

PRE-DEPARTURE SAFETY ORIENTATION

STUDY ABROAD
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Get ready for your study abroad experience

- **RESEARCH** where you will be living and traveling
- **PLAN** for every eventuality
- **PACK** accordingly
- **TRAVEL** safe



Your safety, are you ready?



KEEP YOUR MONEY AND VALUABLES SAFE

- **For arrival**, take some cash and host country currency (use until you find a currency exchange).
- **Do not carry** large amounts of cash; use a debit or major credit card instead. ATMs are widely available in most large cities.
- Some debit and credit cards have an automatic restriction on international transactions. **Check with your bank** or Credit Card Company before you depart. Make sure you notify your provider so that they do not block purchases and be sure to inquire about foreign transaction fees. (Some cards charge no fees.)
- **When traveling** to more remote areas, take local currency.
- **If you do go out with cash**, store the amount in two places, just in case you get robbed or lose your wallet or purse.
- **Make photocopies** of credit and debit cards along with other essential documents; take one set of copies abroad and leave one set with someone at home.
- **Guard** your passport, visas and other documents. Keep the originals secured in your room and carry the photocopies with you unless local law requires otherwise.
- **When traveling**, use a money belt that can be worn underneath your clothing. Purses and bags can easily be cut or ripped from your shoulder by thieves.

STAY AWARE OF YOUR PERSONAL SAFETY

- **Make sure** someone else always knows your itinerary and plan a check-in time with him/her/them.
- **Keep your eyes and hands** on your bags at all times, especially when talking on the telephone or reading a sign or train schedule. If you're distracted, you become an easy target for thieves. If you are sitting at an outdoor restaurant and have a bag or purse, hook the handle on the bottom of your chair to help prevent someone from taking it.
- **Be mindful** when handing your luggage to anyone. Thieves often pose as porters or drivers. At the airport, save your checked luggage receipts because you might need them to be able to leave with your luggage at baggage claim.
- **Plan your trip** so that you don't arrive at an unfamiliar town late at night without having made prior arrangements.
- **When you stay at a hotel**, make use of the provided safe. Leave your passport, money and electronics safely locked away. For hostels and budget hotels, bring your own padlock because often they do not provide one.
- Although there is an added safety to traveling in numbers, we recommend **trying to avoid** forming large groups of foreigners. Smaller groups attract less attention.
- **Don't go anywhere** with strangers if you are alone.
- **Dress to blend in** with the local population. Research your host country's culture to see what type of clothing is appropriate to wear for your gender.
- **Find out** which parts of town are considered risky by the locals and avoid those areas.
- **Always stay** in well-lit and well-traveled places. Don't take short cuts through alleys or unsafe areas.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

- Talk to your host country program provider if you are experiencing any physical or mental health problems.
- **Know** where to get routine and emergency treatment before a medical problem arises. Your host program should be able to guide you to physical and mental health services on campus or locally.
- **Know** the [signs of culture shock](#) and use these tips for coping
- **Use** these [tips to maintain your mental health](#) by recognizing what is going on as you adjust to being abroad.



A few more things to consider...



MONITOR YOUR ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION

- Attitudes toward alcohol consumption vary greatly from country to country. We recommend **researching your host culture's** social norms and attitudes towards alcohol before arriving.
- Whatever the local rules and customs, **use moderation and good judgment**; drinking may place you at risk because it reduces your awareness and ability to judge potential dangers.
- **Never** leave your drink unattended.
- **Excessive drinking has been identified as the single greatest risk factor for study abroad students.**

AVOID SITUATIONS THAT COULD BE DANGEROUS

- **Stay alert** and trust your intuition when you feel you may be in danger. If you feel you may be getting into an uncomfortable situation, try to get to a safe place as soon as possible.
- **Learn** the emergency number in your host country and use it when needed.
- **Memorize your address** and add it in your smart phone before going out just in case you forget it.
- If cannot speak your host country's language, have someone **write your address** in that country's language on a piece of paper before going out. Hand the piece of paper to a cab driver to get home.
- **Don't be afraid** to call attention to yourself or ask for assistance if you're in trouble. When calling for help, be specific about what you need.
- **Be aware** of the effects of alcohol and drugs. These effects include impaired judgment and increased violent behavior.
- **Know your own limits** and be supportive of other people's limits. -** Do not go off alone** with someone you don't know well or who makes you feel uncomfortable. Suggest staying with a group or going to a public place. Don't leave friends alone at parties, bars or clubs.
- **Always bring money** for taxi fare to a safe place. Change for a phone call in case of an emergency can be helpful as well.

KNOW HOW TO DEFEND YOURSELF

- **Always** keep windows and doors locked, not propped open. At night, make sure your drapes, shades or blinds are closed.
- **Don't let strangers** into your room or apartment. Never give them your home address on the phone or over the internet. If you observe a suspicious person, notify the police immediately.
- **Use a steady, confident pace** when walking and always be aware of your surroundings.
- **Wear comfortable shoes.** Don't overload yourself with books or bags.
- **Make sure** you can hear what's happening around you, especially if you are on the phone or wearing headphones.
- **Carry your keys** in your hand so you can get into your home quickly.
- **Be aware** that signals may not be interpreted clearly across cultures. If someone is pressuring you to have sex when you don't want to, say NO clearly. Be direct and assertive.
- If possible, **register with your country's embassy** so that they know you are traveling abroad and so that you can receive relevant travel alerts.



TRAVEL SAFE

AND ENJOY YOUR STAY

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