**Study Abroad Pre-Departure Orientation**

**Health**

**Safety**

*Invest the time required to prepare for both your physical and mental well-being!*

- Please take notes
- Please turn off your cell phone, MP3 player, iPod

**Your Health Abroad**

- Health concerns are real.
- Headaches or allergies may travel with you.
- Illnesses, also emotional or mental, may become more challenging or severe during study abroad.

**Over-the-Counter Medicine**

- Take with you anything you use regularly
  - even if just seasonal
  - e.g., Ibuprofen, Tylenol, antihistamines, etc.
- Some OTCs here are prescription medications abroad
  - and vice versa
Prescription Medication

- Take ample, complete supply for entire time abroad (if allowed by your host country).
- Some medications used here may not be available abroad – check with your consulate.
- Take copy of written prescription with you, in carry-on.
- Take a written prescription of something your doctor thinks you might need.
- Make sure the prescriptions are written in generic terms, specifying all ingredients.
- Leave in original labeled bottles.
- Take a month’s supply in carry-on bag. Divide the remainder in separate bags.

Chronic Medical Conditions

- Follow treatment plan outlined by doctor.
  - This should include current medications, treatment to be used in case of medical crisis, and any other tips for another doctor to use if there is a problem.
- Take your home doctor’s phone and fax numbers with you.
- Tell on-site program director about your condition.

Medication and Flying

For flights from/to the US:

- Guidelines about what may or may not be carried on the plane or in checked luggage: [http://www.faa.gov/passengers/prepare_fly/](http://www.faa.gov/passengers/prepare_fly/)

- 3:1:1 rule for liquids
  - Max 3 ounce containers, all in 1 quart ziploc, max 1 bag per person

- Check with your airline and other countries you will fly through for their own regulations.

Food and Water Precautions

Special Concerns for Tropical Regions

- Food
  - Avoid un-pasteurized milk and cheese.
  - Eat food while it’s hot.
  - Avoid food that’s been frozen, thawed, and re-frozen.
  - Be careful of street vendors.

- Water
  - Ask if one can drink tap water.
  - If answer is “no” or “be careful”:
    - Don’t allow ice from tap water
    - Drink only bottled or boiled water

Peel it, cook it, or forget it!
### Blood & Body Fluid Precautions

Infections can be picked up by:

- **Airborne, e.g., tuberculosis**
- **Contact with body fluids such as saliva or blood**
- **Skin to skin contact**

Use common sense precautions:

- Wash hands with soap regularly.
- Cover mouth when sneezing or coughing (sleeve or tissue).

### Influenza Information

- **From the World Health Organization:** [www.who.org](http://www.who.org)

Regional information is available on-line.

- Precautions same as at home: wash hands, cough/sneeze in sleeve, get adequate sleep, avoid touching mouth or nose.

Each country and program may have their own rules or procedures.

- Some countries may quarantine travelers exhibiting symptoms on arrival. If in this situation, call us +1 (217) 333-6322.

- “People who are ill should delay travel plans.”

### Traveler’s Diarrhea

- Caused by bacteria, viruses, protozoa.
- It is rarely life-threatening – stay hydrated, use electrolyte replacement.
- Follow all food and water precautions.
- Consult CDC and WHO country information sheets for more details (see Pre-Departure Checklist for URLs).

### McKinley Health Center

- **Immunizations**
  - Check standard immunizations and update as needed.
  - Travel immunization fee: not included in McKinley fee; compare costs between McKinley and your own medical physician.
  - May need immunizations two months or more before departure.

- **McKinley**
  - [www.mckinley.illinois.edu](http://www.mckinley.illinois.edu)
  - For medical/travel questions, 333-2702.
  - For travel consults, 333-2715 – strongly recommended for travel to tropical regions.
Sexual Health

- Don’t assume your potential partner is educated about sexual health and safe sex.
- Be aware of infectious diseases, whether sexually active or not.
- HIV, herpes, and genital warts will be with you for life.
- STDs may cause serious problems if untreated.
- Hepatitis B or C may be with you for life.
- Always use barrier protection.
- Condoms available at McKinley Health Center’s resource rooms.

Alcohol

- Alcohol-related illnesses and mishaps can be a big problem when studying abroad.
- Most commonly-reported problems: getting home safely and getting in arguments.
- “When you start drinking, you stop thinking.”
- Be a responsible, intelligent drinker.
- Remember the right to drink is governed by laws - obey.
- Alcohol’s effect on the body depends on:
  - Food or other chemicals in the body; body weight; drinking history/ tolerance; state of emotional/physical health; altitude; heat; and more.

Stress & Fatigue

- Cultural adjustment issues will take a toll on your immune system and may cause unanticipated physical reactions, e.g.:
  - depression, sleep loss, appetite changes, mood swings, sluggishness, and stress.
- Talk to others who are going through similar experiences or who will understand what you’re going through (students, resident director, on-site program coordinator, your study abroad advisor, etc.).
- You will probably need more sleep while abroad than you normally do at home in the first few days.

Compound Effects

- Drinking
- Jetlag
- Compound Effects
- The more effects, the more you need to take care of yourself.
Location-Specific Issues

- Altitude
- Jet lag
- Heat exposure
- Sunburn
- Smog
- Water (currents, animals, etc.)
- Insect-transmitted diseases

CISI Health/Evacuation Insurance

**CISI Covers:**
- Medical expenses
- Treatment for mental/nervous condition
- Emergency medical evacuation
- Emergency family reunion

**Coverage:**
- Valid five days before and after official program dates; call CISI for a one-month extension for personal travel.
- Read policy carefully and take your card with you.

Other Insurance

If you are going on these programs, THEIR insurance covers you - not the Illinois policy: ACTR, Minnesota, Alliance, IES, Arcadia, DAAD, Univ. of Georgia.

Optional Insurance

- Consider buying additional insurance
- Trip cancellation due to illness, political instability, other changes
- Theft
Safety & Security

The Basics

**SAO 24-hour emergency number:** 217-333-6322.

- If you have a problem, call on-site Director or your study abroad office FIRST.
- If you separate from group, leave itinerary with on-site Director - someone should always know where you are.
- If you tell your family you’ll call, please do - especially when you first arrive.
- US citizens: www.travelregistration.state.gov
- Non-US citizens: home country Foreign Affairs Ministry or State Department

More Basics

- **Know the location of your home country’s embassy or consulate in your host country.** For US citizens, it can be found at [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov).
- **If bad news about your host country hits major news networks,** call your families to let them know you are okay.
- **In case of emergency (natural disaster, act of terrorism, etc.),** contact your program provider or your home country’s embassy/consulate and follow their directions.
- **Read everything and attend the on-site orientation.**

Write this down!

- Study Abroad 24-hour Advisor on Duty
- 217-333-6322
Maximize Your Safety Abroad

**Be Vigilant in Public**
- Be aware of your surroundings. Take note of people near you and their behavior.
- Be aware if someone slows you down while walking.
- No phones or iPods when out walking!
- Avoid groups lingering. Learn from locals what might signal threatening behavior.
- Vary your travel routes and times, and other aspects of your daily routine.
- Safety in numbers: help look out for others in your program.
- Avoid suspicious, unfamiliar objects/packages.
- Don't leave bags unattended or carry items for someone you don't know.

**Be Informed and Prepared**
- Avoid taking shortcuts until you know they're safe.
- Keep up with local news.
- Ask about the safety of specific hotels before staying the night.
- Talk to your on-site Director and know your responsibilities in ensuring safe and rapid response in the event of an emergency.

**Maintain a Low Profile**
- Be aware of the actions and image you are presenting to those around you.
- Consider how people from the U.S. may be viewed abroad.
  - Even as a non-US citizen, you could be perceived as representing the US since you attend a US institution.
- Avoid crowds, protest groups, and places where internationals congregate.
- Avoid travel in large groups.
- Avoid carrying big luggage.

**Ensure Fast Communication**
- Ensure that your on-site Director and the Study Abroad Office have your host country contact information (cell/land phone, address).
- Stay in touch with your family on a regular basis to reassure them of your safety.
Maximize Your Safety Abroad

U.S. State Dept.
- http://travel.state.gov
- Check Consular Info Sheets for locations you will visit and follow relevant recommendations
- Know the Dept. of State's list of services available to Americans abroad

Travel Alert
- WorldWide Caution and other Alerts - cause to reflect on your habits to make sure you are maximizing your safety.

Travel Warning
- University may withdraw students in a country for which a Travel Warning is issued.
- We cannot assure students will be fully shielded from credit or financial loss in this case.

Keeping Money Safe

Talk to locals about security issues, and follow their advice.

Use a money belt for things such as tickets, passport, credit cards, etc.

Use a safe or locks, when available at hotels and other places.

Stash money in various places.

ATMs, Credit Cards, Travelers Checks

Credit/Debit Cards
- Let credit card/ATM companies know you’ll be abroad.
- Know how to cancel your cards.
- Learn about credit card safety from locals; follow advice.

ATMs
- Avoid ATMs at night.
- Use ATMs inside banks.
- Cover hand when entering PIN

Travelers Checks
- Consider taking some just in case
- Seek guidance about your region

Important Documents

Take photocopies of the front and back of credit cards, ATM cards, passport, traveler’s checks, etc.

Keep originals on you; put one set of copies in your luggage, and leave another set at home with a trusted relative/friend. Ideally, not someone you are dating.

In an emergency, with one collect phone call to the friend/relative, they could cancel all of your cards.

Do not take your Social Security Card abroad.

Consider getting a laptop lock.
### Legal Issues

**Remember that you are under the legal jurisdiction of your host country.**

- Drug use and alcohol abuse can land you in jail.
- Infractions that receive a light sentence here could be assigned a much higher penalty in another country.
- Drug trafficking is punishable as a capital offense in some countries – it is NOT worth the risk!
- Make sure no one but you places anything in your luggage.

### Road Safety

**Road travel poses the greatest risk to healthy travelers.**

- We recommend you do not drive while abroad.
- Be aware of traffic patterns and road culture.
- Don’t assume pedestrians will be given the right-of-way.
- Avoid travel at night.
- Avoid riding with drivers under the influence.
- Plan how to get home before you go out.
- We recommend you do not hitchhike.
- Know and follow local taxi and bus safety guidelines.

### Women and Gender Relationships

**Women**

- Smiling in public can be misinterpreted in some cultures.
- Be aware of common stereotypes about American women, and be prepared to respond.
- Call Office of Women’s Programs for support at 333-3137 or http://www.odos.uiuc.edu/women/.
- They will call you anywhere in the world.

**Men and Women**

- In many cultures, it is not proper for men to approach unknown women - be suspicious if this happens / don’t approach unknown women.
- In some countries, a woman alone with a man implies willingness for sex – don’t be alone with a person without knowing implications.
- Watch what local peers do and where they go - copy that.

### Students with Disabilities

- You are not required to disclose disability. However, in order for us to help prepare accommodations, you must be registered at DRES and discuss your needs with your study abroad advisor.
- Do not assume accommodations will be available at your program unless you have made arrangements in advance - even those common here, like extended time for test-taking.
- For more information: www.disability.uiuc.edu (search for study abroad) call 333-4602, or e-mail sheft@illinois.edu.
LGBT Points to Consider

Cultural mores and laws differ from place to place.
• Depending where you study, attitudes range from full acceptance of identities to severe homophobia.

Observe, be sensitive to local customs, and express yourself appropriately and respectfully.

Resources:
• Intl. Lesbian and Gay Association: www.ilga.org
• Rainbow SIG: www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay
• UIUC Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Resources Office: http://www.odos.uiuc.edu/lgbt/

Other Important Info

• Abide by your program’s rules or risk dismissal.
• We will not give anyone your name, or information about you, without your written permission.
• If you want people to know where you are, you must tell them.
• Consider giving someone legal Power of Attorney (PoA). See http://www.odos.uiuc.edu/sls/
• Use your common sense and have fun!

Maximize Health and Safety Through Preparation

Have a plan – do not say: “That will never happen to me!”