

## CET's Curriculum Review Initiative

The Curriculum Review began as a working group to reflect on the colonial implications of international education. However, we found that as a study abroad provider operating programs in countries overseas, broadly “decolonizing” is not possible in this context. Dealing with systemic marginalization nuanced by local history and cultures, we wanted to navigate our approach with respect, intention, and sensitivity. As a result, the Curriculum Review was launched with the intent to examine and challenge our curricular content as it exists and the ways in which we teach it. Now an integral component of our current [JEDI Action Plan](#), the Curriculum Review strives to identify and interrogate structures of difference, power, and equity that are uniquely present in each of our program locations both within the local context and within knowledge production in our programs.

### Our Approach

It is important for us to respect the autonomy and expertise of our program staff. As such, the review is neither prescriptive nor is it a top-down approach. Instead, we employ a query-based approach that is largely helmed by on-site academic staff and their respective program directors. However, this set of queries is simply a suggestion — it is assumed and understood that structures and dynamics will vary widely across program locations and subject matter. This question set covers four broad categories: context, canon, faculty, and pedagogy. Here are just a few examples of provided questions to guide the review:

- Does the syllabus intentionally include topics and activities geared towards bringing students out of their comfort zone by questioning their preconceived notions around a certain subject?
- Does the syllabus expose students to non-written reference material such as testimonials, performances, and/or other experiential elements as a means of featuring knowledge-acquisition processes that include elements of non-formal education?
- Does the course intentionally bring in guest lecturers or local members of the community to present an alternative perspective to that of the professor or the theory/perspective being studied?

### Our Process

Beginning in 2023, the Curriculum Review project follows an annual updating and reporting cycle to continue to allow us to challenge and refine our program curricular content to better incorporate and respect social justice concepts within the local context.

#### Year 1

- Development of a guiding set of queries and training materials
- Workshop for onsite staff

- Identify curricular/co-curricular/pedagogical elements for work plans

#### Year 2

- Implement work plans
- Workshop for onsite staff

#### Year 3 and Beyond

- Update work plans (new or continuing projects) for the upcoming academic year
- JEDI training for overseas staff
- Implement current projects
- Status update on project goals
- JEDI Action Plan annual audit
- Assessment and sharing of Curriculum Review outcome results with small group discussions among on-site staff

#### **Our End Goal**

Our goal is to establish a new normal for the ‘what’ and ‘how’ in our approach to education. For the ‘what,’ we aim to have identified power structures that characterize the local/regional contexts in which our programs operate — historical and/or colonial legacies, national geopolitical forces, political, social, and economic factors that shape the host environment—and hope to more skillfully and explicitly address them in our curriculum and co-curriculum. The ‘how’ of this audit involves the production of knowledge itself within our programs — we strive to create a learning environment that eschews hierarchical classroom structures and encourages students to think critically and include perspectives beyond mainstream narratives in their pursuit of answers.

Importantly, we acknowledge that this type of work is never truly finished. It is our hope that the built-in cycle for this work establishes a system for us, as educators, to continually challenge and refine our curricula. And as a result, we hope our brief time with students helps contribute to a generation of scholars, problem-solvers, and creative minds that are active participants in their education — both in school and in their futures.