Alcohol Use in a Study Abroad Program

Study Abroad Program Directors should brief their program participants regarding the alcohol laws of the host country. Most cultures where alcohol consumption is legal have a mandated threshold age at which buying and/or consuming alcohol becomes permitted. Minimum drinking and purchase ages in countries around the world range from 15 to 21 years of age. In some countries, drinking age precedes the age of legal majority; in others, it coincides with it; and, in still others, drinking is delayed well past that threshold. In some countries, alcohol content or type of beverage also determine the age of legal access. A list of legal drinking and legal purchasing ages by county can be found at the website of the International Center for Alcohol Policies at www.icap.org. Typically, drinking age laws make no reference to alcohol consumption in the home.

In addition to establishing alcohol guidelines that are in accordance with local laws and in accordance with the general ISU alcohol policy, Study Abroad Program Directors are empowered to set more stringent requirements. Some Study Abroad Program Directors have chosen to implement guidelines based on "peer pressure" to deal with alcohol problems, and some have implemented a no-use policy.

Participants whose alcohol use or abuse is disruptive to the program or to other program participants are subject to disciplinary actions as outlined in the Study Abroad Conduct Code. Participants whose alcohol use is endangering to themselves because of the increased risk of being a target of crime may also be subject to the Study Abroad Conduct Code. Students should be reminded that violations of any established program policy are subject to consequences as described in the Study Abroad Conduct Code.

Please also refer to ISU’s policy on student alcohol use at http://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/alcohol