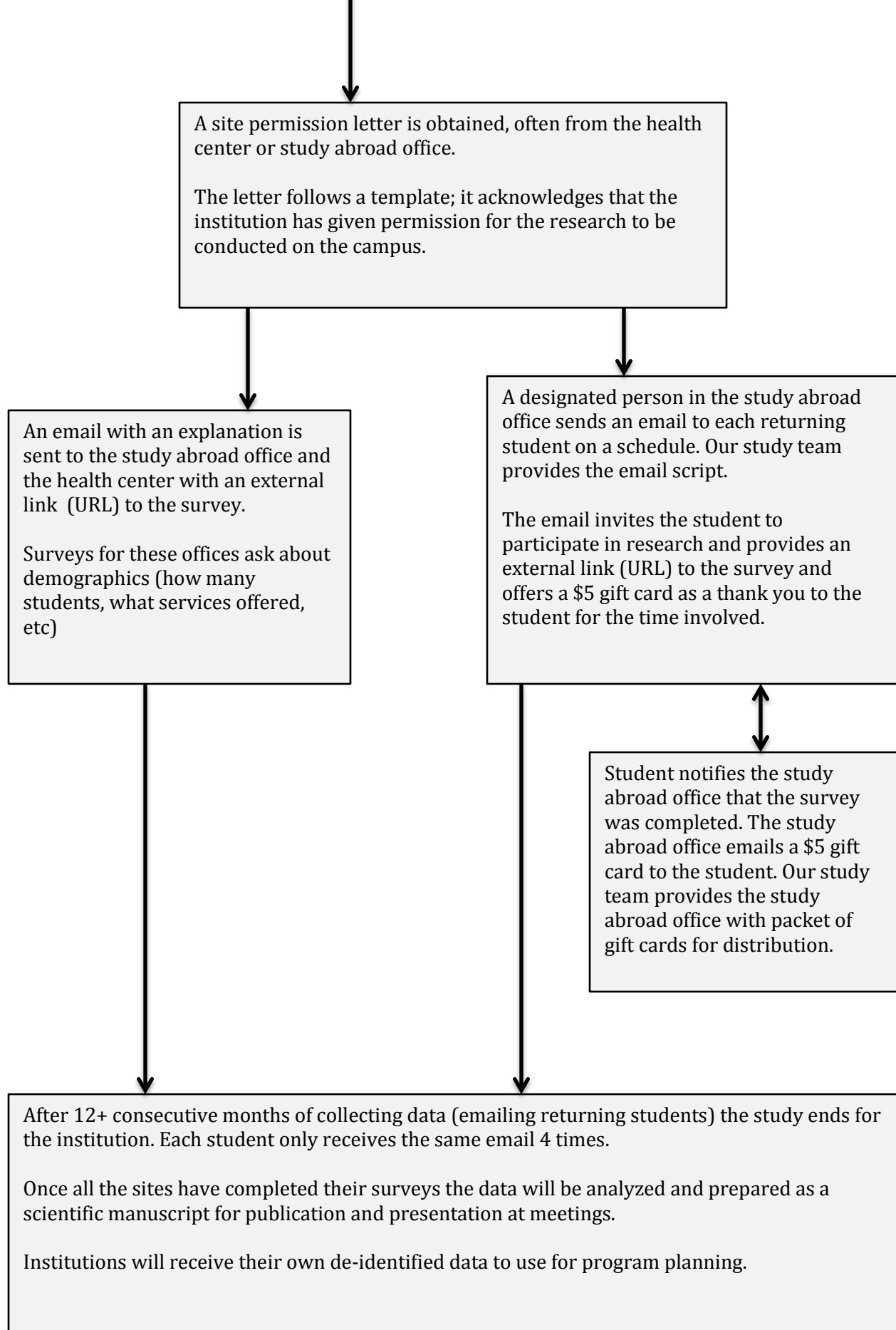
The study consists of surveys:

- One from the study abroad office
- One from the student health office
- One from each returning undergraduate student for a period of 12-24 months.

This is research and the students are considered human subjects. It's important that all sites follow the same protocol. An IRB (ethics review) is needed for each location so that we can include the students in the research.

Many institutions want to understand exactly how the project works. Below is a flow diagram of the typical path for an institution:





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Who owns the data?

The data is owned by the International Society of Travel Medicine (ISTM) and is stored on the secure REDCap server hosted at the CDC. It will be used to conduct research into what types of health outcomes (if any) occur to student who study abroad.

It will be stored for 7 years and then destroyed. No personally identifiable information will be collected from the students. We anticipate that institutions will receive their own de-identified data to use for program planning and benchmarking.

How will the data be used?

Our CDC epidemiologist will analyze the data. The results and analysis will be published in a peer-reviewed scientific journal. Likewise the data and its analysis will be presented at scientific meetings organized around the themes of student health and travel medicine. It is our intent to group the data by institution size. We will not know if that is possible until all the data is collected.

What is the timeline?

The enrollment period started December 2018 and sign- up will continue through December 31, 2019. We anticipate completing data collection by mid- 2021 with publication of results to follow. We want our partner institutions to commit to the study before the end of this year. Our goal is to enroll a total of 2000 students in the study.

How can we make the process go smoothly?

Teamwork at each institution is essential to smooth operations. It is important to identify who at the university will send the scripted emails to the returning students. The ISTM cannot send the emails because our knowing the student's email would prevent the surveys from being anonymous.

Some institutions have administrative support staff in the study abroad office set up automatic emails to their returning students. Other institutions have the team leader or person responsible for the particular trip sends the emails to the students.

This same person usually dispenses the gift cards that are provided on a spreadsheet and simply involve cutting and pasting a link to give to the student. Please notify us by email several days prior to running out of gift cards so that we can ensure an uninterrupted supply for your institution.

Who at the university should be kept in the loop?

Each institution varies in structure. Typically the director of the study abroad office and student health service should be included in planning/execution of the survey project. It's also advisable that the person(s) who will be sending emails to the students be kept in the loop too as they may have insights and suggestion about the best way to contact the students.

Are incentives provided?

Yes, we offer a \$5 gift card to students who complete the survey.

What are the anticipated costs of participation?

Each institution will need to provide minimal administrative support to distribute emails and gift cards to students. We do not charge fees.

If an institution does not participate in CITIprogram.org the “Good Clinical Practices” course costs approximately \$130 USD.

Are there any articles / posters/ social media messages to market this program?

No, this study is set up to involve an email sent 4 times to each student. If the student doesn’t respond after 4 emails over 1 month we feel it is unlikely that they will participate.

Tell us about the IRB process.

An institutional review board (IRB) application is needed as the students are considered human subjects as defined by the NIH. This ensures that the students are properly studied according to modern ethical standards.

Most review boards require an online application. That process is standardized across the country. We provide a copy of a successful application, which you can use to simply cut and paste the information into the application. Most review boards ask a few follow-on questions, typically specific to your institution. We can help you answer the questions.

Some institutions only require you to notify them for changes in protocol (“modifications”) or adverse outcomes (e.g. data breaches). Other institutions require you to check in at least once per year to report how many students are enrolled and whether there were any adverse outcomes, etc. You won’t know what your institutions requires until the IRB responds to your application.

Which institutions are currently participating?

We are in talks with a large number of colleges and universities. We would like to include you. It’s important that we include both large & small as well as public & private institutions.

Institutions that are currently enrolled include Stanford, University of Virginia, University of Pittsburgh, Montana State University, National University of Ireland, Galway. However, we are in various stages of onboarding a dozen more institutions.