

**TERRA DOTTA’S STUDY ABROAD DIRECTORY
BEST PRACTICES**

The Study Abroad Directory is more than a listing of study abroad programs. It is an invaluable resource to the universities using Terra Dotta software. Terra Dotta clients can create a "linkage" to your program listings and quickly import them into their own program catalogs. Because of that unique feature, study abroad providers often ask us questions like:

- What do universities want to see in the program brochure?
- What are “parameters” and why should we use them?
- How often should we update our listings?

To help us respond to such questions, we consulted the Directory Steering Committee, comprised of a dozen members representing the providers and universities who use the Directory. The Committee’s feedback helped us create these guidelines for developing and maintaining your Directory listings. If you need specific how-to instructions on using the Directory, please see the tutorial videos at <http://directory.studioabroad.com/?go=Providers>.

GLOSSARY

As you read these guidelines, you may encounter some unfamiliar terminology. Listed below, you will find specific meanings of certain terminology as it is used in the Terra Dotta software.

TERMINOLOGY	MEANING
Brochure	Program description
WYSIWYG	“What You See Is What You Get” - An editor used to generate content for brochure pages; operates similarly to MS Word
Term	Period of year when applicants can study, work or volunteer abroad
Dates	Application deadline, program start and end dates
Parameter	Attribute or characteristic describing a program
Location	City, country, and region where a program takes place
Values	Items in a multiple choice selection list

PROGRAM BROCHURE

What should we include in the program brochure?

The program brochure describes your program. You may include narrative text, a logo, images, and hyperlinks. Once created, the same brochure normally carries over from one year to the next. Dates and parameters, which require periodic changes, are stored in a separate area of the software and can be updated without the need to edit the brochure.

How wide should the brochure page be?

If you are using only the WYSIWYG interface to design your content, and not utilizing the source code, then you can design your page directly

Can we copy and paste from an external source?

Yes, however you should always paste the content first into a plain text editor in order to remove any extraneous code which could interfere with the proper display of your brochure in a browser. Here is the quickest way to remove the extraneous code:

1. Copy the external content to your clipboard.
2. Login to the Directory and open the program in edit mode.
3. Open the Brochure tab and place your cursor inside the brochure content area; then attempt to paste the content from your clipboard.
4. A pop-up screen will prompt you to paste the content from your clipboard.
5. Follow the prompts to remove any extraneous code.

How much narrative text should we include in the brochure?

Keep text to a reasonable amount. Generally one solid paragraph that gives your program highlights and refers the user out to your main website is the best bet. You do not want to include content that will need to be updated too frequently, such as dates or costs, in the main brochure page.

Should we include a logo?

Including a logo is optional, but make sure your organization name is somehow included or highlighted. Adding a logo is generally considered a desirable enhancement to your brochure page.

Should we include images?

Yes, images make the brochure more visually appealing. Image dimensions can vary, but we find it works well if it does not exceed 300 pixels in height or width. An exception is an image used for a horizontal logo or banner that spans the entire width of the page. Images should be sized to the desired size prior to importing into the WYSIWYG when building your brochure.

Should we include an “Apply” button?

It is fine to include a button pointing to your application, provided it is clear that the button points to the *provider's* application (example: “Apply to CIEE”). This will avoid confusion with the university’s own “Apply” button which will also appear in the public view of the brochure.

What kind of hyperlinks do universities find helpful?

1. Link to provider’s website where program is described;
2. Link to the providers’ application; instead of “Apply”, say “Apply to [provider]”;
3. Link to providers’ contact info; instead of “Contact Us,” say “Contact [provider]”.

Should we include cost information in the brochure?

Preferably not, although it’s fine to include a link to your site where cost information is found. Some universities charge home school tuition or have other fee structures that differ from yours, so they do not want students to receive conflicting information.

Should we include links to Facebook and other social media?

Preferably not. Most universities prefer to encourage their students to participate in their own social media sites.

PROGRAM NAMES

Should we use accents in our program names?

We recommend that you exclude accents and other international characters from your program names. The program search engine is designed to find exact matches only, not approximate matches. For example, a search for “Franche-Comte” will not find “Franche-Comté”. In addition, it can be more time-consuming to type special characters into a search box. A further problem is that accents interfere with the proper functioning of the export/import utility available to users of the Terra Dotta software.

Can we change the name of a program?

To change the name of a program, please email us and provide the current program name and the new program name. In deciding how to name your programs, we recommend the following:

- Include your sponsor name or acronym in the program name
- Avoid frequent name changes as it can be confusing to the universities linked to your programs

PROGRAM STRUCTURE

You offer five programs in the same location. Should you list them as one program or five?

To answer that question, you should consider the academic focus, eligibility requirements, language requirements, location, and dates of the programs in question. If they share many or all of these factors in common, then you will be able to combine them into one generic listing.

How do I add a new program?

Contact Terra Dotta at directory@terradotta.com to request additional program ‘templates’ – please include the program name(s).

How do I delete a program?

There is no way to delete a program. You can deactivate/discontinue a program by following the instructions on page 5 of these guidelines.

TERMS

When you create a program, you will need to select at least one term under the Terms tab. Examples of terms include fall, spring, academic year, etc. The directory offers a finite list of terms.

Is it possible to add terms to the selection list?

No, it’s not feasible to add terms. Universities prefer for us to stick to a relatively limited number of commonly used terms that are easily understood by their students.

DATES

Each term, when combined with a year, it is called an application cycle or app cycle, like Fall 2024. The programs are designed to be used over and over again from one year to the next, but with a new app cycle. Each app cycle has its own “date record” which consists of the application deadline and the program start and end dates. The date record is located under the Dates tab after you open the program in edit mode. Several important functions in Terra Dotta software are triggered by the dates entered in the date record.

How to enter dates

Please use the Date Management tool as described below.

1. Login to the Directory and select ‘Date Management’ which is under ‘Directory’ on the left menu.
 1. On the page that opens, select the application cycle (like Fall 2024) from the drop-down menu. All of your programs which are available in the Fall term will appear. If you don’t see the application cycle you want in the selection list, please contact Terra Dotta and we will make it available as long as it’s not too far in the future.
 2. Enter the program application date and program start and end dates.
 3. Mark the check boxes for the programs you wish to update (flag)
 4. Click the ‘Update Marked’ button. This action will ‘flag’ the programs so that customers linking to them will be notified that there are updates pending. They, in turn, must click a button to accept the updates.

Should we wait until we know the start and end dates before updating a program’s dates?

Yes. Using the ‘Date Management’ tool described above, you will be required to enter all three dates—your application deadline, program start date and program end date.

What is the decision date?

Decision Date is a term that appears under the Dates tab of the program’s tabbed interface, and it refers to the school’s internal date for notifying applicants of a decision. It does not refer to the sponsor’s date for notifying applicants of a decision. You will not be asked to enter a Decision Date if you use the Date Management tool as recommended. If you prefer to enter dates under the Dates tab, you will be required to enter a Decision Date; enter an arbitrary date such as the current date.

Can we enter approximate start and end dates?

No. All date fields require precise dates like 15-SEP-2024 or 15-09-2024, not “mid-September”.

When is the best time to update our dates?

We recommend that you update your program dates two or three times a year. The updates should ideally be completed about six months prior to the earliest program departure date, to help facilitate good resources for your university partners, and to facilitate the possibility for students to get appropriate financial aid estimates and necessary visa documents in a timely manner. The chart below gives recommended timing of updates:

TERMS	WHEN TO UPDATE
Fall and Academic Year	Preceding spring, ideally by April 1
Spring, Jan Term, Calendar Year, Winter	Preceding summer or fall, by October 1
May Term, Summer (all sessions)	Preceding fall or spring, by February 1

PARAMETERS

Parameters are attributes that describe a program such as “Language of Instruction”. Parameter *values* are the items appearing in the drop-down selection list for a parameter. For example, Language of Instruction would include values such as Arabic, Chinese, French, etc. On the university site, students can conduct program searches based on one or more parameters, so the information you complete under the Parameters tab is very useful.

Can we add a parameter value?

New values will be added to the selection lists on a case by case basis. They should be considered useful to most universities and students. Contact Terra Dotta to request the new value.

Areas of Study

This parameter is intended to list general fields of study rather than specific academic subjects. Additions to the selection list will be made sparingly.

Class Status

This parameter is intended to indicate if a program is open to undergraduates or graduates; however, you should select the “graduate” option only if students will be able to take a full course load of graduate-level courses. Do not select “graduate” if only one or two graduate-level courses are available.

Program

A parameter called “Program” has two option values: “Direct” and “Exchange”. This parameter (and any parameter) may be left blank if it does not pertain to your programs.

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

What is flagging and why is it necessary?

Flagging notifies the subscribing schools that you’ve made some changes to your programs. You can *flag* a batch of programs all at once by following these steps:

1. Login and click on ‘Directory’ in the left menu to reveal the sub-topics.
2. Select ‘Search’.
3. On the screen that opens, click ‘Search’ again to retrieve a list of all of your programs.
4. On the search results page, you will see a check box to the left of each program name.
5. Mark the check boxes for the programs you wish to flag.
6. Click the ‘Post Update for Marked’ button.

Subscribing schools will then be notified that updates are available. Each school, in turn, must click a button to accept the updates, at which time the new information becomes immediately visible to the public on the school’s website.

Alternatively, you can flag one program at a time as follows:

1. Login and click on ‘List All’ under Program Admin in the left menu.
2. Click the edit pencil for the desired program.

3. The program opens in the tabbed interface (the editable view) and you will be on the General tab. Toward the bottom of this page, locate the button labeled 'Click to flag program as updated today' and click on it. That flags the program.

What's the best way to announce new programs?

Flagging will send notifications of updates but it does not announce new program listings. When you create brand new programs and make them active, they will be fully accessible to Terra Dotta customers through an internal search on their website, but they will need to be told that new programs are available. You might want to contact your partners via email or use a list-serve such as SECUSS-L.

What's the best way to notify universities of discontinued programs?

From time to time, you may cancel or suspend a program. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Login and open the program in edit mode.
2. The tabbed interface will open and you will be on the General tab. De-select the 'Active' box at the bottom of the screen.
3. Click Update.

This action will notify subscribing schools that the program has been deactivated. They must click a button to accept the deactivation. This will remove the active program from public view. (Inactive or deactivated programs remain accessible to administrators for historical record-keeping purposes.)

If you wish to have discontinued programs moved to a separate folder, please email us and we'll be happy to do that for you. The programs will remain accessible to you but will be out of the way. Please let us know if you notice any deactivated programs appearing on the websites of our mutual customers. We will contact them and call their attention to the problem.

Contact info: directory@terradotta.com