



# USF WORLD EDUCATION ABROAD **STUDENT TRAVELER FIELD BOOK**

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# PRE-DEPARTURE AND PLANNING

## ACADEMIC PLANNING

This section will equip you with the knowledge and tools needed to prepare academically for your trip abroad. To ensure you receive academic credit for your study abroad experience, it is your responsibility to submit the required registration documents and monitor your student account to avoid academic complications or financial penalties. While planning for your program, we strongly recommend you meet with a financial aid advisor as well as consider multiple and creative ways for funding your experience. Embrace the exciting learning opportunities you will have, and remember your final grades earned abroad will affect your GPA at USF.



## SUBMITTING THE COURSE APPROVAL FORM

The course approval form **MUST** be submitted to be accepted into the program and receive academic credit. If you are taking an international course for credit, you need to become aware of how your financial aid, academic record, domestic scholarship, etc. may be impacted by your enrollment status. All course approvals must be submitted to EAO prior to completion of your registration.

The course approval form is available at the Education Abroad Office CGS 101 (USF) / BAY 204 (USFSP) or visit this [link](http://www.ugs.usf.edu/academicadvising/index.html). Please note that both your college department and academic advisor **MUST** sign the course approval form. You can find the appropriate advisor for your department by clicking on the following link: <http://www.ugs.usf.edu/academicadvising/index.html>.

The deadlines to submit your course approval for the term you will be abroad are:

- Fall: July 1
- Spring: November 1
- Summer: March 1

If changes to your overseas course registration are necessary, you must provide:

1. Approval of the instructor or program director
2. Approval of the academic advisor
3. Written request to the EAO

## COMPLETING THE REGISTRATION

In order to complete your registration, you must resolve any outstanding holds on your USF account. You can view your hold(s) and the contact information of the corresponding department or office in OASIS under the Registration Status screen. The most common registration holds are:

- **AA:** a Mandatory First-Year Undergraduate Academic Advising hold
- **CC:** a Cash Collections hold
- A full listing of holds and how to remove them can be found at [www.usf.edu/undergrad/students/holds.aspx](http://www.usf.edu/undergrad/students/holds.aspx)

Failure to 1) submit the course approval or 2) remove outstanding holds before the end of the drop/add period may result in a \$100 late registration fee on your OASIS account.

Keep in mind that there are three types of credit that apply to students who study abroad:

1. **Direct credit:** Any student that directly registers in actual USF courses will receive direct credit;
2. **Transfer credit:** Students that bring back credit from a foreign university/institution or other US institution that are not registered in OASIS for USF courses will have transfer credit;
3. **Hybrid (Semester Exchange) credit:** Generally applied to exchange students whose foreign coursework converted into direct, pre-approved credit upon receipt of your transcript from our foreign exchange partner.

It is your responsibility to determine whether or not the credit hours you will earn will exceed your degree's total credit hour limit. Any **Excess Credit Hours (ECH)** will be charged at the "out-of-state" tuition rate.

Please note, the tuition and fees posted to your account for your study abroad courses will be waived by EAO in due time.

## YOUR STUDENT ACCOUNT

When students are registered or directly enrolled for USF credit, their OASIS account balance summary will show a balance due of the regular on-campus tuition fees. In lieu of these fees, students will see and be responsible for the Study Abroad Program Cost placed on their accounts.

### Important Notes:

- OSP1 - Will designate the EAO Administrative Fee
- OSS1 - Will designate the EAO In-country Program Fees

The fees listed above are fees connected with the study abroad program and must be paid by the student by the stated deadlines for their respective program. Students receiving financial aid may receive a payment deferment of their Administrative Fee (OSP1) and Instructional Fees (OSS1) until receipt of their financial aid disbursement. Please note that these fees may be automatically deducted from their financial aid disbursement.

For program fees on summer and spring break programs, the deadlines for in-country payments are generally two months prior to the beginning of the foreign program, the administrative and instructional fees are generally due for summer programs the week that financial aid disburses for summer. For semester exchange programs, students must remit a \$500 deposit upon acceptance to the foreign school, and final payment is due the week of financial aid disbursement of the semester abroad.

Please go to individual program sites for program deadlines, but be prepared to pay 25% of the program cost 90 days prior to program start date, 75% of cost 60 days prior, and 100% of program cost 30 days prior.

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3. Hybrid (Semester Exchange) credit: Generally applied to exchange students whose foreign coursework converted into direct, pre-approved credit upon receipt of your transcript from our foreign exchange partner.

It is your responsibility to determine whether or not the credit hours you will earn will exceed your degree's total credit

hour limit. Any Excess Credit Hours (ECH) will be charged at the "out-of-state" tuition rate. Please note, the tuition and fees posted to your account for your study abroad courses will be waived by EAO in due time.

## FINANCIAL AID

### Payment in Person:

Once you have completed the USF Education Abroad application, the Study Abroad Charge will be posted on your OASIS account. Generally, the charge will be posted within 1-2 business days after commitment to the program. The charge will be listed under the term in which the program takes place (i.e. Summer 2016). Students will be given a payment request form to take to the USF Cashier's office. Payment may be made by check, cash, cashier's check, or money order. Checks and money orders should be payable to USF (please indicate your USF ID number and the study abroad program in the memo portion of your check).

Credit Cards: Please note that if you are using a credit card and paying on-line (service fee applies), you may NOT choose how the payment will be applied. For example, if you have housing, parking or library charges, your on-line payment will be applied to these fees first. If your circumstances require you to make a payment online, please contact the Education Abroad Fiscal & Business team at [EA-Business@usf.edu](mailto:EA-Business@usf.edu) after you complete your payment to ensure that it will be properly applied.

### Payment by Mail:

Please confirm that your program charges have been posted to your account by Education Abroad prior to mailing your payments. Checks and money orders should not be sent to the Education Abroad Office.

Please include a signed copy of the payment request form with your mail payment.

*Payments can be mailed to:*  
University of South Florida  
PO Box 864571  
Orlando, Florida 32886-4571  
USA

*Overnight mail payments may be sent to:*  
Wells Fargo Bank  
University of South Florida  
Lockbox #864571  
11050 Lake Underhill Road  
Orlando, FL 32825

Please refrain from sending cash through the mail. Cash payments should be made in person on-campus at the Cashier's Office.

When considering the use of financial aid towards your international program expenses, you must schedule an appointment with the Financial Aid office. Your Financial Aid Advisor will be able to:

1. Discuss your eligibility for different funding options,
2. Review financial aid disbursement guidelines, and
3. Help you complete required paperwork.

Two of the most commonly required financial aid forms for studying abroad are the:

- Study Abroad Financial Aid Contact
- Verify Last Date of Attendance

To avoid late registration and delayed disbursement of financial aid, submit your course approval and resolve any account holds as soon as possible. All financial aid is disbursed at least 7 days after the start of your study abroad courses. If you require any forms from the Financial Aid office, you can retrieve them by visiting, [www.usf.edu/financial-aid/forms/](http://www.usf.edu/financial-aid/forms/).



## SCHOLARSHIPS

All Education Abroad scholarship applications must be submitted through USF's [STARS](#) (Scholarship Tracking & Review System) website. The Education Abroad Office offers scholarships with specific deadlines for each semester. If you are applying for EA scholarships and your program application deadline falls after the scholarship deadline, you must be "committed" to your program by the scholarship deadline to be considered.

STARS application deadlines for EA Scholarships:

- Fall: **April 15**
- Spring: **November 1**
- Summer: **February 15**

Review all requirements for scholarship consideration and instructions to apply on the [USF EA Administered Scholarships](#) page. You can access the application by following the link for: [STARS Online](#).

To be considered for EA scholarships, you must complete the following by the scholarship deadline:

1. Commit to your program application,
2. Pay the program deposit, and
3. Complete the Education Abroad scholarship application(s) in STARS, including attachments of the following **REQUIRED** materials below:
  - Education Abroad Signature Document
  - Statement of Intent
  - Unofficial Transcript
  - Resume
  - Statement of Financial Need
  - Cost Estimate Form\* (Required for Non-USF programs)

There are many other sources of funding available. Search the internet, your academic departments, and the [Office of National Scholarships \(ONS\) Link](#) for additional scholarships available to USF students.

## ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

Please note that many overseas institutes do not issue the EAO documentation of this course work until after the close of USF deadlines, resulting in this delay. Students who are studying overseas during their final semester prior to graduation should contact the EAO, the USF faculty director or the host institution to see whether official transcripts could be expedited. The University cannot give credit without a transcript from the foreign institution.

**Be aware of the academic expectations** while you are attending a study abroad program as a USF student. You must be in Good Academic Standing to study abroad. Please note that you are attending a study abroad program and not a tour. You will have many cultural opportunities, but you must set aside time to study and complete course work. Your grades will follow you home.

**Learn about how you will be graded.** What will be important to the professor's in-country? This is particularly important if you are taking classes at a local university. Foreign grading expectations can be very different from USF standards and what you think is worthy of an "A" may end up being a "C." Speak to students who have studied there before. Do your research.

**Set up an appointment with your major academic advisor(s)** to determine how your study abroad courses will fit into your major and degree to avoid issues such as [Excess Credit Hours](#). You may also want to be granted grading options (S/U), but make sure you look into whether it is feasible or even a good idea before you commit to it. You will be subject to the same grading policies while abroad as on-campus students.

**Complete the required paperwork for Non-USF programs.** Students on Independent and Exchange Programs will receive transfer credit after the end of their program. Speak with your program coordinator to ensure the required paperwork is completed prior to departure to avoid graduation and financial aid complications.

**Most importantly, your final grades earned abroad will affect your GPA at USF.** You are under the same academic integrity



requirements as you would be for any on-campus activity.

## TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND MONEY



BRIGGS, JACQUELINE. AMERICAN COLLEGE OF  
THESSALONIKI. 2010

This section will cover the basics to documentation needed to travel abroad, methods of using currency abroad, protecting your documents, and how to manage money responsibly. It may take months to acquire the right travel documentation, so take this section seriously and plan ahead. Careful research will be necessary to discover your options for using money in your destination. Ultimately, it is your responsibility to take this information and use the resources provided to determine what is right for you.

### PASSPORT

U.S. and non-U.S. citizens need a passport both to enter other countries (including Canada and Mexico) and return to the United States. If you already have a passport, make sure it is valid until at least six months after your return date (Note: some countries, such as Russia, require that your passport is valid for 18 months following the completion of your program). New U.S. passports are good for ten years. Apply early to avoid complications caused by misplaced original birth certificates and similar problems.

Passport forms are available at many Federal and state courts, probate courts, some county/municipal offices and some post offices. They can also be downloaded at the U.S. State Department Web site. This site will also link

you to the procedure and form for renewing your passport. This can take the same length of time as issuing a new passport.

For first-time applicants, age 16 and older, a ten-year passport is \$135.00. This includes a passport fee (\$110), and an execution fee (\$25). Note that the cost of purchasing a passport book AND card is \$165.00, but that passport cards are not required nor can they be used in place of a passport book.

Remember that applying for a passport takes up to 8 weeks. You will need to visit the link at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports.html> for information on how to apply for a passport. To see the passport validity requirements for your destination(s), you need to visit the link at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html> and look up the destination country.

For example, for any travel to France, U.S. passports must be valid for a minimum of six months at entry and valid for an additional three months beyond the planned date of departure.

- If you have a passport, take it out and look at it. What is the Expiration Date?
- Look up your intended destination country. What are the Passport Validity Requirements?
- Does your passport comply? If not, you need to apply for a new one!

For Non-U.S. Citizens, countries have different requirements for passport validity based upon your country of citizenship. All non-US citizens must determine the passport validity requirements for the country they are going to. Check with USF International Services at <http://global.usf.edu/is/> if you have any questions.

Prior to departure, you will need to make sure that your passport has at least two blank pages and leave a hardcopy and digital copy of your passport with a reliable person at home. After you arrive abroad, store the passport in a locked safe at your accommodation and carry a photocopy of your passport on your person.

Note: Some countries require you to have your original passport on your person at all times. If unsure, ask your program leader or EAO advisor. Do not pack your passport in your checked luggage! Carry it on your person when at airports and boarding planes. Purchasing a neck lanyard is a good idea as it makes carrying your passport safe and convenient!

In recent years there has been an unprecedented demand for passports; therefore, **you should apply for a passport immediately**. You should plan on at least six to eight weeks for standard processing.

Passport applications and directions for submitting your passport are available in the USF Education Abroad Office or at most post offices.

With your completed application you must also have the following:

1. Proof of U.S. citizenship (i.e. certified copy of your birth certificate).
2. Proof of identity (i.e. a valid driver's license).
3. Two (2) identical photographs (2" x 2" with white background).
4. Appropriate fees.
5. A social security number.

You must submit your application to a post office. Please note that most post offices require that you have an appointment when applying for or renewing your passport. We recommend that you **DO NOT** send your application by mail. The local post office branch that accepts passport applications:

Ehrlich Post Office  
14910 N Dale Mabry  
Tampa, FL 33618  
Phone Number: (813) 264-2107

Passport photos can be obtained by consulting the yellow pages of your phone directory, at CVS, or at many post offices that handle passport-processing.



SPRING BREAK IN CHINA. 2012

Once you have your passport, be sure to **sign it** and fill in the emergency information page.

## VISA

Not all countries require a visa. And if you are not a U.S. citizen, visa requirements can be very different for you than a U.S. citizen.

A visa is an entry/residency permit granted by the authorities of a country. A visa allows you to enter and remain in that country. You will need a passport prior to applying for a visa. That means you will be without a passport during that time period of up to four months. Keep in mind that **your passport must be valid for a minimum of six months beyond the**

**length of your requested visa** (e.g. if you are requesting a 12- month visa your passport must be valid for 18 months). Make sure to check the expiration date on your passport. Also, **your passport must contain at least two blank visa pages**. Note that some countries have more stringent policies, for example in Russia, your passport must be valid for 18 months after your scheduled departure from Russia!

Applying for a visa can be a very long and complicated process. It is much more difficult than applying for a passport. Whether or not you need a visa depends on your citizenship and where you are traveling. For U.S. citizens to find out if a visa is required for a particular destination, visit [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov), just like you did for Passport Validity. Review the Exit and Entry requirements listed in the text. You can apply for a visa through the country's Embassy/Consulate. A visit to an Embassy/Consulate may be required in-person to apply for a visa. To find the appropriate Embassy/Consulate for your destination country, visit <http://embassy.goabroad.com>.

All Non-U.S. citizens will need to check with Consulates or the Embassy of your destination to see if a visa is required for you. It is your responsibility to get a visa. International students studying on a visa at USF must see an International Student Advisor at USF before departing the U.S. You can make an appointment on the [International Services](#) website.

**If your program adviser does not provide assistance for the study abroad group to apply for visas, it becomes your responsibility to acquire one.**

In many countries students are required to obtain a visa in order to study for a summer, semester, or year. The cost and requirements for obtaining visas vary depending upon the individual's citizenship and the laws of the host country. However, the items that are most typically required include **photos, a fee, and proof of funds to support the student while abroad, proof of enrollment in the U.S. and at the foreign institution, proof of housing abroad, proof of insurance, and finger prints or other biometrics.** In some cases students will need to show that they do not have a criminal background. Depending on the country this may be done through their local police station, or some countries specifically require an FBI background check. Additional requirements may include, a birth certificate, HIV or other medical exam, proof of vaccination, roundtrip airline tickets, and proof of residency in the U.S. (e.g. copy of license or lease). It is your responsibility to determine visa requirements for all countries you plan to visit while abroad; this includes countries that you plan to visit before or after your study abroad program. You can do so by consulting with a travel agent, calling the consular offices of those countries, or checking the U.S. State Department Document Requirements website (<http://travel.state.gov/travel/documents.html>) or the Travel Document Systems website ([www.traveldocs.com](http://www.traveldocs.com)).

For some countries a student does need to appear in person to obtain his or her visa. However, in others they may be able to use a visa service that acts as a stand in for the student. Students should be prepared and set aside time and funding to travel to the nearest consulate/embassy if called upon. Keep in mind that you might need to make an appointment prior to appearing in person. Also, make sure to check the operating hours for visa processing services. Generally, it can be very difficult and in some cases impossible, to speak with someone in a foreign consulate regarding the status of your visa application.

Visa regulations change frequently, so make sure to check with the embassy/consulate of your host country before submitting your application via mail or in person. **You may be denied entry into, or be deported from, a country for which you have not obtained a required visa. The Education Abroad Office and the University of South Florida are not responsible for obtaining visas nor are they in any way responsible for visa or entry denial.** For some countries, certain medical requirements must be met before a visa will be issued. Many countries will not issue visas to persons with any type of police record!

Note: If you are not a U.S. citizen, consult the embassy or consulate of the countries you will visit to learn their document requirements. You should check the U.S. State Department Web sites for Foreign Consular Office listings and for the listings of Embassies and Consulates. The procedures that you will follow may be different from those for U.S. citizens. It is important to initiate this process as soon as possible in order to assemble documents and allow time for lengthy procedures. International USF students must visit the USF International Services Office to obtain a signature on visa documents to permit re-entry to the United States. **International Students will also need to complete a Study or Research Abroad Approval Form**, which can be found on the IS Office website under Current Student Forms.

## INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD

Your regular student ID may not be honored in some countries. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) gives students a single, uniform document recognized worldwide as proof of student status. ISIC cards are \$23.00 and available for purchase from many travel agencies and the USF ID Center to any student in a degree-seeking program during the current academic school year.

The ISIC card benefits vary widely from country to country, but may include student discounts on airfare, transportation, and accommodations, as well as reduced admission to museums, theaters, cultural events, and other attractions. When you purchase an ISIC, you will be given an ISIC Handbook that lists exactly which nations recognize the card, types of discounts, and the addresses and phone numbers of student travel offices around the world. Besides the student discounts, the ISIC provides free travel insurance (good for before and after your program dates), an emergency help line, and a communications system (phone card). If you should need to use the insurance benefits,





you will need to have a copy of your card and proof of purchase for any claim.

Please note that there are varying reports on the usefulness of the ISIC. In some cases, the card was not honored as expected. The phone card can only be used at public phones. Usually the greatest benefit to having the card is getting the reduced airfare.

## MONEY

**Call your financial institution to let them know that you will be travelling abroad. Your bank may freeze your account if they are unaware of your travels.** Not all bank or credit cards work in every country or every ATM. Ask your bank if they can identify locations for ATMs that accept your debit cards.

Investigate the possibility to have a credit card with a chip and a pin. Not just a chip and a signature for verification. But a chip and a pin. Many automated kiosks, ticket machines and vendors are only accepting chip and pin cards but these chip and pin cards are relatively new in the U.S. Still, we believe it is important to ask about it and see if you can get one for your travels.

Make sure that you have made arrangements for your bills to be paid while away.

Have a source of funds for emergencies: extra credit card, back-up ATM card, ways that parents or friends can put extra cash into your checking account or wire to you if needed.

Consider getting traveler's checks – American Express or similar brand (\$300 –depending on destination). Traveler's checks can be purchased at a bank or local travel agency (American Express, AAA, etc.) in a variety of denominations and currencies. They can be used for payment at many local establishments or can be exchanged for cash at any bank or exchange agency. Traveler's checks come in both US Dollars and in many foreign currencies and can be replaced if lost or stolen. Make sure to keep a list of the serial numbers from each check in a safe place so it can be given to the bank representative for replacement! More information about traveler's checks can be found on the American Express website or from your bank/AAA.

Get \$75-100 in the foreign currency from your bank or at the airport from a Cambio/Currency Exchange kiosk.

Create a budget – talk to the faculty director, read books and talk to other students who have been to where you are traveling to understand financial needs.

Inquire with your bank regarding partner banks in the country you will be visiting – this could reduce fees charged to your account for withdrawals.

**If you want to learn more about the local currency and exchange rates of your destination, visit:** [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com) or [www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com).

If you are traveling away on a weekend, particularly if you are going to a remote area, plan ahead – you may not have access to ATM machines, and in certain places, credit cards are not accepted. Also note that debit cards do not function as credit cards in many countries like they do in the U.S., and may charge up to \$5 or 5% of the purchase for each transaction. Whenever possible, we recommend using a credit card for purchases – you can often get a better exchange rate.



SUMMERLAB: ARCHITECTURE IN LONDON. 2014

## CHIP-AND-PIN CREDIT CARDS

Chip-and-PIN credit cards are credit cards with a built-in chip for added security. Instead of the traditional credit cards that are swiped, the card is inserted into the chip reader and the card's owner inputs a PIN to complete the transaction. While the roll out of this technology is slowly coming into use in North America, it is already widespread in Western Europe, especially in the United Kingdom. While most vendors still have a credit card "swipe" option, travelers should be prepared to use alternative payment methods should the traditional method not be available. You may pre-purchase a chip-and-PIN credit card from companies like Travelex ([www.travelex.com](http://www.travelex.com)) with funds pre-loaded on the card if you so desire. Inquire with your credit card company as to the availability of this technology with your existing cards.

Some other tips:

- For the first 1-2 weeks of the program, write down what you are spending money on and make sure that you are spending it wisely, and that you will have enough money to last the duration of the program.
- Make sure that you understand the currency exchange rate. People have purchased \$80 umbrellas by mistake, or thought that the Italian pair of shoes they bought was \$50, when it was actually \$250.
- Make sure that you know how much you are spending on your cell phone.
- Know whether or not it is acceptable to barter – in many countries it is expected.
- Understand whether or not you have to tip or pay gratuities in restaurants.
- Do grocery shopping where the locals go, not in the places that "cater" to foreigners. You should also be aware that many grocery stores in Europe require you to purchase bags.
- Do not go out to nightclubs and drink too much – you will drink away all of your savings.
- If you do experience a financial crisis, let EAO know.

## PERSONAL DOCUMENT SAFETY

When preparing for your study abroad experience, you should review what to take and what to leave at home. Certainly, if it is a mandatory item such as your passport or cash, bring it. But, if you don't want it stolen and don't want to hassle getting it replaced when you come back home, don't bring it.

You should leave at home all extra credit cards, house or car keys, driver's license, social security card, USF student ID, your birth certificate and any other items not needed abroad. Always leave a hardcopy and a digital copy of your valuable documents that you are bringing with you with someone you trust at home. Items to leave copies of include: flight itinerary, in-country travel itinerary, contact information, passport, credit and debit cards (front and back), etc.

It is your responsibility to keep your travel documents, credit cards and valuables safe, not your program leader's. Your passport, credit card and/or debit card, and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt as close to your body as possible when you are traveling abroad. Remember, money belts are worn under your clothes, not like a fanny pack.

**When you arrive at your destination, when possible, leave your original passport in a locked safe at your accommodation and carry a copy on you. Actually, in some countries the hotel will require you to give it to them for security.** Only in rare circumstances do you need to carry it with you daily.

A helpful tip for protecting your chip credit card information from getting stolen from walk-by scanners is putting a piece of aluminum foil in your wallet or buying a protective wallet.

**NEVER pack your passport or any other important documents in your checked-in luggage or your carry-on luggage.** Passports (including visa page), credit cards, and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt as close to your body as possible. Be aware that certain reading material or literature may offend officials of some countries. If your passport is lost or stolen abroad, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance.

## BUDGETING

We strongly encourage you to create a budget. If you run out of money, you will be responsible to get more sent to you to cover your daily needs. So, it really is your responsibility to create a budget, live within it and handle your money



responsibly while abroad.

To do this, you will need to determine what the costs are that are included and not included in the program fee. If in doubt, check with your EAO Advisor or program leader. Find out exactly how much money you will receive from Financial Aid and other sources. Then, calculate your out-of-pocket costs. Ask yourself how much you plan to spend on the weekends, or at other times when food is not provided. What will you need for public transportation? As always, try to set aside funds to purchase souvenirs. An emergency fund for unexpected costs is a really important idea. In fact, try to hide away \$75 - \$100 to cover incidental expenses when you fly home.

To help understand costs, take time out to learn the foreign currency BEFORE you go abroad. The buying power of any country's currency is always updated and should be reviewed. One such guide to help you understand purchasing power is the Big Mac Index: [www.economist.com/content/big-mac-index](http://www.economist.com/content/big-mac-index). Though a seemingly silly idea, comparing the cost of a Big Mac in different countries can give you a benchmark to plan for your daily expenses.



COSTA RICA. 2011

## KNOW YOUR DESTINATION

This section will show you how to get prepared for your study abroad experience. Take the time to research where you are going to make the best of your educational trip. Know the security concerns, learn the language, culture and history. Expect a cultural adjustment and be patient but know what resources are here to help you. Overall, enjoy this adventure!

### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER

It is important to take some time out to learn about the history, culture, local diet, geography and customs of the countries you are planning on visiting; study maps, read the news to keep up with current events, and watch YouTube videos related to where you will be traveling. Why? It will go a long way to helping you fit in. Cultural adaptation will go smoother when you can anticipate what you might experience.

Also, it will go a long way to building friendships with your new found international friends if you can properly name and discuss the country you are visiting, its geography and history. You have likely seen articles where Americans were tested on world geography. The outcomes were pretty sad. You can see one example here: <http://www.boredpanda.com/americans-place-european-countries-on-map>.

Learning some keywords/phrases can also be helpful. Learn how to say “hi,” “thank you,” and “where is the restroom,” etc. Also, think about purchasing a small phrase book to carry with you or if you have access to data, download an international translation app on your smart phone. If you have some more time, watch some foreign films or movies set in the country you will be visiting!

Another place to find relevant information is at the international travel sections of bookstores. Browse through or purchase one or two guidebooks, such as *Let's Go*, *Rick Steves*, *Lonely Planet*, *Berkeley Guides*, or *Rough Guides*. To travel light, download the mobile app version of the travel guides.

It is important to realize that guides and travel books are focused on fun and having a good time. Not a bad focus, but many times they do not offer a very balanced view of the risks and challenges you may come across. A part of having an enjoyable experience studying abroad is being more informed about the risks and challenges of your destination. A more informed student is a happier student!

To get very objective and balanced information, we strongly encourage you to visit the U.S. Department of State's website and read the Country Information Sheets prepared by the U.S. Department of State. This is the same place

where you learned about Passport Validity. <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html>. Also, you can check out the [CIA World Factbook](#) for more information about your destination.

For a student perspective on traveling, also sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, is a site created by students for students: <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>.

Visit the U.S. Embassy's own website (<http://www.usembassy.gov>) for the location you are going to. They often have a lot of information about activities you may find relevant. They also keep a list of all special advisories, security messages and emergency messages.

Here are a few tips that will be very helpful for your upcoming experience:

- To have an overall wonderful experience, make sure you also check out how the country/people view Americans: **Common stereotypes about Americans** (<http://blog.travelworldpassport.com/most-common-stereotypes-about-america/>)
- To avoid insulting someone, be respectful and better understand how you will be perceived. For more information, please go to **how to stay out of trouble** (<http://blog.travelworldpassport.com/how-to-stay-out-of-trouble-while-discovering-different-cultures/>)
- A resource on nonverbal communication: **preparing for study abroad** (<http://melibeeglobal.com/2010/10/preparing-for-study-abroad-non-verbal-communication/>)

A true story – a group of USF students were arguing with a group of students in the host country (France) about US policy, and the French students were speaking derogatorily about the US president, when one USF student replied: "If I knew who your president was, I would say bad things about him too!" The French students laughed....

## STAY INFORMED

USF Education Abroad registers all USF students with the US Department of State into the Smart traveler Enrollment Program. The benefit is twofold. On one hand enrollment lets the local embassy know you are there and how to contact you. On the other hand, enrollment means you get notices and information that is sent out by the local embassy. This information can be invaluable to you when security or safety issues arise.

Below are the types of messages/alerts that could be sent to you while abroad:

- **Emergency Messages** are issued to inform U.S. citizens about imminent events or threats that can affect their personal security and that may require immediate action by U.S. citizens on their behalf, or by others, to ensure their safety.
- **Security Messages** are issued to communicate information about personal security threats of a general or systemic nature, or events/threats where local law-enforcement has taken measures to address or provide enhanced security to the general public.
- **Travel Alerts** are issued to quickly inform you about relatively short-term conditions posing imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens/nationals. Examples of events that might prompt a Travel Alert include terrorist attacks, coups, election-related demonstrations or violence, or demonstrations related to an international conference or sporting event.
- **Travel Warnings** are issued to advise U.S. citizens about the risks of travel to countries where conditions are dangerous or unstable and/or where the U.S. government's ability to assist its citizens is constrained because of an Embassy drawdown or closure.

You can create your own account and use it anytime you travel internationally. Just go to this site and follow the instructions: <https://step.state.gov/step>. You will get notices during the dates of travel that you add to your itinerary.

Between now and your departure, it is your responsibility to stay informed about developments in the country/countries where you will spend time (including any countries you'll visit that are not part of your study abroad program's itinerary). You can access the U.S. Department of State's Web page at <http://travel.state.gov> for information about the country/countries where your program will take you.

We ask that you read this information carefully before you depart the United States. Please feel free to call the



Education Abroad office if you have any questions or concerns regarding the information on this site.

### Research Tools:

- View travel warnings and area information: [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov)
- Traveler's Health from the Center for Disease and Prevention: [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
- Emergency Notifications and On-site contacts: [www.osac.gov/Posts/index.cfm](http://www.osac.gov/Posts/index.cfm)
- U.S. Embassy and Consulate Abroad: [www.usembassy.state.gov](http://www.usembassy.state.gov)
- State Department Safety Tips for Going Abroad: [www.studentsabroad.state.gov/html-site/Emergencies.html](http://www.studentsabroad.state.gov/html-site/Emergencies.html)
- UHCG Insurance: <http://www.unitedhealthcareglobal.com/>
- Hillsborough County Health Department: [www.hillscountyhealth.org](http://www.hillscountyhealth.org)
- Different Cultures: <http://kwintessential.co.uk/resources/country-profiles.html>
- Australian Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/>
- Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada: [http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries\\_pays/menu-eng.asp#C](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/countries_pays/menu-eng.asp#C)
- US Customs: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>
- Links to Foreign Embassies: <http://www.embassy.org/embassies>
- Global Scholar: <http://www.globalscholar.us>
- Students Abroad: <http://studentsabroad.com>

## GET TO KNOW STUDENTS WHO HAVE STUDIED ABROAD

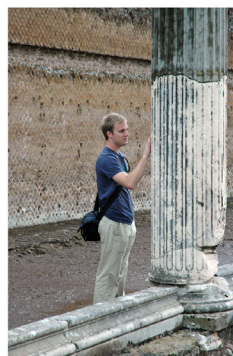
Whether you are trying to decide about which country to travel to, or if you want to prepare for a specific destination, the GloBull Ambassadors are a perfect resource. These are students who have recently studied abroad with USF. Some may have gone on the same program or visited the same country you are interested in. If you have some pressing questions or just want to know more about their experience, contact a Globull Ambassador today. For a list of ambassadors and their contact information, you can visit the [GloBull Ambassadors!](#)



## PREPARE FOR A CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT

Is there a “shock” in “culture shock?” No, not really. The process of adapting to a new culture is most familiarly known as culture shock, but it is a lot more complicated and subtle than the old name implies.

Often while abroad, students sometimes go through experiences that may challenge their pre-conceived notions of how the world works. The process is not an exact step-by-step process and everyone doesn't experience the process of cultural adaptation the same way. In fact, some scholars suggest there are 10 stages while others suggest there are just 5. The details are less important than the concept.



ITALY. 2008

Immersion into a new culture, even one you may have visited before, can challenge your senses and your concepts of who you are and why you are there. Questioning your identity is to be expected. This can produce various emotions, bringing both highs and lows. Yet, if you go with the flow and try not to fight it, the end result is often the same: successful adaptation to your new found home.

One set of stages are named as follows:

1. initial euphoria
2. irritability and hostility
3. gradual adjustment
4. adaptation

Another set with ten stages is Rhinesmith's Ten Stages of Adjustment:

1. initial anxiety
2. initial elation

3. initial culture shock
4. superficial adjustment
5. depression–frustration
6. acceptance of host culture
7. return anxiety
8. return elation
9. re–entry shock
10. reintegration

You can read about Rhinesmith's stages and more here: <http://studentsabroad.com/handbook/adjustments-and-culture-shock.php?country=general>

It is best to welcome the challenge of establishing yourself in a new country. Try not to allow initial negative experiences to taint your education abroad experience. But, if you become concerned that things are not improving, do not hesitate to talk to someone or call the **24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815**.

Some things you can do to help make the process smoother include:

- Research your destination before you leave.
- Learn the local language or at least key phrases.
- As soon as you recover from your jet lag, plunge into the local life in your new home.
- Keep a written or online journal documenting your adventures!
- Consider blogging for USF and check out GoinPlaces

Finally, expect to go through it all over again when you come home to the United States. By that time, you will feel like your new found country is home and the United States may seem very unfamiliar. After a period of time, people will become uninterested in your stories, and you may feel alone. Then would be a great time to consider volunteering as a GloBull Ambassador!

## ADJUSTING TO A DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

When we find ourselves in a new setting – particularly in a new culture – we usually judge and compare everything against “home.” We tend to use our own cultural framework to make sense of our observations and experiences.

It is difficult to generalize about different educational systems around the world. Most undergraduate instruction will include lectures, seminars, laboratory sessions, papers and examinations, but that may be the end of the similarities. Although it may not be explicitly stated in the syllabus, attendance is important. Adjusting to a new system may be compared to the feeling you have in USF courses prior to taking the first exam. You usually understand the discussion and lectures, but not until you take the first exam do you really understand what you are being asked to retain. You may feel this way throughout your semester abroad.

For instance, you may attend lectures, but a larger share of the classroom time may be spent in small tutorial and seminar groups. You may be asked to be an equal contributor to these discussions. Generally speaking, emphasis is put on reading and making use of what you have read in essays and during seminars. Your reading will not usually be based on a textbook or directed in the detailed way that is common at USF. If you are told: “You may wish to have a look at these specific titles,” that implies strong advice that these books should be read! Don’t rely on being told exactly what to do or when to do it.

In many cases, the professor may be expecting you to be reading on your own and ask you for original research and thought in the exam essays. **You will be expected to provide your own motivation and to assume responsibility for your own education and learning, and not to simply wait to be taught the course material.**

It is likely exams will be essay-type. Before you take your first exam, ask for clarification of the grading system. This will help alleviate any surprises when you receive your results! We also recommend speaking to students of the host institution, so as to get a feel for the type of exams, and how to study.



SPRING BREAK IN PRAGUE. 2010

## CONSIDER APPROPRIATE ATTIRE

The first thing that may come to mind as you prepare to pack is, “What should I wear?” Certainly, you will want to learn about the climate and the average highs and lows for the destination you are traveling to. It may be summer in Florida but winter where you will be studying! Also, everyone else in the world uses the metric system, so start practicing with Celsius instead of Fahrenheit. An easy way to do this is go into the weather program you use and change the setting to °C. You will find that 32°F = 0°C, 72°F = 22°C and 100°F = 37°C. Note, this is not a linear progression!

Possibly more importantly is learning what clothing is culturally appropriate and what is not. Here in Tampa, you have a great deal of freedom in what you can wear. In other countries, wearing shorts or shirts that show your shoulders can be highly inappropriate. Think about how you are going to be perceived when studying abroad, including your attire and your actions, language, gestures, etc. There’s no easy “one size fits all” guide of how to dress and act appropriately. Some may take what may be a typical behavior to you as inappropriate, depending on the situation.

You will want to try to blend in and not stand out as a foreigner. Of course, you will stand out, but the more you can minimize it, the better. Researching the local customs and practices will help prepare you to avoid awkward moments. You can discuss this topic with others that have traveled there before. Ask them what they learned about what is acceptable attire. Speak to a GloBull Ambassador, your Program Leader or Advisor. Read up on attire and expectations for your destination on the internet. **Avoid clothing with any form of slang, phrases, profanity, images or gestures** as they do not always translate well. Be careful and avoid even Pro-American phrases. Pro-American sentiments can be taken very negatively abroad as a form as boasting or bragging.

While you are abroad, you must exercise the same safety precautions you would at home. Don’t take the attitude that you are protected and safe because you are anonymous and no one knows you. Don’t travel with anything you are not prepared to lose. Use your common sense, avoid confrontations, try to blend in as much as possible, try to familiarize yourself with the area, ask the locals where the safe part of town is, and if you feel insecure in a certain place, don’t go there. Do not expose yourself to unnecessarily dangerous situations.

It will be difficult to fully hide the fact that you're a foreigner. That may make you more vulnerable to theft and crime. While you can't control everything that happens to you at home or abroad, you can sway the odds by being aware of your appearances and actions and by communication:

### Actions:

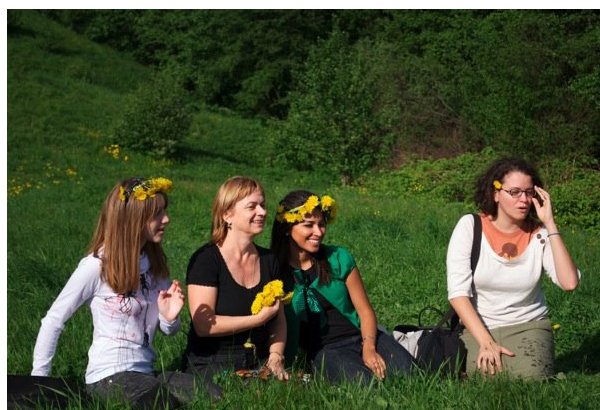
- Try to avoid arriving late at night in cities with which you are not familiar, and take along a reliable guidebook that lists resources and hotels/hostels.
- Research the most common safety and security concerns for your destination. Criminal activity and practices vary by destination.
- Try to stay on well-lit, heavily traveled streets. Avoid shortcuts through alleys. Stay in the middle of the sidewalk; avoid walking close to the street or buildings.
- Carefully chose when and where to withdraw money from ATMs. Criminals often target people immediately after withdrawing cash from ATMs.
- Walk against the flow of traffic so oncoming vehicles can be observed.
- It is preferable to travel with another person. It is not advisable to sleep on a train if you are traveling alone.
- Do not agree to watch the belongings of a person whom you do not know.
- Do not borrow suitcases. Ensure that nothing is inserted into yours.



- Take off your luggage tags after arrival.
- Remember that hitchhiking can be as dangerous abroad as it is in the United States. Hitchhiking is not advisable.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- Never leave handbags/purses/baggage unattended and make sure they are locked. If the item has a shoulder strap, wear it crossing the strap over your body. Do not put valuables in the exterior pockets of book bags or backpacks or in bags that are open at the top.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, comply with local laws, regulations and customs of the host country, community, institution and study abroad program, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Avoid complacency! Bad things can happen to good people.

## ADJUSTMENTS FOR WOMEN

The overwhelming majority of students who study abroad are women and they report back that they have had incredible experiences. However, in certain locations and programs, women may have a difficult time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad, both in public and private interactions between men and women. Some men openly demonstrate their appraisal of women in ways that many women find offensive. It is not uncommon to be honked at, stared at, verbally and loudly approved of, and, in general, to be actively noticed simply for being a woman, and in particular, an American woman. Sometimes the attention can be flattering. Soon, it may become very annoying and potentially even angering or frightening. Local women, who often get the same sort of treatment, have learned through their culture how to respond to the attention.



ALONZO, DAVID. USF IN RUSSIA. 2009

Eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street, which is not uncommon in the U.S., may result in totally unexpected invitations, and some women feel forced to avoid eye contact. You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do. Women can provide support for each other; you may wish to get together several times early in your stay abroad to talk about what does and doesn't work for dealing with unwanted attention. U.S. women are seen as liberated in many ways and sometimes the cultural misunderstanding that comes out of that image can lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

These cultural differences may make male-female friendships more challenging. Consider the implicit messages you are communicating, messages you may not intend in your own cultural context. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging and sometimes difficult experiences are part of the growth of cultural understanding, which is one of the important reasons you are studying abroad.

Female travelers may be more likely to encounter harassment such as unwanted sexual gestures, physical contact, or statements that are offensive or humiliating. Such uncomfortable situations may be avoided by taking the following precautions:

- Dress conservatively; while short skirts and tank tops may be comfortable, they may encourage unwanted attention, and in some countries it is entirely inappropriate – like a woman walking around in a bra and underpants.
- Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods.
- Do not agree to meet a person who you do not know in a non-public place.
- Be aware that some men from other cultures tend to mistake the friendliness of American women for romantic interest.

If, after acknowledging cultural differences, you still feel uncomfortable with what you interpret as sexual harassment,



you should talk with your leader, resident director, or other on-site personnel. This conversation may provide you with some coping skills and a possible action plan to avoid future encounters. It may also help you gain a different perspective by understanding the local customs and attitudes. It could be possible that the behaviors you feel uncomfortable with are behaviors that are also considered unacceptable in the host culture.

If you feel you are being sexually harassed by your fellow American students, speak with your program leader. If you feel you are being sexually harassed by your program leader, resident director, or other on-site personnel, contact the **International Risk and Security Officer at the 24/7 International Assistance Line +1 (813) 317-5815.**

#### **Communication:**

- Keep up with the local news through newspapers, radio and television, and, in the event of disturbances or protests, avoid demonstrations and protests and do NOT get involved.
- Report suspicious events immediately: contact your leader or resident director if you observe suspicious persons within the premises of your educational environment. Act similarly if anything might indicate threats or an actual terrorist attack on the premises or on student activities.
- If you have been a victim of a crime, report this immediately to your leader or resident director. If you wish to speak directly to someone in Education Abroad call (813) 974-4314 or the 24/7 Education Abroad International Assistance Line at (813) 317-5815.
- Do not give information about other students freely. Be wary of questions from people not associated with your program. Do not give out your or anyone else's address or telephone number to strangers. Don't give away your class or field trip schedule.
- Develop a plan with your family at home for regular communication so that in times of heightened political tensions or local incidents, you will be able to communicate directly with your family about your safety and well-being.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions and promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
- Become familiar with the local emergency number (comparable to 911) and the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.

#### **Did you know...?**

- Traffic and swimming accidents are the leading cause of death in travelers.
- You should always use clean water for brushing your teeth and for drinking.
- You should swim only in well-maintained chlorinated pools or in unpolluted rivers or parts of the ocean.

## **HOUSING CONSIDERATIONS**

Your housing may be pre-selected for you or you may be traveling independently where you will need to select your own housing. In either case, please understand that there is no such thing as a 100% "safe" location. Great effort has been made to identify locations where risk can be mitigated, but ultimately it is your responsibility to make good decisions. This means, pay attention to both housing considerations and room considerations. Therefore, pay attention to the following suggestions when you both plan for and arrive at your destination.

#### ***Housing Considerations:***

- Avoid unsafe neighborhoods. Ask the International Risk and Security Officer if you have any doubts at [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu). Sometimes the U.S. Department of State has information about crime in certain locations. You want to avoid locations in a part of town known to have high crime rates, frequent demonstrations, ethnic or political tensions or any other issues which could lead to violence against the hotel or hotel guests.
- Avoid hotels located adjacent to high-profile targets (such as foreign embassies, government offices, etc.) Also, avoid housing in close proximity to train stations or bus stations. These often crowded locations are usually a place of high crime, especially pick-pocketing, robbery and assaults.
- Preference should be given to housing with 24/7 reception. When you have a receptionist 24/7, you can sleep better knowing that unwanted guests are being greeted at the door, and turned away.

If you ever feel unsafe or threatened, make sure to **immediately** notify your program leader or your Education Abroad Advisor.

#### **Room Considerations:**

- When you first enter your room, check it out.
- Check windows, doors & locks. Doors should have a solid deadbolt & peephole
- Select rooms with a solid door chain
- Read hotel information regarding security concerns and limits to liability against theft of guest valuables, in-room safes
- Avoid rooms on the ground floor when possible
- Check for a working telephone with emergency information
- Think Fire Safety!!
  - » Look for posted fire protection and evacuation information in guest rooms
  - » Check fire extinguisher/detectors
  - » Check for a fire sprinkler protection
  - » Avoid rooms above the 7th floor
  - » Identify emergency exits and fire escape routes in the event of a fire
- **Do not give out your room number**
- **Do not open the door unless you expect the person**

#### **Hotel Selection:**

- Avoid hotels in a part of town known to have high crime rates, frequent demonstrations, ethnic or political tensions or any other issues which could lead to violence against the hotel or hotel guests.
- Avoid hotels located adjacent to high-profile targets (such as foreign embassies, government offices, etc.)
- Preference given to hotels with 24/7 reception
- Select hotels with fire sprinkler protection

#### **Room Selection:**

- Avoid rooms on the ground floor or within easy access from the ground
- Avoid rooms directly above the hotel reception area
- Check doors & locks, doors should have a solid deadbolt & peephole
- Select rooms with a solid door chain
- Check windows & locks to make sure they can be opened in the event of a fire, but locks are functioning
- Avoid rooms above the 7th floor; most fire departments can only reach the 7th floor and would make it harder to escape down the stairs in a fire emergency.
- Identify fire escape routes in the event of a fire
- Room safe, check to make sure the locks works
- Look for posted fire protection and evacuation information in guest rooms.
- Read hotel information regarding security concerns and limits to liability against theft of guest valuables, in-room safes?
- Check for a working telephone with emergency information

## ROOMMATES AND GUESTS

All housing on a USF international travel experienced is subject to the [USF Education Abroad Office Resident Handbook](#) 2016-2017 just as if you reside on campus. Therefore, housing is strictly segregated between male and female. There is no co-ed housing. Students who are transitioning may select the gender that they identify with.

It is important to understand that many countries specifically ban guests who are not registered with the hotel or housing facility. It can get you thrown out. In many locations around the world, guest may be heavily restricted or prohibited. You are responsible for the conduct of your guests, regardless of who they are, when they are present in housing. If you intend to have visitors or guests, be aware that you may be subject to disciplinary action because of their behavior. No overnight guests are ever permitted, and this includes every location you are staying in while on a USF Education Abroad experience. Check with your program leader or advisor if unsure.

Generally, they cannot ride the bus with you, go to class with you, go to dinner with you, or otherwise spend any time with you while you are actively participating with your group or program.

Additionally, Education Abroad Office and its representatives reserve the right to ask any non-resident to leave the USF residence at any time. Please refer to the "Visitation" section of the Housing Resident Handbook for additional information.

## TRAVELING AND PACKING

This section will inform you on common traveling and packing concerns that you may for your trip abroad. Before for departure date, you will need to apply for a passport (if you don't already have a valid one). Depending on your travel destination, you may need to apply for a visa. Not all countries require a visa. You will need to ensure that your financial institution is aware that you will be traveling abroad. It is also recommended to bring extra money in the foreign currency of your destination for any unexpected situations. When calculating how much money to bring for your study abroad experience, it is best to create a budget. When traveling abroad, you should leave all items that will not be needed at home. Always bring a digital copy of your valuable documents.

## AIRPORTS AND FLIGHTS

First, **do not** purchase your airline tickets until you are told to do so by your Education Abroad Advisor or your Program Leader. If you purchase your tickets too early and the program is changed or cancelled, you will be responsible for the cost of your tickets. Group ticket purchases are often handled by the Education Abroad Office though you may also be responsible to purchase your own ticket. When flying as a **part of a group**, you must follow the flight itinerary as planned for the group. If you wish to travel outside the group schedule, you will be financially responsible for those additional travel costs.

Airports can be confusing places. This is especially true when you are in a country where you do not speak the language fluently or understand the culture yet. There are a couple of things that you can do to help yourself. One, if possible, is to travel with other people going on the same program. Another suggestion is to talk to your ticket agent or travel agent and try to get a copy of the layout of the airport you will be arriving at. If you are making a connection in a foreign country, find out what gate you will be coming into, what gate you will be going out of and how to get from one to the next. Even if you do all of the pre-planning in the world, complications will likely come up. Almost all airports have information counters where the staff will often speak English.

You may feel tempted by very inexpensive ticket prices online but you must be cautious. Not only compare prices, but compare the terms and conditions. Very cheap tickets also have very restrictive baggage limitations, high change fees and no refunds allowed. Research weight and luggage restrictions of each airline with which you plan on traveling. You do not want to be surprised with extra charges when you check in.

If you want to gather information about the airport (good idea for connections), go to the following site: <http://www.international-airports.com/> or simply search for the name of the airport in question.

In some airports, particularly in India and Africa, a print out of your flight confirmation is required in order to get into the airport at all. When you arrive in your host country, it is advised that you find out about these requirements before you leave the airport, or well in advance before you leave to come home, that way you can be prepared with the proper flight documentation.

You must also keep in mind that airports are potential crime areas. Please be careful with your baggage; **never leave it unattended, and stay away from any unattended bags or packages in public places. Do not check luggage for anyone else onto airplanes, railroads, or buses.** Do not borrow suitcases and do not allow anybody, not even a newfound friend, to put anything in your luggage if you want to avoid the risk of becoming a carrier of drugs or other illegal or dangerous materials.

Take the time to not only research the airlines you will be traveling on, but the airports that you will be visiting, as well. You can learn about the airports you will be flying into or out of, by visiting such sites as <http://airport.airlines-inform.com>. It has maps of the airports you will be traveling to. It also provides reviews and rankings of airlines. Especially if you have connecting flights, knowing the layout of a particular airport can also help you understand how much time you will need between flights. Do not skimp on the time you will need to get from one gate to another. You can also use that time to read about their airport security, and find out about construction updates.





Booking an overseas flight is one of your first challenges when traveling abroad. It can be the easiest thing you do or the most complex, depending on how early you start planning. While we strongly encourage you to purchase your flight early, **please do not do so until you have been officially admitted to the program, and for USF's faculty-led programs, that you have been informed by the Education Abroad office that the program has the minimum enrollment to ensure that it will take place.** If you start early, you will save yourself time and money, since the closer to your trip you get, the higher the fares generally become. Flights also become filled, so start early to ensure yourself a flight when you want it.

Programs deal with flight plans differently. Some programs will arrange to have the entire group fly together while other programs will have no participation in your travel plans. Make sure to find out how involved your program is before you start looking into flights. You do not want to make a flight reservation if you have already paid for one through your program. Also, make sure you find out when and where your program wants you to arrive. Changing tickets can cost you anywhere from \$50 to the cost of another ticket. We recommend that all students traveling abroad purchase trip/travel insurance. In some cases programs have changed their start date or even been canceled due to various circumstances. Travel insurance can cover the cost of any unexpected changes in plan.

If you, or your parents, want to track a flight overseas or at your destination, [www.flightview.com](http://www.flightview.com) will allow you to see where the flight is and whether it's on time or delayed. All you need is the flight number and the airline and the website will track the flight for you!

If you have any special diet requirements, you must notify your airline within a week of your departure in order for them to secure arrangements. Vegetarian, light and kosher meals are possible on most flights.

Please note that it is particularly important to make sure that the name used to purchase your airline tickets EXACTLY matches that on the identification you will be using to travel. If it does not and you find this out in advance of your date of travel, you will need to contact the airline and pay a name-change fee. If this is not realized until you are in the airport, you will likely not be let through security and may need to purchase a new ticket.

## TRAVEL DELAYS AND TRAVEL INSURANCE

International air travel can be an exciting experience, but it can also be extremely frustrating. Many things can happen that can delay or even cancel a particular airline flight. Always plan to arrive at the airport 3 hours before departure. Expect delays on the way to the airport as well as in the airport. You do not want to be stuck in a security line or resolving a ticket issue at check-in when you should be boarding your aircraft.

Here are a few things to keep in mind that can cause a delay:

- Labor Strikes – taxis, public transportation, flight crew workers, baggage handlers, etc.
- Major Events – sporting events, political or economic summits, elections, heads of state visits,
- Religious Events – visit by the Pope, Hajj to Mecca, Holy Week, Passover
- Vacation Season/Holidays
- Protests or Demonstrations
- Terrorism Threats – increased security at airports or police check points
- Natural Disasters such as severe weather, hurricanes, volcanoes or floods

**Travel Insurance** is intended to cover trip cancellation fees, lost luggage, flight accidents and other losses incurred while traveling. Sometimes it covers theft. Look closely at the policy to be sure. It is very important to understand that **all students traveling abroad must be registered through the Education Abroad Office (EAO). EAO then in turn enrolls students in the USF emergency medical and evacuation insurance. The emergency medical and evacuation insurance does not** cover the losses incurred while traveling that travel insurance does. We highly recommend that you secure travel insurance before departure. You can acquire travel insurance through many providers. Usually the airline or travel agent you used to book your tickets will offer insurance. It comes under many different names: trip cancellation, trip protection or travel insurance. Ask and do your research!

**Renters Insurance** may also be available to you. It can sometimes offer compensation for items lost or stolen. Check with an insurance company if you do not have it on campus. See if your policy covers you internationally. If not, sometimes you can purchase a rider to cover your belongings internationally. Remember, if you have any items that turn up lost or stolen, it is your responsibility to pay for to replace them. It is not the universities responsibility to



replace items you had lost or stolen.

Remember, your health, mental health, medical evacuation, and evacuation for natural disaster or political unrest insurance is already provided by registering with the Education Abroad Office. This policy does not include travel insurance or renters insurance. Travel insurance and renters insurance are your responsibility.

You can begin learning about your destination at this wonderful site: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports.html>. Use the Country Information link to learn about the country you are traveling to. Create your own STEP – Smart Traveler Enrollment Program account. This account puts your information in a database so that the U.S. Embassy in your destination country can inform you of security and emergency situations. Look for the “blue suitcase” step icon and follow the link to <http://step.state.gov/step/>.

Students are strongly encouraged to purchase travel and trip cancellation insurance which covers you for any problems/costs associated with your travel – stolen luggage, delayed /cancelled flights, etc.

## PACKING

Before you start planning on what to bring, take a moment to think about what you really need. Often times, you may be able to fit everything into your baggage allotment for the airline, but when you get to your destination, you may find that you may have to walk a mile to the nearest bus stop and then your apartment is on the 5th floor with no elevator! One rule of thumb is if you cannot carry all of your belongings from the first floor of the Marshal Center to the 4<sup>th</sup> floor and back without losing your breath, you packed too much.

There are many other important things to keep in mind when you start to pack. Visit the Students Abroad website hosted by the U.S. Department of State. They have some great tips and tricks you should look into! <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/smart-travel/packing.html>.

Learn about your host countries local amenities as they will greatly impact what you need to pack. Is air conditioning available? Can the local electrical system handle high powered hair driers and curling irons? What are the refrigerators like? Do they use hot water for showers? How do the locals shave without electricity? How will you wash your clothes? You may find that you will have to adapt to a new way of life, a new routine, and many of the things you relied on here are either not available or not practical where you are going. If you can't use it abroad, it is not worth packing!

Here are some general tips to keep in mind:

- **Pack light! You will be carrying your luggage up and down stairs, on and off of buses, trains, and airplanes.**
- Pack your valuables, cash and important documents on your person, in a money belt that can be worn under your clothes
- Don't bring items that require special care such as dry cleaning or ironing; bring items that are easily washed, that dry quickly, and do not wrinkle.
- Electric appliances – note the difference in voltage and purchase a convertor and adaptor plugs as needed. Sometimes it is better to just plan on buying an inexpensive hair dryer when you get to your destination.
- Be aware that certain reading material or literature may offend officials of some countries.
- Keep in mind that some small airlines may even make you check your small carry on luggage. Keep medicines, valuables and documents on your person or in a small purse or bag.
- In your carry-on luggage, put whatever you need for one-night in the event your checked luggage is delayed. Liquids, gels, aerosols, creams and pastes must be 3.4 ounces (100ml) or less per container; must be in 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; the bag limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring in your carry-on and enables TSA officers to screen them quickly. Learn more about the TSA rules here: <http://www.tsa.gov/travel/travel-tips>
- Carry all medications, even over the counter medicines, in their original container. Make sure you bring copies of any prescriptions. If traveling with syringes have a doctor's note. Do not pack your medications in your checked luggage or your carry-on bag. Keep it on your person or in a purse or bag you can always carry with you. You must be able to have access to them.
- Pack larger containers of liquids in your checked luggage. Make sure you put them in plastic zip-lock bags to avoid messy spills.
- Bring an extra collapsible empty bag for your return in case your one suitcase is slightly over-weight.
- Do not bring irreplaceable or valuable items with you if you can avoid it. Leave expensive jewelry and

heirlooms at home. In fact, even fake jewelry can cause problems. Remember, you are going to try and blend into the local culture of your intended destination.

**PACK LIGHT!!** Really, we mean it. There will not be porters available, so you must be able to manage your bags yourself. Particularly for those programs which require travelling from location to location, you should only take what you, by yourself, can carry for 2-3 city blocks. Also it is important to note that fewer and fewer airlines are allowing travelers to check luggage for free. The more bags you have, the more costly it will be to fly, anywhere \$25-100 per bag. International flights have very strict limitations on baggage size and weight. If you are travelling on domestic flights within your host country, the restrictions are more stringent. Do not waste money on paying for over-weight baggage. Mark your luggage tags ahead of time with a clear indication of your name, address and phone number of your destination. Also keep this information inside your bags.

Keep your luggage close to you and locked with a TSA-approved lock!

If you intend to travel before or after your program, make arrangements for storage of your luggage. Do not assume that your luggage can be stored at your housing location during dates outside of the program. Daily storage charges in train stations and airports can be quite costly.

Get a backpack – they do not weigh much, are durable and it makes moving with your luggage easier. Wheeled bags can be good at airports, but in-country you may be walking on uneven cobblestone walkways and climbing stairs, which makes them very impractical. Don't bring anything you can't easily replace or is of high-value.

Don't bring many items that require dry cleaning or ironing; bring items that are easily washed and that dry quickly. While most locations will have laundry facilities, they may be limited, and you want to spend as little time as possible doing laundry and finding dry cleaners, which can also be very costly.

Speak with your faculty director or Education Abroad advisor about acceptable clothing for your destination. What is "in" here may be unacceptable in many countries, or may serve as a way of accentuating your national identity in an unflattering way. For example, in many countries, most people do not wear shorts unless at a beach, and in some, particularly for women, showing your legs is categorically unacceptable. Men should not wear pants that show undergarments, hats are not to be worn inside buildings, and very baggy and loose t-shirts and jeans are not to be worn in many places around the world. Also note that many of the popular places of worship (such as many of the cathedrals in Vatican City) require you to be completely covered. Particularly for women, knowing where you are going and what is acceptable is very important; often in many countries and cultures, men will take what you wear as an open invitation. If you have the opportunity to speak to someone from the country to which you will be travelling, ask how the styles here differ from those in their home country.

## CARRY-ON LUGGAGE

We suggest you include:

- An extra pair of eyeglasses or contact lenses and cleaning solution (less than three ounces)
- A map or directions to your destination
- Any medications you use (keep medications in their original labeled container to make customs processing easier; carry a letter with you from your physician attesting to your need to take them, especially if your medications contain narcotics)
- Basic toiletries (containers must be less than three ounces each and all must be placed in a quart-sized, clear plastic bag)
- A sweater or sweatshirt
- A change of clothes.
- **Do not pack** any sharp items such as jackknives, scissors, etc. in your carry-on luggage.
- **Do not pack** personal documents (passports, visas, airline tickets, etc.) in your carry-on luggage

Be aware of common scams in your host country! Use helpful resources, such as the Department of State website, to prepare yourself for scams that are widespread in your area. Pickpocket's are experts at what they do and are becoming ever more cunning in their methods of deceit. For example, the "Trojan Horse" scam is often used in Europe and includes a local with a hollow suitcase on wheels who waits for tourists to look away from their bags and then swoops in and places the suitcase over the tourist's bag and wheels it away!



## COMMUNICATION

Communication is key! Definitely plan to have a cell phone while overseas, whether you use your own or buy an inexpensive one in-country. Free international text messaging services are easy to download onto your phone and extremely user friendly. If you don't need your laptop don't take it. Check with your faculty to see if it's required. It's important to know that converters change voltage and adapters change the plug that goes into the wall. Stay connected to family and friends while away, but make sure to immerse yourself and experience all that your study abroad program has to offer.

### USING YOUR AMERICAN CELL PHONE

Many travelers want to save money on expensive cell phone plans and attempt to do all of their communication using internet applications. This would be a grave mistake. Your cell phone can be your lifeline in an emergency and "Murphy's Law" dictates that if anything can go wrong, it will. That means, if you did not prepare to have a cell phone that can make and receive international calls then you may suffer an incident in a place with no WiFi and have no way to call for help.

Sometimes you can simply call your phone company to activate global coverage. You may need to unlock your phone and buy a sim card. Or, you may just want to wait and purchase a disposable phone when you get into the country. Check with other travelers to see what worked for them. Then, plan on getting a real phone.

Here are some tips:

- Call your cell company to determine costs and chose a rate plan that works for your needs. It's very important to understand roaming charges.
- Confirm the service fees of using your data packages overseas. If you're uncertain, consider turning off your data package while abroad and use WiFi instead. Text and email messages can be very expensive if you're using your data package.
- If your phone is "unlocked" for international use then you may be able to purchase a local SIM card in your destination country for inexpensive local use and avoid roaming charges completely.
- If you have an iPhone, unlocking the phone may void the warranty. Please confirm this with your carrier.
- Even though there are many companies advertising SIM cards for use in Europe for sale here in the U.S., consider buying your local SIM card in your destination country. This will ensure you have access to assistance should you encounter any difficulty.
- In most main city centers in Europe, the cell phone companies and kiosks are accustomed to working with foreigners and many speak English.

You should check with your carrier to see if your phone will work at your destination and any travel destinations you plan to visit. If so, you may be able to activate the international roaming service that would allow you to receive and make calls while abroad. Consider having your provider unlock your phone so that you can replace your U.S. based SIM card with a local SIM card (each SIM card comes with its own number). Having a local SIM card would ensure that you can make and receive local calls, in addition to calls to the U.S. without incurring roaming charges.

Students have also found it easy to buy a cell phone upon arrival at their program site. You can usually rent or purchase from local vendors for an affordable cost after you arrive. When purchasing a cell phone and SIM card abroad, you will most likely pre-pay your minutes as you go.

### USING GSM CELL PHONE

Most countries around the globe - more than 205 at last count - have adopted the Global Service for Mobile (GSM) wireless technology and if you plan on studying overseas, outside of North America and want the convenience of carrying a cellular phone, then you're going to need a GSM cell phone.

The United States did not standardize and consequently competing wireless standards emerged from the various wireless carriers. In the US our cell phone service is most likely to be the CDMA type (Verizon and At&T), or perhaps



TDMA or even iDEN or AMPS. While there are some North American GSM cellular providers such as T-Mobile, they unfortunately operate on a different (1900mhz) frequency than is used abroad. However, there are some multi-band world phones now available through these US carriers.

Unlike typical cell phones in the US, GSM world cell phones do not come with phone numbers programmed into them. Instead customers activate their mobile phones by popping in SIM cards, which determine your cell number and the actual service.

After you arrive at your destination, you can purchase a pre-paid SIM card which gives you a local phone number and local calling rates are relatively inexpensive for you to call other people in the country you're visiting, and easy and normal for them to call to you on your local number, too. Best of all, incoming calls are free regardless of where they originate.

You can replenish your airtime on the SIM card by purchasing an airtime voucher in one of the local currency denominations. They are available at most newsstands, kiosks and convenience stores. The airtime vouchers are scratch cards that have a pin code which you simply key into your phone for immediate credit.

## PHONE APPS FOR WIFI/INTERNET CONNECTION

If you bring a smart phone, you may already be familiar with apps that can help improve your communication with friends and family. The Education Abroad Office 24/7 International Assistance Phone is already set up to use WhatsApp, Twitter, and Skype. But it is always best to make a regular phone call to the 24/7 International Assistance Line at +1-813-317-5815 to have the best chance of immediate response.

24-7 International Assistance  
WhatsApp: Risk Security Office 813-317-5815  
Twitter: @USFchamberlain  
Skype: ben.chamberlain.usf

Below are a couple of examples of available services. Remember, you can still text 24-7 International Assistance Line at +1-813-317-5815 and call 24-7 International Assistance Line at +1-813-317-5815 the old fashioned way!

**WhatsApp** – This is a free international text message app that uses your mobile cell number, but does not offer voice calls. Users can create groups, send each other unlimited images, video and audio media messages.  
<http://www.whatsapp.com>

**Viber** – this app offers free text messaging and free voice calls to other Viber users, and has group text messaging. It is available for the iPhone, Android phones, BlackBerry but not for Nokia and Symbian.  
<http://www.viber.com/en/>

**VoIP** (Voice over Internet Protocol) is a service that allows you to make phone calls with a web service provider using a computer with an Internet connection. Skype and Vonage are both companies that are becoming popular and easy to use. It is typically free to sign up and use if you're speaking with someone using the same VoIP service accounts. You can also call regular land lines and cell phones for a reasonable per minute charge. If you use this type of service, you'll want to set up your account before you leave.

## WHETHER OR NOT TO TAKE YOUR LAPTOP

If you do not need your laptop, we recommend not taking it. Consider what kind of work you will be doing. Will you need to take extensive notes, construct presentations, or collaborate in groups? In some developing countries, a laptop computer is a sign of wealth and openly carrying it around may expose you to the risk of theft. Always check with your Program Leader, first. At a minimum, if you need a laptop take an old one so that if it is lost or stolen, it is not a big loss for you.

If your laptop, camera or any personal property is lost or stolen abroad, it is your responsibility. USF will not replace it. It is best to investigate getting theft or international renters insurance before you depart. It is important to keep in mind that connectivity can be unreliable or even non-existent where you are going.





Sometimes, WiFi can be very expensive and you may be charged for bandwidth or time spent online. You might even find that an Ethernet connection might be the only way to connect, and if so, check if you need to bring your own cable. Consider whether the computer lab at your overseas university or even your hotel might be enough to get the job done. Then, all you may have to pack will be your flash drive.

If you do take and use your laptop overseas, it is recommended not to access bank accounts or transmit vital personal information while linked to open WiFi networks in airports, hotels or coffee shops. Make sure to only use trusted connections that are password protected for these tasks. If you were considering your laptop for communication, consider using apps such as the ones we discussed earlier for your smart phone such as Skype, Tango, Facetime, Google Voice, WhatsApp or Viber.



SUMMER IN PERU. 2008

## CONVERTERS AND ADAPTORS

There are currently 15 types of electrical outlet plugs in use today, each of which has been assigned a letter by the US Department of Commerce International Trade Administration (ITA), starting with A and moving through the alphabet. These letters are completely arbitrary: they don't actually mandate anything. There are also different voltages and frequencies used in different countries. What does all this mean? It means you may need an adapter and /or a converter to be able to charge your phone or use your hair dryer abroad.

### Adapters:

- The adapter does not change the voltage coming out of a wall. It adapts your US plug to fit into one of the various socket configurations around the world. (See below)
- Grounded adapters have three posts, non-grounded adapters have only two.
- Obviously a grounded plug is safer, but you might not be able to plug it in if you are staying at an older hotel or B&B.

### Converters (Transformers);

- Converters change the voltage; they step up or down the voltage.
- Converters should be used only with "electric" products that are simple heating devices, use little power or have mechanical motors. Examples are cell phone or laptop power supplies, hair dryers, steam irons, shavers, toothbrushes or small fans.
- Converters are not designed for "continuous duty" and should only be used for short periods of time (1 to 2 hours). Additionally, most converters can only be used for ungrounded appliances (2 pins on the plug). Converters must be unplugged from the wall when not in use.

[Click here](#) for a global map showing the spread of the different plug types used around the world.

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the countries of the world with their respective plug and outlet types, voltage and frequency.

This information is provided by <http://www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets/> Electrical service varies throughout the world. Most outlets will not accept the two- or three-pronged plugs that are standard in the United States. Therefore, if you intend to take small appliances you will need a set of adapter plugs that will "adapt" U.S. plugs to the plug system of your host country. Additionally, you will need a voltage converter to "convert" the U.S. voltage of your electronic device to the local voltage. These items can be purchased at electronics stores such as Radio Shack or Best Buy. Electric appliances, such as curling irons and hairdryers do not normally work well on foreign voltages even with a converter. If you are going to be in a country for some duration, it is often advisable to purchase these items abroad.

If you are bringing expensive electronic equipment such as a computer, obtain all necessary conversion information from a professional before departure.

## STAYING CONNECTED WITH HOME

It is your responsibility to notify family that you have arrived safely abroad. However, if you encounter a flight delay abroad, do not hesitate to call the 24/7 International Assistance Line and we can help facilitate communication with people concerned about you.

Also, your travel abroad as a USF student is protected by FERPA – the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. That means that we need special permission from you to discuss your activities with your family, friends or guardians. You were requested to list someone as your emergency contact, and we can call them and speak to them freely about an emergency where you may not be able to speak on your behalf. Those situations generally are rare and would involve being incapacitated in a hospital, missing or arrested.

Therefore, it is important to make sure family and friends are kept informed of your day to day activities.

### Plan on Managing Homesickness

It is very normal to feel homesick while abroad. One way to manage homesickness is to call a loved one at home. Do not feel hesitant to reach out to family and friends. Sometimes just hearing a friendly voice over the phone can really help! However, relying on this every time you feel homesick can actually not be good for you and make you feel even more homesick. Then again, ignoring homesickness and “toughing it out” is not effective. So, be prepared to seek out other ways to get over your homesickness such as engaging in local activities, journal writing or making new friends.

### Too Much of a Good Thing

Laptops and computers keep us connected to our friends and family, news, social media, chat, email, video, and much more. While these can be handy, they can also prevent you from “being in the moment” by tethering you to people and events back home.

Try not to isolate yourself to your room or internet cafes – make the most of your time abroad! This is the perfect time to disconnect from the internet and social media and enjoy a whole new world.

One of the biggest regrets of students when they return home is that they did not take advantage of the many opportunities that were possible when studying abroad because they spent all their free time talking to friends and family back home.

Go out and experience what the world has to offer!

## HEALTH AND SAFETY

Your health and safety abroad are of utmost importance to the USF System, and we hope they are for you as well. This module is going to spend some time familiarizing you with the health and safety resources USF has to offer as well as outlining some of your responsibilities in this endeavor.

If possible, start working on the activities discussed in this section at least 8 weeks prior to departure! When you have completed the review of Pre-Departure Health Considerations, you should be well on your way to having a healthy experience abroad by completing the following tasks.

## HEALTH CONSIDERATIONS AT YOUR DESTINATION

Prior to your departure, you should review worldwide health information and country-specific health requirements for all countries in which you will study, as well as those you think you will visit. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list/> and U.S. Department of State <http://travel.state.gov/content/>





[passports/en/country.html](https://www.cdc.gov/passports/en/country.html) websites are valuable resources.

Take a moment to look up your destination on the CDC and DOS websites and list the recommendations they offer in the box below.

## IMMUNIZATIONS

All countries recommend that travelers be up-to-date on routine immunizations (but check with your doctor or health care professional before getting any vaccine – particularly if you have allergies or other health conditions which could cause complications):

- Tetanus-diphtheria-pertussis (DTP)
- Hepatitis B
- Polio
- Meningitis
- Chicken pox (Varicella)
- Measles, mumps, rubella (MMR)
- Influenza



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Some immunizations require a series or spacing for protection (as long as three months for a series of shots), so allow as much time as possible for immunization.

## ZIKA VIRUS

The CDC has issued a **Level 2 Travel Alert** (Practice Enhanced Precautions) for all travelers to the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, Puerto Rico and South America due to ongoing transmission of the Zika Virus through mosquito bites in numerous countries in the above regions. For a list of all Zika-affected countries visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/geo/index.html>

According to the CDC, about 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus will become ill. The most common symptoms are fever, rash, joint pain, conjunctivitis, muscle pain, and headache. Symptoms usually last up to a week. Infection with the Zika virus usually does not require hospitalization and deaths from this virus are rare. There are no vaccines or medication to prevent this virus. All persons traveling to these areas are strongly encouraged to exercise standard precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

Zika virus can be spread from a pregnant woman to her unborn baby causing significant neurological birth defects and other poor pregnancy outcomes. The CDC is recommending that women who are pregnant in any trimester consider postponing travel to countries where Zika virus is present. If travel cannot be postponed, the CDC is recommending that pregnant women talk to your doctor first and strictly follow the CDC's guidelines to prevent mosquito bites

Any woman who is pregnant or thinks she may be pregnant, traveled to the above regions, and has experienced the above symptoms is strongly recommended to contact their physician for further consultation.

If you have further question regarding the Zika virus or other medical concerns regarding traveling outside of the US, contact Student Health Services Travel Clinic at (813) 974-2331.

For more information on Mosquito Bite Prevention for Travelers, click [here](#). To view the most up-to-date Student Health Services statement, please follow this link: [www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-health-services/services/zika-virus.aspx](http://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-health-services/services/zika-virus.aspx)

## COMPLETING THE MEDICAL INFORMATION QUESTIONNAIRE

The most important questionnaire you need to fill out in your Education Abroad application is the Medical Information



Questionnaire. The questionnaire will not be used in the decision whether to accept you into the program. However, it is a mandatory form that must be completed within 1 week after opening the application, and no later than 6 weeks prior to departure.

This form will be reviewed by the Director of USF Student Health Services or his designee, the Director of Education Abroad, the International Risk and Security Officer, the Associate Director of Education Abroad, and the Assistant Director of Education Abroad. It is important that USF Student Health Services and the Education Abroad Office be aware of any health conditions which might affect your ability to fully enjoy and participate in this education abroad program. The information you provide will be used by USF Health Student Health Services and the Education Abroad Office to help you prepare for your education abroad experience as well as to provide appropriate assistance to you should the need arise during your experience abroad.

The information you provide will be kept confidential as required by law and by professional ethical standards. In an emergency, this form may provide critical health information to the medical professionals treating you and others who may be assisting you in obtaining treatment. We ask that you disclose all of your health history honestly. In case of an emergency or illness, the ability to coordinate care depends on this information being accurate. Failure to complete your health form accurately may cause delays in care or prevent treatment you may need.

Disclosure will be made only to persons having a genuine need to know in the case of management of an illness or emergency.

**USF strongly recommends that you voluntarily share information with your faculty leader, host family, or the host institution's resident director. Students with chronic conditions are encouraged to talk to their faculty leader about plans to manage their condition abroad.**

Make sure you are complete and thorough. Your well-being abroad will depend on it.

## MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES

If you have any questions regarding medical problems, immunization requirements, or other health issues that may affect your ability to successfully and completely participate in the program, you are expected to consult with a physician prior to departure.

### **Make an appointment by calling USF Student Health Services at (813) 974-2331.**

Even if the countries you plan to visit have no required immunizations to enter, but you have a chronic disease, a pre-existing medical condition or are on regular prescription medications, you should visit a health practitioner to discuss managing your condition and/or your medications abroad. This discussion may also include obtaining recommended, but not required vaccinations. Remember, not all family physicians are certified in international travel medicine.

Also, we know that more and more students with mental health conditions or histories are attending college. Today's students report struggling with bi-polar disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, stress management, family or other relationships, career decision-making, cultural identity, interpersonal concerns, sexual assault, and many others. With a combination of medications and therapy, the vast majority of these students have productive and enjoyable experiences at home and abroad.

Make your appointment **6-8 weeks before departure.**

This is especially important if you:

- Are not up-to-date on your immunizations
- Have a pre-existing condition or chronic disease
- If you are currently taking prescription medications since some medicines are unavailable or illegal
- Are traveling to areas that have higher risk of infectious diseases or other health risks such (e. Africa, Asia, Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Russia and the Middle East)

## MEDICAL IDs SAVE LIVES

USF Student Health Services recommends that if you have a pre-existing condition or chronic condition, that it is a good idea for you to consider purchasing a Medical ID before you travel abroad. If you are confused whether you should



or not, discuss your concerns with a healthcare practitioner at Student Health Services.

Medical IDs are a simple way to communicate important information to first-responders in an emergency. With custom medical IDs there are a lot of features to consider. You can print the order form [here](#) or go to this website <http://www.identifyyourself.com/> to see what options are available that best fit your lifestyle.

## STUDENTS WITH DISABILITY SERVICES

The university is an Equal Opportunity/Equal Access employer and therefore complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) and all other federal and state laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of disability or handicap. Human Resources oversees the university's Disability and Accommodations policy (#0-108) as it relates to employment by determining eligibility for accommodation, and by reviewing and approving or denying requests for accommodation.

Do you have a disability(s) that will require accommodation(s) while abroad? If yes, please make sure to first visit with Student Disability Services. You can discuss what accommodations(s) you may need to be able to participate abroad.

Even if you are already registered with SDS, meet with SDS staff to discuss your needs. Ideally, this process must start at least six (6) weeks prior to departure to allow for evaluation and implementation of any accommodation. If you do not timely disclose your disability or request accommodations, USF may not be able to evaluate and implement an accommodation. More time is needed to manage significant accommodation requests.

- Register with Students with Disabilities Services (SDS)
- Request a SDS Verification Letter be sent to the Education Abroad Advisor
- Meet with the Education Abroad Advisor, Program Leader and SDS Coordinator as appropriate
- Understanding Disability Culture
- The Americans with Disabilities Act does not necessarily accompany you as you travel abroad. Research the legislation and approach to persons with disabilities within the culture you will visit.

## MEDICINE AND HEALTH-RELATED PRODUCTS ABROAD

If you have a pre-existing medical condition that may require treatment or need prescription medication while traveling, be sure to bring an adequate supply in the original container as well as a prescription with your physician's explanation of the condition and generic and brand names of the medication and dosage information.

Also, know that some common prescription medications in the U.S. are illegal abroad. Check with the embassies of the countries you expect to visit to make sure your prescriptions and over-the-counter medications are permissible.

Do not plan on sending medications abroad since it will require customs paperwork and may be delayed in delivery. Be sure to maintain your usual dosage and pattern of taking your medication while you're abroad and ask your physician how to make adjustments due to any time zone changes.

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## PRE-DEPARTURE MEDICAL CHECKLIST

The Pre-Departure Medical Checklist is a useful mechanism to improve communication between you and your program leaders and assistants regarding your medical needs while still keeping your private information private.

### ☒ **Meet with a medical professional certified in International Travel Medicine**

If you use prescription medications, have a chronic disease or other pre-existing condition, make an appointment with the USF Travel Medicine Clinic at 813-974-2331 or other medical professional certified in international travel medicine to make a plan for managing your situation abroad. Review the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations for your destination countries here: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>. (If you did not fully disclose your health conditions, make sure you update your Medical Information Questionnaire.)

☒ **Verify you have had all of the required immunizations**

It is the responsibility of all participants to obtain required immunizations (if any) for entry to the country in which their program is located and for return to the United States. These requirements change frequently and it is the participant's responsibility to keep informed about them. USF Education Abroad recommends that all participants our programs consult their USF Travel Medicine Clinic. Not all family physicians are certified in international travel medicine. To prepare for your appointment, you should consult the CDC to learn what vaccinations and inoculations are they recommend. We also advise every participant to read and heed the "Travel Health Tips for Students Studying Abroad" on that website.

☒ **Review availability and legality of your prescriptions in host country**

Some countries do not allow certain medications into the country. Examples of these medications include some pain medications (Tylenol #3, Vicodin, etc.), prescription sleeping medications, medications for panic and relaxation (e.g. Xanax), and ADD or ADHD medications (Adderall, Ritalin, etc.) If you have a question about this, contact the embassy of the country or countries to which you are traveling. You may be able to buy some over-the-counter medications, but it would be a good idea to bring what you need – these may include cold medicine like Mucinex, allergy pills such as Claritin, anti-diarrheal medicines, etc. When you do take prescription medications with you, make a list of them and keep that list with you at all times.

☒ **Ensure you have enough medication to last the duration of your stay**

Even if legal to import, many U.S. prescriptions are not available outside of the United States. You should bring enough of your medication to last the entire program (and pack it only in your carry-on bag in the original prescription bottles). You should also bring, if possible, copies of prescriptions, written with the generic (or scientific) drug name, as trade names vary from country to country.

☒ **Review potential reactions from taking your medication**

Some prescription medications may have severe reactions when taken with alcohol; it would likely be a good idea to look at any interactions your prescriptions might have. (Example: benzodiazepines such as Xanax + alcohol = a dangerous combination)

☒ **Inform program leader of chronic condition, if desired**

If you have a chronic condition (epilepsy, diabetes, a severe anaphylactic allergy, etc.), you may want to inform your program leader/resident director in case of an emergency, but you are not required to do so. This might also be good information to share with your host family and/or roommates.

☒ **Inform program leader of food/environmental allergies, dietary restrictions, or other limitations, if desired**

If you have food/environmental allergies, dietary restrictions, or other limitations, you may want to inform your program leader/resident director, but you are not required to do so. We have learned that sharing this information can assist you later on in the program. This information might also be good to share with your host family and/or roommates.

☒ **Review UHCG policies**

While traveling abroad, doctors and hospitals may expect immediate cash payment for health services. You are provided with comprehensive medical insurance through UHCG. To arrange for direct payment by UHCG for an appointment or hospitalization, UHCG should be contacted in advance at UHCG Customer Service at +1-410-453-6330 (Mon-Fri 8:30AM-4:30PM). If advance payment cannot be arranged, retain all receipts and complete a UHCG claim form when you return to the United States.

☒ **Consider bringing your own feminine products for convenience**

For women, it might be helpful to bring your own feminine products. They are likely available in your destination country, but may not what you are used to in the U.S.

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In Summary:

- **Plan ahead** since some common prescriptions



and over the counter medications in the U.S. are illegal or unavailable abroad, ask at Student Health Services.

- » Check with the USF Travel Clinic to make sure your medications are permissible overseas. Medications that are narcotic or psychotropic in nature may have some restrictions and require additional documentation.
- **Bring an adequate supply** of your medications, plus an additional week of supply in the original, labeled container. Also, bring a written prescription for each medication from your doctor during your travels. Remember this also goes for vitamins, supplements and over-the-counter drugs, too.
  - » **Prescription glasses and contacts are not covered by insurance** and hard to replace abroad! Bring 2 sets and your favorite contact lenses solution.
  - » **Bring what you are especially familiar and comfortable with.** Your favorite or preferred contraceptives or feminine hygiene products may not be easily available. Remember that AIDS and STDs are world-wide epidemics – condoms in some countries may be of substandard quality.
  - » **Mini First Aid kit.** [Here is an example from the Mayo Clinic.](#)
- Other items for personal health protection include: Hat, Sunglasses, Insect repellent, and UVA/UVB Sun block
- Contraceptives, feminine hygiene products etc. in countries where these items are not easily found: Remember that AIDS and STDs are world-wide epidemics – condoms in some countries may be of substandard quality.

## PREPARING FOR JET LAG

There are a number of stressors that are associated with study abroad and jet lag may be one of the most confounding. Jet lag can affect your mood, the ability to concentrate, and physical and mental performance. In fact, many mental health experts agree that jet lag can trigger a mental health issue that you may never have experienced before. Therefore, it is very important to prepare to deal with jet lag before you go!

Some suggestions offered by international travelers include:

1. Set your watch to local time before landing
2. Drink plenty of water to stay hydrated when you arrive
3. **DO NOT SLEEP WHEN YOU LAND! DO NOT SLEEP WHEN YOU LAND!** Go to sleep at your normal time in the current location

A great source for preparing for jet lag comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/jet-lag>. The CDC suggests the following:

### Before Travel

- Exercise, eat a healthful diet, and get plenty of rest.
- A few days before you leave, start going to bed an hour or two later than usual (before traveling west) or earlier than usual (before traveling east) to shift your body's clock.
- Break up a long trip with a short stop in the middle, if possible.

### During Travel

- Avoid large meals, alcohol and caffeine.
- Drink plenty of water.
- On long flights get up and walk around periodically.
- Sleep on the plane if you can.

### After You Arrive

- Don't make any important decisions the first day.
- Eat meals at the appropriate local time.
- Spend time in the sun.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid excess alcohol or caffeine.
- If you are sleepy during the day, take short naps (20–30 minutes) so you can still sleep at night.
- Talk to your doctor about taking medicine to help you sleep at night.



## STAYING HEALTHY WHILE ABROAD

Regardless of the type of international experience you will be on while a student at USF, we hope to make it abundantly clear that the activities you engage in must be of the low risk variety. We understand there will be many tempting adventurous activities offered to you, but if any of those activities could cut your experience short, you need to avoid them at all costs. You have invested a great deal of time and money, so we want you to make the most of it. There will be many opportunities for fun, and we certainly want you to have a great time. Just do so responsibly by following our guidance in this section.

### DEFENSIVE EATING

The single most common health issue abroad comes from eating foods that are either spoiled or are not readily accepted by your stomach. Traveling abroad requires defensive eating habits. Take note of any environmental allergies, food allergies, or dietary restrictions and share them with your program leader, assistant or preceptor. Plan ahead if you have a restrictive diet. Ask for help from Student Health Services in planning your food intake if necessary.

Be prepared to be challenged by a new local cuisine. This is a great opportunity as many cultures develop around the local food they eat, but take your time and ease into it. Adjusting to a new location can take a toll on your health so do not try to experiment with new food items too early on. Provided the food is not on your list of dietary restrictions or allergies, do make an attempt to try new foods. Of course, if you cannot stomach the local cuisine, make sure to ask for food that can sustain you. You may wish to pack some processed food such as health bars or snacks that you can fall back on if you need a quick bite to eat.

While contaminated food and water is more prevalent in the developing world, you can suffer from stomach and intestinal problems even in developed countries. Take a moment to review helpful information from the U.S. Department of States Students Abroad website. <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/health/staying-healthy.html>

Please follow these food and water precautions when traveling abroad:

- Do not drink tap water and stay away from ice cubes. Don't even brush your teeth with tap water. Fortunately, bottled water is for sale in most parts of the world. Check tamper seals on the bottles to help ensure quality for safe drinking.
- Bottled or canned beverages are usually okay to drink.
- Boiled beverages, such as coffee and tea are also generally safe.
- If you are traveling to remote locations, pack water-purification tablets, iodine, chlorine, or water filtration devices to make the water potable.
- Avoid unpasteurized dairy products.
- Stay away from raw or uncooked meat and shellfish.
- Unpeelable fruit (such as grapes and berries), raw vegetables and salad greens are likely rinsed in local tap water. Be careful when ordering these.
- Beware of foods sold by street vendors, especially in developing countries. Do not eat sauces, salsas, or anything else that has been sitting on any table for a long period of time.



USF CHINESE LEARNING IN THE CULTURE PROGRAM -- TIER II. 2010

### ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES VS. LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Please keep in mind that your travel on a USF activity is not designed to provide you with adventurous experiences.

Adventure tourism is not our bag. The reason is simple. You are investing a lot of money and time into this experience to advance your educational career. Any one of the activities discussed below can lead to an injury or even death, ending your experience for good. Keep the "STUDY" in international study-abroad.



Another reason has to do with what is covered by our insurance. Certain activities are considered high-risk and are not supported while attending any study abroad or international program. These banned activities include but are not limited to surfing; cliff diving; scuba diving\*; skiing; bungee jumping; parachuting; hang gliding; mountain climbing; running with the bulls; driving a motor vehicle or swimming\* with no life guard present.

The **USF Risky Business Rule of Thumb**: Does it need a helmet? If you have to think about whether or not the activity you are interested in could be dangerous, **DO NOT DO IT!**

Therefore, USF expects that no one will participate in any risky activities outside of the program itinerary. Otherwise, if you do, you may be held fully responsible and accountable for your own well-being.

*\*There are exceptions when they pertain to the educational goals of your program, but even then compliance with licensing and training are strictly enforced. Speak to your program leader or advisor for more information.*

## DRIVING A MOTOR VEHICLE ABROAD – NOT!

You may be tempted to rent cars, mopeds, or motorbikes during your time abroad, but often without thinking about the risks of driving in a country where the rules of the road are unfamiliar. Therefore, while the Education Abroad Office understands that some students want to rent such vehicles largely for economic reasons or for fun, Education Abroad Office does not recommend it nor support it. In fact financial aid will block any funds associated with a student planning to use such funds to drive abroad.

In the past, study abroad participants from around the nation have been injured and even killed while riding in vehicles with drivers unaccustomed to local driving practices and traffic patterns. To prevent such accidents, some countries also limit the minimum age for drivers to rent a motorized vehicle. Also, note that most countries will require an international driver's license, and driving without one could result in a severe penalty.

So, be prepared to rely solely on public transportation for the duration of your international experience.

**Driving is the number one cause of serious injuries and fatalities abroad, next to swimming. DO NOT do it.**

Road safety is not something that you may necessarily think about in planning your study abroad experience, yet the Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT) reports that road crashes will soon become the third greatest global health concern. In fact, death and serious injury from road crashes are among the greatest risk for healthy travelers. And, contrary to popular belief, 85% of such crashes occur in industrialized countries. You can minimize your risk by assessing road culture in your areas and implementing safe precautions.

ASIRT suggests that you:

- Select the safest form of transportation in your area
- Avoid late night road travel in counties with poor safety records and/or mountainous terrain
- Understand how seasonal hazards affect road conditions
- Know the dates of local holidays (when road accident rates rise)

Additional suggestions for pedestrians are:

- Be aware of traffic patterns in your area and what other pedestrians are doing (they may be very different from the US)
- Be especially alert at intersections
- Wear reflective clothing if jogging at dusk or dawn (especially in locales where jogging may be uncommon)
- Do not walk where you cannot be easily seen
- Remember most road fatalities are pedestrians
- Do not hitchhike

Additional suggestions for passengers are:

- Avoid riding with a driver that appears intoxicated, irrational, or over-tired
- Always ride in the back seat of a taxi cab
- Wear seat belts whenever possible





Traveling in some developing countries may pose additional road risks. Public transportation in some areas may consist of overcrowded, overweight and top-heavy minivans or buses. Taxicabs may not appear in good condition; drivers may or may not be licensed. Sidewalks may or may not be lit, or exist at all. In these cases, follow the advice of the on-site staff or your faculty leader.

## SWIMMING ABROAD

**Swimming is the number one cause of serious injuries and fatalities abroad, next to driving. Do not swim when a beach is closed or a life guard is not present. Don't!**

(Okay, so we just contradicted ourselves from our section on driving. It was done with purpose and to make a very strong point. Swimming and driving can both end your international experience. Heed this advice.)

Even though many of us growing up have learned to swim, it is important to understand that not all swimming beaches and swimming conditions around the world are like ours. Swimming in unfamiliar conditions is extremely risky. In fact, swimming in very polluted waters can also expose you to serious infectious diseases. Note the red arrow in the picture at the left. It identifies a rip current you may not see from beach level.

Because the risk of drowning is such a serious concern, you must keep the following in mind:

- **Take warning flags on beaches seriously:** This seems like a no-brainer, but many drownings occur when swimmers are overwhelmed by the water conditions. If black or red flags are up, do not enter the water. Strong undertow and rough surf along beaches are more common than you may think, especially on the Pacific coast. If you swim with a life guard present, still always exercise caution.
- Many international beaches are not protected and health and hazard warnings are not posted for the public
- Risk of rip currents (undertow) is a significant threat. If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to the shore and do not try and fight the current by swimming against it. Once you are out of the current, swim towards the shore.
- Swimming/rafting in rivers and lakes also carries the risk of disease & parasites
- If the place where you want to swim looks inviting but there is no one swimming in that location, there is usually a reason that they don't swim there.
- **If there is no lifeguard on duty, Do Not Go In The Water!**

## DATING, SEX AND STUDY ABROAD

Much like all other matters of importance, getting to know your destination is right at the top of the list for this category of risk as well. It is important to note that different cultures have different norms with regard to gender identity and gender expression, especially when it involves dating and/or sexual activity. Everyone should be aware that the ways people interact vary widely by country and region and issues concerning dating and sexual activity can be particularly difficult in a cross-cultural setting.

Growing up in the United States you have intuitively learned recognizable social cues (how to act, what to say and what not to do) for certain situations within a social/dating environment. However, you have learned that totally within the culture of the United States. It is extremely important to understand that social cues in other cultures can be very different and often times at odds with what we would act, say and not do here. This could lead to you letting your guard down and becoming vulnerable to people who may want to take advantage of you or even worse. **Social miscues can be deadly.**

Since you cannot be sure you understand all the signals you are sending and receiving, be extra cautious and a little more conservative than you might be at home. A term coined by a professor who leads study abroad programs in Somalia describes a helpful type of vigilance he calls **"Productive Panic."** He postulates that becoming hyper-vigilant – sometimes verging on panicking – is not necessarily a bad thing, as long as you do not take it too far. Question others motives.

Question the surroundings. Don't simply trust someone because of the way they dress, wink at you or engage in small talk. Make your hyper-vigilance (panic) productive! In fact, that same professor states, **"Productive Panic" is the cure for perceptual blindness.** Because you are not necessarily aware of the societal norms and cues in this new culture, you



may become blind to what is going on around you. Therefore, he adds that the safest way to meet locals is in small groups and through friends or others you know and trust.

If you choose to be sexually active, ask yourself why you are choosing to be sexually active. Set your boundaries and be aware of partner expectations. If you choose to be sexually active, practice safe sex and protect yourself and your partner from unintended pregnancy, sexually-transmitted diseases, AIDS, and misunderstandings about the meaning of the relationship.

It is important to note that different cultures have different norms in regard to gender. Women and men should both be aware that the ways people interact vary widely by region and country, and issues around dating and sexuality can be particularly difficult in a cross-cultural setting. Such things as eye contact, the way one dresses, and body language can send very different messages by region and culture. Observing interpersonal interactions within a culture can be useful in helping you choose the way you communicate verbally and non-verbally with others in that country.

## DATING, SEX AND STUDY ABROAD: RISK MITIGATING STRATEGIES

Around the world, U.S. Embassies receive reports from U.S. Citizens that have been victimized by individuals that managed to take advantage of them. It is so persistent that the U.S. Department of State issued an alert that recommends that U.S. citizens take the following precautions.

When traveling internationally:

- Do not go out alone at night.
- Do not walk alone in isolated areas.
- Do not accept drinks from strangers or casual acquaintances.
- Keep an eye on all drinks in public places.
- Avoid late-night or illegal after-hours clubs.
- Never leave anyone alone

When traveling internationally, USF recommends that you always travel with others - these can be other students, friends or peers. Unfamiliar locations make a traveler who is alone vulnerable to unforeseen problems.

- Use the buddy system to ensure that all members of your group are accounted for.
- Always stay with your Buddies!

## WHO'S GOT YOUR BACK?

Even though you are on the other side of the world, USF cares and the people you are with care. Let them have your back. Review the following points that came from this "Who's got your back?" card.

### College Truths and Study Abroad

**At some point you may be asked, "Do you want to hook up?" but the reality is you may not have that choice.**

- In fact, 1 in 4 women will be sexually assaulted in college
- 2/3 of rapes happen by someone you know, trust, or consider a friend or boyfriend
- 70,000 students per year are victims of alcohol-related sexual assault

Sex when you cannot give consent is criminal and not consensual in the United States. This can happen with someone you know and even with someone you have slept with before. Understand that when abroad, the law may not always be on your side.

## Partying and Consent

**Consent Defined:** *A voluntary, active agreement with any person to do something sexual or have something sexual done to you.*

Here's the deal:

- This definition of consent is not accepted everywhere in the world.
- We live in a world where women often get blamed or judged for being sexually assaulted



- Sometimes women think, because they were wasted, what happened was their fault

Let's clear up a grey area: You cannot give consent if you are drunk, high, asleep or too afraid to say no. If you cannot give consent and someone has sex with you, it is a crime in the United States and USF will also do what it can to support you when abroad.

### Good Men Needed

Do yourself a favor and learn about Revolution and Rape Culture from Emory University. [Visit their site here](#). [View their video](#). It's called Project Unspoken. They interview men and women about what they do every day to avoid sexual assault. Basically men say they don't really ever think about it. But women? They think about how to prevent it all the time.

**So What Does this Say About Men?** We need your help, voices and strength to help stop violence against women on our campus and when abroad. Where do you stand when you see something happen that you know isn't right? Do you say anything? Simple, powerful words make a difference. To get involved go to: [www.mencanstoprape.org](http://www.mencanstoprape.org).

This content provided in part by [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org) and [Campus card Final-2401.pdf](#)

### HANGING OUT OR HOOKING UP?

Making new friends abroad is an important part of the experience. But even more so than here in the United States, where you are used to social cues when dating and making friends, you need to remember that you may not be on the same wavelength when abroad. Before going too far in any relationship, think about the following points from the "Hanging out or Hooking up?" card, and never hesitate to ask for help if it goes sour.

### What About Respect?

Anyone you are with (whether talking, hanging out, or hooking up) should:

- Make you feel safe and comfortable.
- Not pressure you or try to get you drunk or high because they want to have sex with you.
- Respect your boundaries and ask if it is okay to touch or kiss you (or whatever else).

How would you want your best friend, sister, or brother to be treated by someone they were going out with? Ask yourself if the person you are seeing treats you with respect, and if you treat them with respect.

### How to Help a Friend

Do you have a friend who you think is in an unhealthy relationship? Try these steps to help them:

- Tell your friend what you have seen in their relationship concerns you.
- Talk in a private place, and don't tell other friends what was said.
- Show them [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org) and give them a [copy of this card](#).
- If you or someone you know is feeling so sad that they plan to hurt themselves and/or wish they could die—get help.

**Suicide Hotline: 1-800-273-8255; 24/7 International Assistance Line: 813-317-5815;** or the **Counseling Center: 813-974-2831** and press #3 to speak with a crisis counselor

### How is it Going?

Does the person you are seeing (like a boyfriend or a girlfriend):

- Treat you well?
- Respect you (including what you feel comfortable doing sexually)?
- Give you space to hang out with your friends?
- Let you wear what you want to wear?

If you answered YES—it sounds like they care about you.



## And on a Bad Day?

How often does the person you are seeing:

- Shame you or make you feel stupid?
- Pressure you to go to the next step when you are not ready?
- Control where you go, or make you afraid?
- Grab your arm, yell at you, or push you when they are angry or frustrated?

Nobody deserves to be treated this way. If these things ever happen in your relationship, talk to someone about it. For more info, go to [www.loveisrespect.org](http://www.loveisrespect.org).

## Everybody Texts

**Getting a lot of texts can feel good—“Wow, this person really likes me.”** What happens when the texts start making you uncomfortable, nervous, or they keep coming nonstop?

**Figuring out what to say can be hard, especially if you like the person.** Be honest. “You know I really like you, but I really don’t like it when you, text me about where I am all the time or pressure me for naked pics.” For more tips on what to say go to: [www.thatsnotcool.com](http://www.thatsnotcool.com).

## What About Sex?

Can you talk to the person you are seeing about:

- How far you want to go sexually?
- What you don’t want to do?
- Preventing STDs by using condoms?
- Birth control?

If you answered NO to any of these questions, maybe this person is pushing you to do things you don’t want to do. Or you might not feel comfortable bringing this up. Try using this [card](#) as a conversation starter. “I got this card in a clinic and wanted to talk about it with you.”

*\*This content provided in part by [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)*

## BYSTANDER INTERVENTION – WHO ARE YOU?

The "Who are you?" multi-media campaign was initiated and launched in Wellington, New Zealand, and is a collaborative effort from Tu Pakari Ora – Sexual Assault Assessment and Treatment Service, Sexual Abuse Prevention Network, Wellington Sexual Health, Sexual Abuse HELP Foundation, Radio Network Wellington, Hutt Rape Counselling Network, Wellington Police, Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care and Regional Public Health. <http://www.whoareyou.co.nz/>

The center piece of the campaign is a video. This video on the next page demonstrates the role and importance of bystanders. The setting depicted in the video can be any place in the world, and may remind you of the location you will be visiting while abroad. While abroad, it is important to keep in mind that you and those who you are traveling with, are in it together. You may be unfamiliar with the community or the culture, but you do have each other. If you see something, do something.

Bystanders are the individuals who witness emergencies, criminal events or situations that could lead to criminal activity or harm another. By their presence, they may have the opportunity to provide assistance, do nothing or contribute to the negative behavior.

Ethical bystanders are individuals whose behaviors intervene in ways that impact ‘the event’ and its outcome positively. They take some action, but they are mindful of caring for themselves, as well as the impact on the other person. (Carmody, 2009:126)

To learn more about Bystander Intervention at USF, contact the USF Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence



Prevention Office: (813) 974-5756 Victim Helpline (813) 974-5757 - Fax: (813) 974-8589 Email: [va@admin.usf.edu](mailto:va@admin.usf.edu)

The USF Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention has a program called **REAL-Relationship Equality and Anti-violence League**. It is a special project designed to engage men in prevention efforts and to provide leadership opportunities for students to become allies in sexual and relationship violence prevention. [Click here to visit REAL on facebook!](#)

### Confidentiality Statement from the Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention

The USF Center for Victim Advocacy and Violence Prevention assures confidentiality to all who utilize the program's services. Client names, identifying information and any disclosures will be kept confidential unless an advocate receives permission from the client to release the information to a specific third party.

The following situations are exceptions to this policy:

- An advocate has knowledge of a client's suicidal or homicidal potential;
- An advocate suspects that child or elder abuse has occurred;
- A judge orders the program to release information to the court.

### Getting Help for a Friend

Your friend was sexually assaulted. If you know someone who has been sexually hurt or assaulted, it wasn't their fault no matter what.

#### What do you say?

- » "I'm so sorry, it is not your fault. What do you need, how can I help?"

#### What should you do?

- » Listen. Be there. Do not judge. Call or speak to a victim's advocate, a responsible USF employee or the 24/7 International Assistance Line to help you know what to do. Understand that each resource has different reporting requirements as described.

#### What should you know?

- » Rape and sexual violence are crimes that take away an individual's power. It is important not to compound this experience by pressuring your friend to take steps they are not ready for or do not want to do.

\*This content provided in part by [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org)

### IT'S ON US!

TAMPA, Fla. (Nov. 21, 2014) - As a part of the national [It's On Us](#) (Links to an external site.) campaign students, faculty and athletes from the University of South Florida joined together to take the pledge against sexual assault and violence. The campus community created a video message expressing their commitment to take a stand at ending sexual assault and violence. The collaborative effort between Student Government, University Communications and Marketing and Student Affairs encourages students, faculty and staff to be vigilant and stand up against sexual violence. Take the pledge today at [itsonus.org](http://itsonus.org) and share the link using the hashtag #ItsOnUSF.

### ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION ABROAD

Do you think movies with party scenes in Italy or London paint the true picture of all college students? Think again. Most students are smart when it comes to their choices about alcohol. The majority of USF first-year students do not drink at all and over a quarter of them have never drank alcohol.

Nevertheless, to paraphrase the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "Virtually all college students traveling abroad experience the effects of college drinking – whether they drink or not. The problem with college



drinking is not necessarily the drinking itself, but the negative consequences that result from excessive drinking.”  
<http://niaaa.nih.gov/alcohol-health/special-populations-co-occurring-disorders/college-drinking>

The drinking age is generally much lower in all other countries than it is here in the United States, so it is possible that you may think it is wise to experiment with alcohol. This can lead you down a path that can end tragically. It is important to keep in mind that even if you are of legal age to drink abroad, your behavior resulting from alcohol consumption can still be a violation of the USF Student Code of Conduct as well as local laws.

Alcohol consumption can lead to an arrest, accident, violent crime, or even death. In many locations, just as in the U.S., disturbing the peace, lewd behavior, littering, driving under the influence, drinking on the street or on public transportation may all be considered criminal activities by local authorities — is it worth it?

USF provides a great deal of information and support regarding Alcohol & Other Drugs. Visit this information presented by the USF Student Affairs Community. [www.usf.edu/student-affairs/wellness-education/health-topics/alcohol-and-other-drugs.aspx](http://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/wellness-education/health-topics/alcohol-and-other-drugs.aspx). You may be interested in how alcohol affects your body. Take a moment to review the [Anatomy of a Hangover](#).

## ALCOHOL POISONING

Alcohol poisoning can also kill. Learn about the warning signs! (From Michigan State University Olin Health Center) Always Be Safe, Not Sorry!

If you think someone may have alcohol poisoning:

- Call an Ambulance (Know your local equivalent to dialing “911”)
- Stay with the person until help arrives. Turn them on their side to keep them from choking if they start vomiting
- Do **not** induce vomiting!
- Don’t second guess yourself. If you are concerned, make the call. **Most Students Make the Call.**

Signs and Symptoms;

- Person is **unconscious** or semi-conscious and cannot be awakened by shouting, pinching, or prodding.
- Person has **cold, clammy, pale, or bluish skin**.
- Person is **breathing irregularly** – which means fewer than eight breaths per minute, or ten or more seconds between breaths.
- Person **vomits while passed out** or doesn’t wake up after vomiting.
- Person is **unable to make eye contact** or **unable to maintain a conversation**.

Most countries, with the exception of those with religious prohibitions, tolerate social drinking. Intoxication, public drunkenness and inebriating behavior, however, are seldom allowed under any circumstances. If you attend Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) meetings in the United States, check the AA Web page for information about meetings abroad. ([http://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/find-local-aa/world/1](http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/find-local-aa/world/1))

## ALCOHOL MISUSE

The USF System does not prohibit the legal consumption of alcohol on its campuses. USF recognizes that as part of a well-planned and structured program, the serving and consumption of alcohol may take place. However, any behavior deemed disruptive that interferes with the rights of students due to alcohol consumption will lead to disciplinary action. The entire USF Alcohol Policy can be read here: <http://regulationspolicies.usf.edu/policies-and-procedures/pdfs/policy-30-023.pdf>

At the USF Education Abroad Office, bad behavior resulting from alcohol consumption is called Alcohol Misuse. Alcohol misuse will not be tolerated on USF study abroad programs.

**YOU can be sent home at your own expense for misusing alcohol while abroad.**

What is “alcohol misuse?” Alcohol misuse is present when:



- A student misses any scheduled event because of the effects of alcohol consumption;
- A student becomes ill due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
- A student is disrespectful of others sharing the same or neighboring housing, due to the effects of alcohol consumption;
- A student engages in inappropriate behavior toward other individuals that is the result of alcohol consumption;
- A student becomes so intoxicated that he/she cannot walk unassisted;
- A student engages in destructive behavior toward property that is the result of alcohol consumption;
- A student does not abide by the laws of the country in which he or she is staying;
- A student engages in behavior that causes embarrassment to the other members of the group, the faculty member(s) or the in-country host(s) as a result of alcohol consumption;
- A student engages in behavior that causes his/her companions concern for the safety of the individual or the group;
- Students in a group encourage or ignore a fellow student who is misusing or abusing alcohol; or
- Students who transport quantities of alcohol to program sites with the intent of sharing the alcohol with members of the group.

Students are encouraged to use good judgment if consuming alcohol at private homes or other accommodations during non-program hours. Student groups are encouraged to discuss issues related to alcohol abuse by other members of their group with the faculty leader or resident director. Peers should look out for each other and keep each other safe.

## DON'T DO DRUGS

Regardless of your position on marijuana or other drugs, do not attempt to import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. It is not worth it. Be sensible. Drug charges can carry severe penalties, including imprisonment without bail for up to a year before a case is even tried. A conviction carries several more years of imprisonment in a foreign jail. In some countries it does not matter if you are underage, you can still be charged as an adult.

And the U.S. Embassy will not be able to help get you out....

### THE U.S. EMBASSY CANNOT:

- Demand the immediate release of a U.S. citizen arrested abroad or otherwise cause the citizen to be released;
- Represent a U.S. citizen at trial, give legal advice, or pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. Government funds.

**The most they may do is provide you a list of lawyers and a turkey sandwich.**

Therefore, the University of South Florida Education Abroad Office has a **zero-tolerance policy** regarding the purchase, possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by students participating in USF affiliated international programs.

If you are in violation of this policy by the purchase, possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs while on USF Education Abroad Office registered travel, **you will face the following consequences:**

- Immediate Referral to Student Rights and Responsibilities for violation of the USF Student Code of Conduct with possible disciplinary action while abroad
- Possible dismissal from the program
- Possible academic withdrawal from the University for the semester in progress; and
- Possible further disciplinary action upon return to campus.
- Remember, your in-country institution may have other sanctions including the right for immediate dismissal, regardless of any finding by USF.

Also, if you are caught with the purchase, possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, exchange or distribution of illegal drugs by local authorities, **you may be incarcerated** and it could mean:

- **Interrogation and delays before trial including mistreatment and solitary confinement for up to one year under very primitive conditions**
- **Lengthy trials conducted in a foreign language, with delays and postponements**

- Weeks, months or life in prison (some places include hard labor, heavy fines, and/or lashings) if found guilty
- Death penalty in a growing number of countries (e.g., Malaysia and Pakistan).

If you are purchasing prescription medications in quantities larger than that considered necessary for personal use, you could be arrested on suspicion of drug trafficking.

Although drug laws vary from country to country, it is important to realize before you make the mistake of getting involved with drugs that foreign countries do not react lightly to drug offenders. In some countries, anyone who is caught with even a very small quantity for personal use may be tried and could receive the same sentence as a large-scale trafficker.

A few words to the wise...

- A number of countries, including the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Jamaica, Mexico and the Philippines, have enacted more stringent drug laws that impose mandatory jail sentences for individuals convicted of possessing even small amounts of marijuana or cocaine for personal use.
- Once you leave the United States you are not covered by U.S. laws and constitutional rights.
- Bail is not granted in many countries when drugs are involved.
- The burden of proof in many countries is on the accused to prove his/her innocence.
- In some countries, evidence obtained illegally by local authorities may be admissible in court.
- Few countries offer drug offenders jury trials or even require the prisoner's presence at his/her trial.
- Many countries have mandatory prison sentences of seven years to life without the possibility of parole for drug violations.
- If someone offers you a free trip and some quick and easy money just for bringing back a suitcase...SAY NO!
- Don't carry a package for anyone, no matter how small it might seem, and pay close attention to your luggage to ensure that no one can place anything in yours.
- The police and customs officials have a right to search your luggage for drugs. If they find drugs in your suitcase, YOU will suffer the consequences.
- You could go to jail for years with no possibility of parole, early release, or transfer back the United States.

## ARRESTS OVERSEAS

If you are arrested while abroad for any reason, it is important that you know what the U.S. government CAN and CANNOT do for you.

### THE U.S. CONSULAR OFFICE CAN:

- visit you in jail after being notified of your arrest
- give you a list of local attorneys (The U.S. Government cannot assume responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of these individuals or recommend a particular attorney)
- notify your family and/or friends and relay requests for money or other aid - but only with your authorization
- intercede with local authorities to make sure that your rights under local laws are fully observed and that you are treated humanely, according to internationally accepted standards
- protest mistreatment or abuse to the appropriate authorities

### THE U.S. CONSULAR OFFICE CANNOT:

- demand your immediate release or get you out of jail or the country
- represent you at trial or give legal counsel
- pay legal fees and/or fines with U.S. government funds

## OVERSEAS CITIZENS SERVICES:

- EAO will register all participants with the U.S. Department of State in all countries included in your program itinerary. However, you should also register with the U.S. embassy or consulate as soon as you arrive on site. To register, you will need to provide all the information on the front page of your passport. This will be helpful to you and your family if there is a need to locate you in the event of an emergency.
- The [Overseas Citizens Services of the Bureau of Consular Affairs](#) is responsible for the welfare and whereabouts of U.S. citizens traveling and residing abroad. American Citizens Services and Crisis Management (ACS), a branch of OCS, assists in all matters involving protective services for Americans



abroad, including arrests, death cases, financial or medical emergencies, and welfare and whereabouts inquiries. The OCS toll-free hotline is (888) 407-4747. From overseas, call (202) 501-4444. An OCS duty officer is available for after-hours emergencies and during Sundays and holidays at (202) 647-4000.

- Further information regarding the emergency services to U.S. citizens abroad and related U.S. Department of State services can be obtained at their [International Travel](#) Web site.

## WHO YA GONNA CALL??

**USF 24/7 International Assistance** can be called direct or collect from anywhere in the world, **+1-813-317-5815**. It is monitored every day; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to support all members of the USF community who are traveling abroad on university business or education abroad.

**Right now, pull out your phone and add **813-317-5815** into your contacts!**

Always know what the local emergency numbers are for the country you are in. Not every country uses “911” as its emergency contact number, as we do in the United States. You can look up the “911 equivalent” number for your destination here: <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/to-go/911-list.html>

If you become ill while abroad, you can call our insurance company United Health Care Global (UHCG) at +1-410-453-6330. If you contact UHCG directly, you will need to identify yourself and provide them with your policy # 902238160.

In summary:

- Threat to life, limb or eye – **Call an Ambulance!**
- Report any illness to your faculty leader and/or **USF's 24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815** and ask for assistance. We can open a case with UHCG on your behalf!!
- If you want to talk to the insurance company directly, call **+1 (410) 453-6330**. You need the **Policy #: 902238160**.

**We will only notify your parents/emergency contact as necessary or unless you tell us to!**

## SAFETY AROUND ANIMALS AND RABIES PREVENTION

Animals can be cute and you may want to pet them, but any animal, even if it appears to be friendly or harmless, can be dangerous. Any animal can bite, scratch, kick, or otherwise injure you, even if you did nothing to provoke it. Some diseases can cause an animal to behave aggressively toward people, even if it had previously been friendly; thus, do not touch animals including domestic pets—especially monkeys, dogs, and cats—to avoid bites and serious diseases such as rabies and plague. In many countries, pets may not be vaccinated against harmful diseases the way they are in the United States.

- Before departure, the CDC recommends that you should have a current tetanus vaccination or documentation of a booster vaccination in the previous 5–10 years. Travel health providers should assess a traveler's need for pre-exposure rabies immunization.
- Consider a rabies vaccination if one of the following apply:
  - Travelers involved in outdoor and other activities (such as camping, hiking, biking, adventure travel, and caving) that put them at risk for animal bites.
  - People who will be working with or around animals (such as veterinarians, wildlife professionals, and researchers).
  - People who are taking long trips or moving to a country designated by the CDC as having a concern about rabies. [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)
  - Children, because they tend to play with animals, might not report bites, and are more likely to have animal bites on their head and neck.
- While traveling, you should never try to pet, handle, or feed unfamiliar animals (whether domestic or wild, even in captive settings such as game ranches or petting zoos), particularly in areas where rabies is endemic.
- You should never attempt to feed, pet, or handle any animal such as monkeys, bats, or rodents while traveling. To mitigate the risk of exposure to rabies, stray dogs should be avoided, and travelers should avoid the temptation to adopt a stray dog from abroad.

- To prevent infection, all bite and scratch wounds should be promptly cleaned with soap and water, and the wound should be promptly debrided if necrotic tissue, dirt, or other foreign materials are present. Often times, a course of antibiotics is appropriate after dog or cat bites or scratches. Wound care is especially important.
- All bite and scratch wounds should be considered as a possible rabies case. If you think you might have been exposed to rabies, you should contact a health care provider as soon as possible for advice about rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP). The USF 24/7 International Assistance Line can be a good first step to initiate a report.
- Even if you have been vaccinated against rabies, you must get rabies shots as soon as possible if you are exposed to an animal that might have rabies; having vaccine before traveling will simplify your post-exposure management and may give you more time to seek care. Being vaccinated only buys you more time to get treatment after an exposure.

#### References:

##### Be Safe Around Animals

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/be-safe-around-animals>

##### Animal – Associated Hazards

<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2016/the-pre-travel-consultation/animal-associated-hazards>

## MENTAL HEALTH ABROAD

### INTRODUCTION

Experts say that 50% of us are likely to report having, are currently experiencing or will experience a mental health issue in our lifetime.

#### **And the other 50% are in denial about the risk of experiencing a mental health crisis.**

This section is intended for everyone traveling abroad. Today it is commonly reported that many of us are struggling with bi-polar disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, stress management, family or other relationships, career decision-making, cultural identity, interpersonal concerns, sexual assault, and many others. With a combination of medications and therapy, the vast majority of us are having productive and enjoyable experiences at home and abroad.

Experiencing another culture is an exhilarating, but often stressful experience. The experience can sometimes cause symptoms or conditions to appear seemingly out of no-where, or worsen if already present, even if only temporarily. For these reasons, we recommend discussing the rigors of your program with your therapist and physician so that you are more prepared to handle them abroad.

Note: Culture shock is a normal developmental phase of adjustment to a new cultural environment, not a psychological disorder. However, reactions to culture shock can mimic more severe psychological problems such as clinical depression and anxiety.

Some common manifestations of stress are:

- Irritability over small things
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Queasy stomach
- Desire to run away
- Constant feeling of tiredness
- Psychosomatic illness
- Excessive criticism of others
- Poor work performance
- Difficulty making decisions
- Eating disorders

- Being unusually introspective
- Feelings of guilt, loneliness, worry and anxiety

Poor coping choices include:

- Resorting to heavy alcohol use
- Staying in bed 12-14 hours a day or staying in your quarters all day
- Eating excessively
- Avoiding friends and neighbors
- Escaping into sexual relationships

Better coping choices:

- Immerse yourself in study/reading that is satisfying or keep a journal of your experiences
- Find a local person with whom you can talk regularly
- Make a healthy routine, such as taking a walk through the park every day after lunch.
- Practice your faith through prayer, meditation, reading, etc.
- Write letters/e-mails (or make audiotapes) to family and friends
- Visit fellow students
- Meet with Resident Director/Faculty to talk about the stress
- Eat healthy and get regular exercise

**If you notice these signs in someone else, please contact the program director or the EA office – we will help.**

- **USF Education Abroad 24/7 International Assistance Line: 813-317-5815**
- **USF Education Abroad International Assistance Email: EAassist@usf.edu**

## CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AKA CULTURE SHOCK

*“The process of adapting to a foreign culture is mostly about change, and the change must occur in you. If you are to function happily and productively in a culture foreign to you, then you have to meet that culture on its own terms, because it’s not going to meet you on yours” (from Culture Shock!-Morocco, Orin Hargraves).*

Culture shock comes from:

- Being cut off from cultural cues and known patterns with which you are familiar.
- Living and studying over an extended period of time in a situation that is ambiguous.
- Having your own values brought into question.
- Being continually put into situation in which you are expected to function well, but where the rules have not been adequately explained.

Different cultures have their own social norms; gestures as simple as nodding or pointing or even looking someone in the eyes can be seen as rude or aggressive. For example, in America it is traditional to exchange a quick, firm handshake when meeting someone, in Africa a loose but lengthy, handshake is preferred and in many Arabic countries you would only shake hands with men in business situations, but never with women. In Bangladesh, the “thumbs up” gesture is considered obscene, in Japan it is rude to tip, and in some South American countries it is offensive to “toss” things to somebody rather than just handing them directly.

When we talk about well-being, it is important to understand the role that mental health has in the overall concept of well-being. In this next section we will go over some aspects of mental health and its importance on your overall experience. As discussed in Module 1, immersion into a new culture, even one you may have visited before, can challenge your senses and your concepts of who you are and why you are there. Sometimes, it may make you wonder if you are just finding it hard to adapt or if it really is a mental health crisis. Questioning your identity is to be expected. This can naturally produce various emotions, bringing both highs and lows. Yet, if you go with the flow and try not to fight it, the end result is often the same: successful adaptation to your new found home.

It’s important to understand that international travel will affect everyone differently and people move along this timeline at different speeds and through different moods. This chart is important to understand, not just for yourself but also for those with whom you are traveling. You may recognize that a friend is going through one of these stages, and if you recognize it early on, then it will help them to process the experience. They delineate the various stages





of culture shock and adjustment. This is general in nature. [Please check out this link for even more information and resources on culture shock.](#)

In Summary:

- In the beginning phase, there is a honeymoon period where you are researching your country and everything is exciting and new
- The first stage of feeling sad or depressed usually comes in many forms. The most common is from being homesick. You don't feel that you have the support of your own personal network of family and friends and you miss the familiar (food, bed, access to being connected electronically).
- Then the apparent differences in culture start to become more evident and we become frustrated by these differences more than we were in the beginning
- Slowly you begin to adapt and make more friends and understand the culture and language more.
- The latter part is the same as the first part but in reverse. This is known as reverse culture shock.

These are some of the timeless tips for a speedy acclimatization and a more meaningful stay abroad:

- Learn about your destination before you leave.
- Talk to others who have been there and ask them how it affected them;
- Learn the local language, even if it's just a couple of phrases;
- As soon as you recover from your jet lag, plunge into the local life in your new home;
- Accept the challenge of establishing yourself in the new country and work hard to enjoy your stay;
- Don't allow initial negative experiences to sour you on the country;
- Write in a journal/start a blog;
- Stay Healthy! Try to eat a healthy diet and avoid over-indulging, Exercise/Walk, and do not use alcohol – it is a depressant.
- Set up a schedule of communicating with family or close friends (e-mail, letters, phone) but plan to only stay in touch at most once per week. **Studies have shown that daily contact with home can actually make you more homesick or depressed!**

## MENTAL HEALTH – BEFORE YOU GO!

More and more students with mental health conditions or a history of previous mental health challenges are attending college. Some reports peg this number at 25% with diagnosed conditions and another 25% that could benefit from a counselor or therapist but haven't gone yet.

### 50% of us likely have a disorder or are diagnosable. - The Forum on Education Abroad Fireside Dialogue 2014

Today, many students report struggling with bi-polar disorder, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, stress management, family or other relationships, career decision-making, cultural identity, interpersonal concerns, sexual assault, and many others. With a combination of medications and therapy, the vast majority of these students have productive and enjoyable experiences at home and abroad.

Experiencing another culture is an exhilarating, but often a stressful experience that can sometimes cause symptoms or conditions to appear seemingly out of no-where or worsen if already present, even if only temporarily. For these reasons, we recommend discussing the rigors of your program with your therapist and physician so that you are more prepared to handle them abroad.

If you have a history of mental health issues, or any questions or concerns, we strongly suggest that you speak with a therapist, counselor or mental health practitioner. Tell them where you are going, what concerns are, and ask them to help you come up with a plan to cope.

Some of the triggers and other things to think about include:

- In many study abroad programs, you will not have your own space, you may not be able to choose your roommate, and you may be surrounded by more people than you are accustomed to. You may be living with a host family, and continually traveling with the same group of U.S. students. Your access to private bathrooms and showers may be somewhat limited or non-existent.
- You are likely to have far less down-time and must often keep to a regimented schedule.
- You may have difficulty sleeping due to the change in time, full-schedule, change in diet and climate, and unfamiliar and potentially noisy surroundings.



- You may not have the benefit of understanding what is being said around you. Even if language is not a barrier, cultural differences are significant and being a foreigner can be somewhat alienating at times.
- Over the past few years, there has been growing anti-American sentiment in some places around the world. Generally this has been directed at U.S. policy rather than individual Americans, but it can be difficult to remove yourself, as a U.S. citizen, from the criticism you may hear.

Finally, experiencing some level of depression or anxiety about your study abroad experience prior to departure can be expected. However, if you begin to doubt your readiness to participate or you fail to complete pre-departure requirements, you should discuss your feelings with a medical professional.

## IDENTIFYING A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE ABROAD

The benefits of a USF international travel experience far outweigh the difficulties, and if you develop coping skills to deal with these and other issues, you will have a very positive experience. In addition, we recommend that you identify ways of keeping in touch with support systems at home – family, friends, and your therapist – in the event that you are experiencing difficulties.

Drugs and alcohol often do little to address the underlying mental health symptoms and ultimately create a whole new batch of problems while increasing the severity of the original mental health symptom or symptoms. Chronic drug and alcohol abuse results in poor decision making and increases the chances of breaking the law or becoming a victim of assault or rape.

**Key point - Alcohol and Drug Use is not a cure for mental health issues and often triggers additional mental health symptoms and increases threats to your safety and security.**

## RESPONDING TO A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE ABROAD

**Be prepared to recognize distress in yourself or in others.** When you do, you can generally intervene early to minimize its effects. Below are the three main levels of distress, how to recognize them and how to intervene if it happens to you or another in your program:

### MILD DISTRESS

You or another participant demonstrate behaviors that **do not disrupt others** but may indicate something is wrong and that assistance is needed.

Examples of Mild Distress include:

- Difficulties in concentration and motivation
- Disrupted sleep (too little or too much)
- Loss of energy or general body weakness
- Loss of appetite and/or reluctance to eat local foods
- Euphoria and happiness in the presence of generally unpleasant situations

Action for Mild Distress:

- Consult with friends or program leader or call the 24/7 International Assistance Line
- Convey warmth and respect, and express empathy and support
- Ask open ended questions and listen to the story
- Help identify possible solutions

### MODERATE DISTRESS

You or another participant demonstrate behaviors that indicate **significant emotional distress** and may be reluctant or unable to acknowledge a need for help.

Examples of Moderate Distress include:

- Intense difficulties in concentration and motivation that affect participation
- Disrupted sleep (too little or too much) that affects ability to stay awake during activities or class
- Excessive loss of energy or general body weakness that keeps you out of activities or class
- Severe loss of appetite where you are hungry and weak all of the time
- Excessive euphoria, manic behavior, giddiness, laughter and feelings of grandeur completely out of context with the current situation
- Withdrawal from activities or class, refusing to leave your room
- Episodes of crying which are generally spontaneous and may not be controllable
- Persistent loneliness and sadness that affects ability to participate in activities or class
- Disabling anxiety or exaggerated fears that keep you from participating in activities or class

Action for Moderate Distress:

- Explain reasons for concern in concrete and specific language
- Avoid labeling behaviors
- Consult with program leader, someone in authority and/or education abroad 24/7 International Assistance Line

## SEVERE DISTRESS

You or another participant demonstrate behaviors that signify an **obvious crisis** that necessitates emergency care.

Examples of Severe Distress include:

- Acting or verbalizing a desire to hurt oneself or others
- Inability to get out of bed, with a persistent claim of pain or loss of all energy
- Manic and uncontrolled euphoria placing you in danger
- Inability to stop crying, often coupled with debilitating thoughts of sadness and hopelessness
- Hallucinations and belief in seeing spirits or beings that may be threatening or speaking to you

Action for Severe Distress include:

- **This is an emergency! Contact program leader, someone in authority or call 24/7 International Assistance Line immediately!**
- Consider impact on other participants and hosts
- Debrief with the program leader or someone in authority during and after incident and upon re-entry

*If you notice distress in yourself or someone else, consult with someone right away...  
or call the USF 24/7 International Emergency Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815.*

## INTERNATIONAL HEALTH AND EVACUATION INSURANCE

All USF students must be enrolled on our International Health and Evacuation Insurance policy. Why? Because it is comprehensive, accepted around the world, and has been integrated into our health and safety protocols. It is a great value and you will likely soon see it pay for itself after you eat that street food we warned you about earlier. It is not "travel insurance" so it is important to learn the difference and learn how to get the most out of it!

## OVERVIEW OF COVERAGE AND BENEFITS

Once you have completed your study abroad application with the Education Abroad Office, you will receive proof of UHCG insurance coverage via your USF email address. If you have not received your coverage materials at least one week prior to your departure date, immediately contact the USF Education Abroad Office.

United HealthCare Global is our provider of comprehensive insurance to all USF study abroad students, international scholars and cultural exchange participants. UHCG coverage is only provided for the duration of your program. If you decide to travel before or after your study abroad program, you will need to obtain additional travel medical insurance. If you require immediate assistance regarding medical, travel or legal concerns, you will need to contact UHCG.

It is very important to become acquainted with the [UHCG Coverage Plan](#).

Some of the benefits included in the UHCG Coverage Plan are:

- Medical benefits which cover any bodily injuries sustained in a covered accident. This benefit will provide a maximum limit of \$250,000 and no deductible.
- The Trip Delay benefit will reimburse your covered expenses up to \$100 per person per day and subject up to five days to a maximum limit of \$500. This only applies if your trip is delayed for more than 12 hours.
- Emergency Medical Evacuation is activated when you are hospitalized for more than six consecutive days, with a maximum limit of \$200,000.
- The comprehensive Security Evacuation benefit provides a maximum limit of \$200,000 that can be used when a situation near your program location is deemed too dangerous. If an evacuation is necessary, the University will notify you via email or phone. If an USF program is evacuated, the evacuation is for all participants within the vicinity. Our office will work to secure some form of academic activity to retain credit, if possible.

**In the event of an evacuation, since you are a participant of a university sponsored program, you must evacuate. If you refuse, you must withdraw from the program and cut ties with the university. This includes withdrawal from your host school, host accommodations, internship, volunteer activities, and the semester in progress. Your UHCG insurance must also be withdrawn.**

**This could have a serious impact on:**

- Your student visa/status at USF or in-country
- Academic standing
- Financial aid

UHCG provides limited coverage for the treatment of a pre-existing condition. You should always familiarize yourself with the coverage of benefits prior to departure. It is also recommended to understand the host institution's support infrastructure on arrival. This will become very useful if you become ill or injured while abroad.

## ACTIVATION OF INSURANCE AND FILING A CLAIM

Your insurance benefits will activate if you become ill, injured or your program location is deemed unsafe. For example, if you become ill while abroad, you can either contact UHCG: **+1 (410) 453-6330** or the International Risk and Security Officer **+1 (813) 317-5815**. If you contact UHCG directly, you will need to identify yourself and provide them with your **policy# 902238160**.

In some countries, cash payments for services are required up front. In this case, it is recommended to have some extra cash in case you may have to pay for medical services up front. Always keep your receipts for any routine medical care, prescriptions or other medical costs. You must have these in order to file a claim with UHCG when you return to the U.S. If you are staying abroad longer than two months, you may wish to mail these receipts to your parents, family or other trusted caregivers in the U.S., so that they can file a claim for you.

To submit a claim form, please contact UHCG or the International Risk and Security Officer.

## IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY

It is strongly encouraged to always notify the **24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815** prior to contacting UHCG. This phone is staffed 24 hours a day by the on-duty International Risk and Security Officer or the designee on-duty officer.

If you decide to contact UHCG Team Assist yourself while abroad, use +1 (410) 453-6330. You will need to provide UHCG with your policy number: 902238160.

If you are unable to call, have someone call on your behalf. They will give you referrals to English-speaking physicians, emergency rooms, hospitals or other health care facilities that they are familiar with. UHCG will make sure to call you back regularly to conduct a follow-up. They will call your physician to check on appropriate treatment. USF will be notified of your situation and where needed, request staff assistance. Your emergency contact will only be notified at your request.



In the event of contacting the **24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815** while abroad, please follow these steps:

- Dial the international access code for the U.S.
- Then dial 813-317-5815.
- Identify yourself, which program you are affiliate with, and give the country where you are currently located.
- Provide thorough details on what the issue is.
- Respond to questions and listen carefully to instructions.
- Provide the on-duty officer your contact information.

It is recommended to learn how to make and receive international calls from anywhere in the world before you depart. To learn the international access codes for calling to and from the U.S. visit the [How to call abroad](#) (Links to an external site.) website.

Once on-site, your program leader should discuss appropriate emergency preparedness steps with you. These steps might reflect preparing for natural disasters such as hurricanes or earthquakes, as well as communication protocols for electrical outages or cell tower overloads. For more information on personal emergency planning visit the U.S. State Department's Emergency Assistance to American Citizens Abroad website. It is also important to create an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) before studying abroad.

For your EAP, you should:

- Know Where to Go: in case of an emergency, where should you go and what transportation should you take? Know the location and numbers of the following:
  - » Airport
  - » Bus Station
  - » Train Station
  - » Metro Station
- Know Your Emergency Contact Information: in addition to your personal contacts, you should also know the numbers for the following:
  - » City or country's 911 equivalent
  - » Local government/ visa office
  - » Consulate/Embassy
  - » Police
  - » Fire
  - » Hospital
  - » Translator Service
  - » Lawyer
  - » Red Cross
  - » Insurance Hotline
  - » Other

In case of an emergency, the EAP plan follows these steps:

1. Stay calm. Take a deep breath. You will need a clear mind to focus on your next move.
2. Assess the situation. Get advice from the program staff. Identify in what kind of emergency situation you find yourself. An emergency crisis can be:
  - a. Personal: Accident/Injury, Death, Illness, Sexual Assault, Kidnapping, Arrest, etc.
  - b. Regional: Natural Disaster, Political Uprising, Terrorist Attack, War Outbreak, etc.
3. Take action. Exercise good judgment. Follow your evacuation plan/ written instructions/ maps you have developed as part of your EAP to help remove you from the emergency and get you to a safer location where you can get help. Remember the alternate transportation options available in your area.
4. Contact the 24/7 Education Abroad International Assistance Line (813) 317-5815. Now that you are in a safer and more stable location, update others about your situation. Using a method of communication at your disposal, get in touch with your emergency contacts so they can help you. Have them assist you in finding





what you need (medical care, a transport, lawyer, etc.).

- a. Take care of yourself. While you are waiting for your contacts to assist you, or in case you cannot reach anyone to assist you, use your emergency kit. Take out supplies you need to keep yourself healthy (bandages, food, jacket, etc.). You may need additional/continual medical care and/or personal/psychological counseling.
  - b. Keep trying. If you cannot get a hold of anyone to help you (because phone lines are down, you are trapped, etc.) don't give up. Try alternate methods of communication and transportation until you are able to reach someone. If you need to move to another location, let others know and leave a written description of where you are going.
5. Move to a more permanent location. After you have removed yourself from any immediate threat, regrouped at a safer location, and communicated with your emergency contacts, you may need to move to a more permanent location for treatment/assistance. Consider your transportation options and try to get yourself to the appropriate location (hospital, police station, embassy/consulate\*, contact's home, counseling center, etc.).
  6. Stay in touch. Maintain contact and update your emergency contacts on your condition. It would be useful to have a "communication tree" whereby your emergency contacts can collaborate to help you through the emergency situation (you may need to have privacy release forms in order for this to happen).
  7. Finally, evaluate and revise your EAP. After the emergency is over, and once your condition has stabilized, evaluate your EAP and use what you have learned to revise it in case of future emergencies.



AFRICA. 2011

*\*Note that in case of a terrorist attack, you should call your local embassy, but do not go there unless you know it is safe.*

## INSURANCE COVERAGE BEFORE OR AFTER YOUR PROGRAM

If you plan to travel before or after your study abroad program, it is very important to obtain additional medical insurance coverage as the medical insurance provided by UHCG only provides coverage during the dates of the study abroad program. While you may believe your domestic health insurance policy will cover the costs for any medical care needed abroad, it is likely you will be required to pay upfront and later seek reimbursement. Keep in mind that hospitalization or evacuation abroad can cost as much as \$40,000. Do you have immediate access to that much money on a moment's notice?

If you would like to extend your insurance coverage beyond your program date, contact the UHCG enrollment center at +1-800-732-5309. Feel free to view the [FAQ](#) (Links to an external site.) page for additional information.

Remember, you will need to independently purchase this **separate insurance coverage** (you **cannot** extend the USF study abroad coverage -- a "new" policy must be obtained).

## TRAVEL AND TRIP CANCELLATION INSURANCE

The UHCG Insurance is **not** Travel and Trip Cancellation Insurance. Students are strongly encouraged to individually purchase travel and trip cancellation insurance which covers you for any problems/costs associated with your travel – stolen luggage, delayed /cancelled flights, etc. You can normally find this insurance by asking the airline.

## THE INTERSECTION OF RIGHTS AND CULTURE

The United States prides itself on being a melting pot of diversity where people of different races, ethnicities, sexual orientations and religions interact and blend on a daily basis, but even in the United States, we know that we are not

perfect. Discrimination and harassment are all too commonplace. Now, take your most dearly held world beliefs and enter a new culture that does not see eye to eye with you. This is what you are about to embark on and navigating the intersection between rights and culture will be one of your greatest challenges.

There are many laws, regulations and policies that have been written to set up protections and remedies for you when they are violated. USF will hold you accountable to these laws, regulations and policies and we will do our best to likewise apply them to your intended destination. Keep in mind, it may be a challenge to enforce them with non-United States citizens, but we will always do our best to support you when abroad. Study this section carefully. We want you to be fully informed and prepared to ask for help, when necessary!

## TITLE IX, VAWA, THE CLERY ACT AND YOUR RIGHTS ABROAD

When you are traveling abroad, where you live and where you take classes can be considered extensions of USF. Therefore, you are not only expected to comply with all USF policies such as the [USF Student Code of Conduct](#), but you are also protected and under the auspices of certain regulations and policies meant to help you. Three significant federal regulations that are there to serve you are Title IX, VAWA and The Clery Act. These regulations are reflected in [USF's Sexual Misconduct/Sexual Harassment \(Including Battery\) Policy Number O-004 \(Policy O-004\)](#).

Policy O-004 states that “the University of South Florida System (USF System) community is most successful when it is based on respect and fair treatment of all people. The USF System strives to provide a work and study environment for faculty, staff and students that is free of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual violence. As part of the effort to maintain an environment that is comfortable for all people, the USF System establishes this Policy.”

Throughout this discussion the term “**sexual harassment**” is used as an umbrella term that includes all forms of sexual misconduct from the most extreme to the more innocuous. From Rape (sexual battery is the legal term for rape in Florida) to inappropriate gestures. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking. The person or persons committing the offense can be a student, an unknown individual, a faculty leader or even a host resident director. [Policy Number O-004 \(Policy O-004\)](#) includes a complete definition with links to other resources.

**Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, 20 U.S.C. §1681 et seq.**, (Title IX), [34 CFR Part 106](#) is a comprehensive federal law that prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in in education programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance. While sex discrimination was identified for the failure to provide equal opportunity in athletics, sexual harassment was also identified as another source of discrimination that was covered under Title IX. This law is enforced by the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) who can assess fines and other penalties.

In 1994 congress passed the **Violence Against Women Act (VAWA)**. This act is in recognition of the severity of the crimes associated with **domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking**. The protections and provisions afforded victims of such crimes were expanded and designed to improve criminal justice responses to domestic violence and increase the availability of services to those victims. Among other things, victims are now also afforded the right to sue the offender as well as the university if Title IX or VAWA is not followed. You can read more about the History of VAWA by [following this link](#).

Some specific provisions in VAWA include:

- Holding rapists accountable for their crimes by strengthening federal penalties for repeat sex offenders and creating a federal “rape shield law,” which is intended to prevent offenders from using victims’ past sexual conduct against them during rape trial.
- Mandating that victims, no matter their income levels, are not forced to bear the expense of their own rape exams or for service of a protection order;
- Keeping victims safe by requiring that a victim’s protection order will be recognized and enforced in all state, tribal, and territorial jurisdiction within the United States;
- Increasing rates of prosecution, conviction, and sentencing of offenders by helping communities develop dedicated law enforcement and prosecution units and domestic violence dockets;
- Ensuring that police respond to crisis calls and judges understand the realities of domestic and sexual violence training law enforcement officers, prosecutors, victim advocates and judges; VAWA funds train over 500,000 law enforcement officers, prosecutors, judges, and other personnel every year;
- Providing additional tools for protecting women in Indian country by creating a new federal habitual offender

crime and authorizing warrantless arrest authority for federal law enforcement officers who determining there is probable cause when responding to domestic violence cases.

The **Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act** ([The Clery Act](#)) (Links to an external site.)) is a federal law that requires all colleges and universities that participate in federal financial aid programs to keep and disclose information about crime on and near their respective campuses. The crimes that must be reported include those crimes identified by Title IX involving sexual harassment. As a traveler under the auspices of USF, we ask that you also report any crimes you are aware of by calling the USF 24/7 International Assistance Line at [+1-813-317-5815](#).

Some of the other mandates of [The Clery Act](#) include:

- Provide timely warnings to the campus community about crimes that pose an ongoing threat to students and employees;
- Maintain and make available a public crime log in their police or security department (if one exists)
- Maintain a daily residence hall fire log and report and publish an annual fire safety report alone or along with the annual crime statistics
- Provide certain rights to sexual assault victims and make specific statements about sex offenders
- Take action within 24 hours when students in residence halls are reported missing

## NON-CONFIDENTIAL / RESPONSIBLE EMPLOYEE RESOURCES FOR ASSISTANCE

Your faculty, program leader and assistant leader are considered a responsible employee under Title IX. USF's International Risk and Security Officer is also a Title IX Liaison. Both are considered non-confidential resources. They cannot confidentially assist you due to State reporting requirements, but, they can certainly assist you with discretion during such a situation. Non-confidential resources do not widely disseminate reports under Title IX. In fact they must handle all reports very discretely and are only authorized to report to Title IX Coordinators and Investigators. You can report your concerns to either one of these individuals by calling USF's 24/7 International Assistance Line is [+1-813-317-5815](#)

## DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT IN ANOTHER CULTURE

The US prides itself on being a melting pot of diversity where people of different races, ethnicities and religions interact and blend on a daily basis. Very few countries are as diverse as the United States. When entering more homogeneous populations, you - whether you are blond/blue eyed, or black - you may draw attention. While generally, this may be mere curiosity, it may lead to overt and subtle forms of prejudice - which can happen here too.

There are some locations, where because of your race or ethnicity, gender identity, disability, and/or outward-show of religious practices, you may feel yourself particularly targeted. For example, there have been recent crimes against Africans in Moscow; Caucasian students have been asked to leave certain locations in Asia; Students have been fed food against their stated religious beliefs in South America; Many countries have accessibility standards that are either non-existent or far less supportive than the United States.

Discrimination, harassment and retaliation are prohibited within the USF System as described in [Policy O-004](#). USF is committed to an environment free from discrimination and harassment on the basis of race, color, marital status, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, or genetic information, sexual orientation, as well as gender identity and expression.

It is important to **learn about the cultural norms** regarding the country you are going to, and how they may impact those protected categories that USF supports. A good place to start is at the U.S. Department of State Country Information Portal: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html>. The country information sheets share information about a great many things, including local laws and cultural norms.

You can also visit [NAFSA: Association of International Educators members' interest group site](#). There you can find a wide range of links to groups that support study abroad from a variety of perspectives including institutional, country or region, or those with similar professional or personal interests.

## LGBT ISSUES ABROAD

LGBT issues abroad can be quite complex. There may be LGBT laws and cultural norms that are even in stark conflict with each other. LGBT considerations when studying abroad may include how some countries support openness and acceptance with regard to sexual orientation while others do not. It can be very helpful to be aware of how your destination country views the LGBT community. Your selected destination may discriminate, persecute and criminalize same sex acts or even displaying support for same sex couples, and may carry severe legal consequences up to and including death.

For your particular destination, explore legal and social attitudes toward the local LGBT community. Investigate cultural and local attitudes towards homosexuality. Nearly every [Country Information Sheet](#) published by the U.S. Department of State has information about local attitudes and laws towards the LGBT community. The U.S. Department of State also has a team dedicated to your LGBT concerns and questions. Contact USF's International Risk and Security Officer if you have particular questions you would like him to pose to the U.S. Department of State by writing him at [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu). The EAO website has posted a thesis written as a guide to resources for LGBT culture abroad. ([http://educationabroad.global.usf.edu/\\_customtags/ct\\_FileRetrieve.cfm?File\\_ID=51978](http://educationabroad.global.usf.edu/_customtags/ct_FileRetrieve.cfm?File_ID=51978)).

### Other resources on this topic include:

- The [U.S. Department of State Students Abroad website](#) that was created by and made for students traveling abroad.
- [NAFSA: Rainbow SIG](#) [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org)
- [International Lesbian and Gay Association](#) is an international lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex association. It is a worldwide federation of 1100 member organizations from 110 countries campaigning for lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex rights. Since 1978.

LGBT students are encouraged to use the support of fellow USF students and faculty to help them if they ever feel out of place. The Education Abroad office welcomes any questions or concerns students may have concerning certain programs or laws in other countries. For more information on LGBT experiences, the EAO website has posted a thesis written as a guide to resources for LGBT culture abroad. (<http://global.usf.edu/educationabroad/out-predepart.php>).

## REPORTING DISCRIMINATION, HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION ABROAD

Discrimination, harassment and retaliation is a safety concern during your program that you need to be aware of. Discrimination, harassment and retaliation can come from a variety of different sources, such as students from other Universities, host families, co-workers at an internship, an employee at the host institution or even other USF students or employees in your program.

Even though we may have little influence with another country's laws and customs, we can intervene to offer our support and resources to assist you with an unfriendly or even dangerous situation. You may experience verbal or non-verbal conduct or behavior that is threatening, harassing, intimidating, discriminatory, or hostile and is based on one of USF's protected categories. When it happens, don't try and tolerate it. Don't let fear or embarrassment keep you from asking for help. Talk to someone about it. Report it.

Remember, you have rights! You choose how to proceed. You choose if you wish to file charges with the police or not. You choose if you wish to seek medical attention, though USF will always encourage medical care if you are sick or injured. Review the information in your Pre-Departure Information Guide to learn more. ([Link to Pre-departure Guide](#)) Also, please review the [2015-2016 USF Guide Regarding Sexual Harassment Under Title IX](#) and the [VAWA Victim Guide](#).

## CIRCLE OF 6 HAS YOUR BACK

Ok, this free app is awesome! Circle of 6 is a safety app where you can program in the contact info of six friends (including USF's 24/7 International Assistance Line when you program it into your phone) who have your back if you get in trouble. With just two taps of your finger, a pre-programmed text goes out letting your friends and USF 24/7 International Line know you need help.



- » “Call and pretend you need me. I need an interruption.”
- » “Come and get me. I need help getting home safely.”

It will send a map using GPS to show your circle exactly where you are. The hope is that one of them will get the message in time and help you out.

Go to this site\* <http://www.circleof6app.com/> and get the app now! Immediately program the app with five friends' phone numbers that will be on your program as well as the **24/7 International Assistance Line 813-317-5815**

*\*You can also [scan this code](#) to get the app.*

*\*\*This information in part from [www.futureswithoutviolence.org](http://www.futureswithoutviolence.org) and the card "Who's got your back?"*

## FEDERAL LAW ABROAD

When you travel abroad as a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident, you may still be held responsible by federal law. This is known as extraterritorial jurisdiction. Extraterritorial jurisdiction is the legal authority of the United States to prosecute criminal conduct that took place outside its borders.

Violating a federal law with extraterritorial jurisdiction may lead to criminal prosecution back in the United States. It may also be used to file a complaint with the USF Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Please visit the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities website for information: <http://www.sa.usf.edu/SRR/>

### **Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct in Foreign Places (Sex with minors abroad is not legal)**

Certain sex offenses are covered by extraterritorial jurisdiction in federal law. One important such law is Title 18 part 1 Chapter 117 U.S. Code § 2423(c). Engaging in Illicit Sexual Conduct in Foreign Places.

18 U.S. Code § 2423 (c) says that any United States citizen or alien admitted for permanent residence who travels in foreign commerce or resides, either temporarily or permanently, in a foreign country, and engages in any illicit sexual conduct with another person shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than 30 years, or both.

As used in this section, the term “illicit sexual conduct” means—

1. a sexual act (as defined in section 2246) with a person under 18 years of age that would be in violation of chapter 109A if the sexual act occurred in the special maritime and territorial jurisdiction of the United States;
2. any commercial sex act (as defined in section 1591) with a person under 18 years of age; or
3. production of child pornography (as defined in section 2256(8))

What this means is that if you engage in sex with anyone under the age of 18 years while on a USF international activity, you could be in violation of 18 U.S. Code § 2423 (c) and could be prosecuted in federal court as well as have a complaint filed with OSRR.

You can learn more here:

[www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-law-extraterritorial-sexual-exploitation-children](http://www.justice.gov/criminal-ceos/citizens-guide-us-federal-law-extraterritorial-sexual-exploitation-children)

[www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2423](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/2423)





## OSRR POLICY WHILE ABROAD

When traveling on a USF international activity, all students must adhere to the [USF Student Code of Conduct](#). All international travelers are expected to support the mission, goals, values and vision of the University of South Florida System (“University” or “USF”) by promoting a community that values individual responsibility and the adherence to community standards in a respectful manner.

This means that all students must also adhere to the USF World Education Abroad Office procedures and regulations, USF Health procedures and regulations as applicable, and all other applicable federal, Florida state and local Florida laws, as well as the laws of the visiting country, their local customs and their cultural norms. When a question exists about a possible conflict, contact the International Risk and Security Officer (IRSO) by either calling the 24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815 or email address, [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu) who can seek guidance in this matter.

### Reporting

Incidents of alleged violations of the Student Code of Conduct or other laws and expectations while abroad should be reported to the International Risk and Security Officer (IRSO) by either calling the 24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815 or email address, [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu). If after consultation the reporter wants a formal written complaint initiated with OSRR, the IRSO can do it on their behalf. Or, the individual can submit a complaint directly online.

This link takes one to the OSRR Public Incident Report: [Online Complaint Referral](#)

Verbal or written warnings issued by the IRSO to the individual alleged in the incident may be issued prior to filing a formal complaint.

A complaint must be submitted in writing to engage the OSRR. After receiving a written complaint, Student Rights and Responsibilities will determine University jurisdiction and a staff member from Student Rights and Responsibilities will investigate the incident. This may include meeting with the student alleged to have violated the Student Code of Conduct and all persons with information concerning the incident to determine future action as proscribed by the Student Code of Conduct. If still out of the country, meetings may be required via web-based methods, or may be delayed until the student’s return to campus, depending upon circumstances.

#### In Summary

1. Observation of alleged violation
2. Consultation with USF representative (IRSO)
3. Options Available – not necessary to follow in order based upon situation
  - 1. Verbal Warning – discussion with student and notification to IRSO**
  - 2. Written Warning – IRSO written warning document**
  - 3. OSRR Written Complaint Online**
  - 4. Other sanctions and/or possible dismissal from program – Consultation with General Counsel and Director of the Education Abroad Office**

### Academic Disruption

When teaching a course in an international setting, instructors still have authority to employ the Academic Disruption Regulation. Though, logistics and circumstances of the international activity may limit or amend its applicability.

This Academic Disruption Regulation provides the steps an Instructor may take to immediately address a student disrupting a class or academic setting including restricting a student from class, assigning an academic sanction or other immediate sanction. This is considered an Academic process and provides for academic sanctions. Simultaneously, the academic disruption report is to be filed with OSRR.

As with any incident abroad, it is of utmost importance to engage the International Risk and Security Officer (IRSO) by either calling the 24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815 or email address, [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu) to report and coordinate any sanctions.

## Academic Disruption Form

[Academic Disruption PDF](#)

[Academic Disruption Word Doc](#)

### CONDUCT PROCESS

Please visit the USF Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities website for more information. <http://www.sa.usf.edu/SRR/>

## PERSONAL SAFETY AND SELF AWARENESS

In this section, you will learn about some of the crime and safety concerns that occur while abroad. You will learn the best practices for prevent and preparation for your personal safety. In certain areas around the world, taking pictures are forbidden and you can even be jailed!

### DON'T BE A STATISTIC

In a recent survey of USF students traveling abroad, we learned the following:

- 24% reported thefts (Mainly pick pocketing and petty theft)
- 6% reported assaults
- 2% reported sexual assaults
- 4% reported feeling concerned for personal safety

Crime and safety concerns abroad are real, but that doesn't mean it's definitely going to happen to you. During your time overseas, there is going to be a lot going on around you and sometimes it may be a lot to take in. So, start preparing now so that you can reduce the risk of unknown threats to your material and personal safety. This orientation is a great place to start, but don't just stop here. Research your intended destination.

If you have any questions about best practices, concerns or resources, contact your advisor at the Education Abroad Office. They are there to help you plan and prepare as much as they possibly can.

### PREVENTION AND PREPARATION

The best way to protect your personal safety is through prevention. That is, it is important to think about your personal security before you travel abroad. Research the country you are going to and learn about its customs and laws. Start monitoring the news from your intended destination. You can set up searches in Google or Twitter, for example, for the city or country you plan on visiting.

When you start packing, definitely avoid packing any shirts that can be construed as inflammatory or brazen. Avoid clothing that may be seen as overly patriotic as it may come across as putting down the local culture. T-shirts with inflammatory designs or sayings on them are definitely not appropriate. Remember, you will be trying to blend in.

Think about how you are keeping yourself safe here in the United States. Think about when you go shopping or visit a friend's house. It is likely that you naturally practice safe behaviors without even realizing it. Generally, it has come as second nature to us to be vigilant, avoid dangerous neighborhoods or keep an eye open for individuals whose motives are questionable. You will need these skills abroad, especially since the environment will be very different and the social cues you rely on in Tampa are going to be very different where you are going.

Always be self-aware of your surroundings and your location in a new environment. Remember, when you are in a foreign environment, it is not always common sense when trying to avoid risky situations. You will have to think!

In summary, here are some tips to keep in mind when traveling abroad:

- Stay Vigilant
- Try to blend in



- Don't put valuables at risk
- Avoid fake jewelry, as any jewelry looks expensive to thieves
- Travel light- leave valuables at home if possible
- Don't wear inflammatory designs on t-shirts

**\*T-shirts that are highly inappropriate may lead to confrontation.**

## THE MISSING STUDENT

USF takes your safety and security very seriously. During your travels, you or a student may not be where they are supposed to be. It may be as mundane as sleeping in or missing a bus or train. It may be much more serious than that. There are many reasons that it may appear that you or another member of your group appears to be missing and no one should assume it is no big deal. A missing student is no laughing matter and it should be emphasized that USF does not need to wait 24 hours to act on a possible missing student case. In fact, USF can act immediately if it is determined that additional factors have led us to believe the student is missing. And when that happens, USF requires that local law enforcement, the U.S. Embassy, and any other resources be notified to locate and help the missing student.

There are many reasons for a student to go missing. Usually, if you cannot readily determine where a student is, it is likely the situation is very serious. The student may have experienced a mental health issue. They may have drunk too much the night before and got lost coming home. They may have been abducted. They may have been in an accident and in a hospital. Or they may have been arrested and taken to a police station.

If you are out with friends and someone in the group becomes difficult to be around or insists on going off alone or with a stranger, there is one important rule to keep in mind:

**\*\*\*NEVER LEAVE SOMEONE ALONE\*\*\*CALL FOR HELP IF YOU NEED IT\*\*\***

## TAKING PICTURES ABROAD

Just about everyone has a camera at his or her immediate disposal through a smartphone. It is not uncommon to want to immortalize certain individuals, experiences, sites, or scenery, especially when traveling abroad. However, the decisions you make to photograph the subjects you want could get you into serious trouble abroad.

The people you photograph may have strong religious or animist/indigenous beliefs that prohibit photographs of children or temples; women may not be allowed to be photographed; the military and police and their buildings are almost always off limits to photography; and some people simply do not want to be photographed!

Remember, foreign laws and customs governing what is permissible to photograph can vary vastly from U.S. norms.

Also, be careful about the photos you take of yourselves and others on the USF program abroad. Pictures that include the following can get you in serious trouble: immodest skin exposure, lewd or lascivious acts, kissing, and drinking alcohol. In some countries, avoid pictures of airplanes, trains or any buildings related to aviation, transportation, police or the military. Even pictures of places such as war zones, sacred grounds, archaeological sites, and tribal grounds or artifacts could be off limits.

Did you know that the use of the "selfie stick," a telescoping rod to take photographs of oneself from approximately one meter's distance, is banned in many locations, to include museums and art galleries, particularly in Europe? Now you know!



USF SUMMER IN GERMANY. 2010

Depending on what country is involved, visitors who violate local law or custom can be detained for lengthy periods, charged stiff fines, and/or be declared persona non grata. Not knowing local laws and customs is not excusable in the eyes of the court or police.

In summary:

#### DO'S

- Do ask before taking pictures of locals, children, or anyone, and respect their decisions
- Do remember that you are representing your university, your family, and yourself
- Do be aware that selfie sticks are banned in many locations, especially museums and art galleries. Adhere to signage regarding photography rules.
- Do avoid taking pictures with too much skin, at government buildings, religious structures, sacred grounds, and military areas.

#### DON'TS

- Don't post pictures of inappropriate behavior or indecency on social media
- Don't ignore signs; they are there for your safety and consideration. A picture is not worth your life

This information came in part from a report from the U.S. Department of State. You can read the full report here: <https://www.osac.gov/pages/contentreportdetails.aspx?cid=17303>

## SCAMS AND PETTY CRIME

In this section, you will learn about various scams and petty crimes that generally occur while abroad. Pick pocketing is one of the most common forms of petty crime. Banks that are abroad do not operate in the same manner as the banks in the U.S. Cyber crime and identity theft is a growing concern around the world.

### PICK POCKETING, ROBBERY & PETTY CRIME

When it comes to petty crime, USF wants you to be aware of these crimes, how they are executed, and how being aware of your surroundings can minimize the chance of becoming a victim. Please review the following 5W's = Who, What, Where, When and Why:

- **Who:** These are criminals operating primarily in groups but sometimes alone, whom target travelers and tourists. Pickpockets and others involved in street crime often work together and are likely close friends and even family. In fact, they are usually well known to the locals on the street who will take measures to protect them.
- **What:** These criminals will look for what's easy, obvious and convenient – is your purse hanging loosely from your body, with a strap that is exposed enough to quickly cut, snatch, and get away? Are you about to board a subway, so picking your pocket just before you board will ensure an easy escape route? Are you a confused and vulnerable tourist that's easy to manipulate? Petty crime thieves look for situations like this to minimize confrontation and maximize profit.
- **Where:** Crime can happen anywhere, however high-risk areas include airports, train stations, subways, & hotels. These areas have a high frequency of vulnerable tourists and are so busy that crime can go unnoticed.
- **When:** Normally these types of crimes will happen in an environment with lots of stimuli – noise and distractions, which decreases your awareness of the situation around you. Think about it; if you are seeing the Great Wall of China for the first time and are preoccupied with the experience, you are too busy taking pictures to notice that your wallet has been slipped out of your pocket.
- **Why:** Unfortunately, these criminals are taking advantage of an opportunity (travelers in new situations). The best way to prevent petty crimes from happening to you is to never travel alone, to travel light, to lower your profile, and to be aware of your surroundings.



USF LONDON AND PARIS PROGRAM. 2010



Take a moment to recall the discussion of Personal Document Safety near the beginning of this course. Passports and Phones are the two most stolen items on study abroad.

It is your responsibility to keep your travel documents, credit cards and valuables safe, not your program leaders. Your passport, credit card and/or debit card, and money should be worn in a pouch or a money belt as close to your body as possible when you are traveling abroad. Remember, money belts are worn under your clothes, not like a fanny pack. When you arrive at your destination, when possible, leave your original passport in a locked safe at your accommodation. Actually, in some countries the hotel will require you to give it to them for security. Only in rare circumstances do you need to carry it with you daily. Instead, always carry a copy of your passport with you.

Remember, your health, mental health, medical evacuation, and evacuation for natural disaster or political unrest insurance is already provided by registering with the Education Abroad Office. This policy does not include travel insurance or renters insurance. Travel insurance and renters insurance are your responsibility.

## SCAMS

A scam is a way that thieves use dishonesty to rob you of your money. Here are some common scams found in popular international locations:

- **The Helpful Local:** These are thieves posing as concerned citizens that warn you to store your wallet or valuable in a safe place, then steals it once they know the location of your wallet or valuable. You may also find these individuals at public transportation locations asking to help you with purchasing tickets or changing money. Always ask for help from an employee of the location.
- **The Pick:** This is a maneuver used to separate you from your belongings. Generally, one individual will block you from sitting down, entering a subway train or at a choke point (such as a subway door etc.) That person may try to distract you with a question while the second individual snatches a wallet, purse, or some other valuable in your possession. You will be blocked from recovering your property due to the doors closing or some other obstruction.
- **Other distractions:** A woman with a crying baby asking for money for milk; a man asking you to sign a petition; a random person on the street squirts mustard on your jacket; a stranger recommends a great place to eat; or a young child asking YOU for directions. Their ulterior motives are not always nefarious, but it is wise to be extra cautious. Be polite, say you are in a hurry, and move on.
- **Read about scams** from around the world in this article by USA Today. They mention quite a few country specific scams. Are they talking about your destination? <http://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/destinations/2014/05/04/criminals-target-travelers-abroad-with-scams-and-schemes/8060061/>

## BANKING SAFETY

Banks abroad do not necessarily operate in the same manner as banks in the U.S. It is important to organize your finances before you depart. Notify your bank of your travel plans before you go. If you don't, unfamiliar spending patterns may raise suspicions that the card is being used fraudulently, which could cause a suspension of your account until you call and verify the charges – and in a foreign country, this can be a major inconvenience.

Carry only the plastic you'll actually use. Leave all your other check/ATM cards and credit cards at home in a safe place. Get some cash in the currency of your first destination before you depart. That way, you'll have money for that very first taxi or train ride to your ultimate destination without having to stop or pay the excessive exchange rates often charged at airports. Find out if your bank has branches and/or ATM's where you're going, or if it has affiliations with foreign banks. In both instances, you'll save money by avoiding ATM fees.

Once you get in country, you need to keep in mind that anytime you attempt to access cash, you can inadvertently draw attention to yourself or expose yourself to possible banking scams.

In Europe, especially, it is becoming more common for automated kiosks and other businesses to require a "chip and pin" credit card. That is a credit card that has an electronic security computer chip embedded in it and requires the use of a "pin" or secret number, to authorize expenditures. Many U.S. issued chip credit cards do not require a pin, only a signature. Those are sometimes trouble in Europe. Check with your bank or credit card company to see if your





cards can be reissued as chip and pin cards.

To read more about safe banking tips, read this article. <https://www.usbank.com/student-banking/money-tips-for-students/studying-and-spending-abroad-what-to-know-before-you-go.html>

ATM scams continue to plague tourists. To stay safe and keep your money safe, follow these tips.

- Only use ATM's located in a bank – not on the street
- Only use ATMs referred by a trusted local or one that you are familiar with
- Check for a thin plastic insert or sticky substances that may be used to trap your card
- Also check for an added card reader, used to scan and store your card information and PIN
- Never use an ATM if the card scanner is loose or appears to be a “add-on” device
- If the ATM eats your card, notify the bank immediately

To read more about ATM scams, review this article. <http://www.scambusters.org/atmtheft.html>

## CYBER CRIME AND IDENTIFY THEFT

Identity theft and cyber-crime is a growing problem around the world. While traveling abroad it is extremely important to protect your personally identifiable information or PII? PII can be used to distinguish or trace your identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual. Read more about it here. <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/104256> (Links to an external site.)

Some of the more prevalent schemes criminals are using these days to steal identities include suspicious e-mail and/or phishing attempts to trick victims into revealing personally identifiable information, “smash and grab” burglaries involving the theft of hard copy driver's licenses, credit cards, check books, etc., and actual computer and network intrusions that result in the loss of personally identifiable information. To learn more about identity theft, check out this article: [https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/cyber/identity\\_theft/identity-theft-overview](https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/cyber/identity_theft/identity-theft-overview) (Links to an external site.)

Be very careful of connecting to a strange WiFi hotspot in an airport terminal or a café. It can actually be set up by a criminal working from the laptop computer sitting near you! Do not carry your social security number with you, at all. Since you are not driving, do not bring your driver's license. Keep your credit cards stored separately from you passport or your passport copy. It does not take much for a thief to steal your identity.

## TERRORISM AND POLITICAL UNREST

In this section, you will learn about various situations relating to terrorism and political unrest and how to handle each situation. There will be an interactive case study for what to do in the event of different emergencies. Know the threat(s) for your destination!

**RULE #1: THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A “SAFE” DESTINATION.** There was a time when many international travelers felt completely safe going to France or Denmark. Those days are long gone. A quick review of current events from 2015 will quickly identify the Charlie Hebdo attack in France and the Copenhagen terror shootings.

And even though the likelihood of being a victim of such a terrorist event is quite small....

Terrorism Deaths, Injuries, Kidnappings of Private U.S. Citizens, 2015

U.S. citizens worldwide killed as a result of incidents of terrorism: **19**

U.S. citizens worldwide injured as a result of incidents of terrorism: **22**

U.S. citizens worldwide kidnapped as a result of incidents of terrorism: **0**

... the chance that an event can disrupt your travel is very high. Communication and transportation can often grind to a halt during such an event.

But this does not mean we should not travel abroad. What it means is that we need to heighten our sense of awareness – become more vigilant. To be vigilant simply means to be alert and watchful, especially to avoid danger. <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/vigilant>





Being frozen by panic and fear will only serve to spoil a wonderful experience abroad. But how can one travel and avoid the risks? There are many ways to do this. Completing this online orientation is one of them! Specifically for your destination country the U.S. Department of State offers many risk mitigation strategies in its country information sheets. It is important that you know the tactics used by terrorist groups and criminals at your study abroad location.

The U.S. Department of State has pulled together a very thorough “Traveler’s Checklist.” <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/checklist.html>

Take a moment to look up your country <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html> and identify one risk and one strategy to minimize the risk for each of the following categories:

- Country Name
- Terrorism
- Crime
- Health
- Transportation

## WHAT TO DO IN THE EVENT OF A TERRORIST INCIDENT?

A terrorist event can happen in the United States just as likely as it could while you travel abroad. Being prepared and knowing what to do if such an event strikes can mean the difference between successfully negotiating the experience with minimal stress or putting you or your group in harm’s way.

The American Red Cross, an organization that we all trust, has put together excellent information regarding “Terrorism Preparedness.” Read about how to “Prepare; Respond and Recover” here: <http://www.redcross.org/prepare/disaster/terrorism> Even though it is written based upon a possible terrorist event in the United States, the same rules, recommendations and advice still apply abroad.

Some basic tips include:

- **Remain calm and be patient.**
- **Do not head towards an incident.** Follow the instructions of the security/emergency services and find a place of safety that offers cover from further explosions, shrapnel or gunfire.
- **Make an immediate and sustained effort to communicate out;** mobile communication networks may be disrupted in the immediate aftermath, so SMS texts and landlines should be considered as alternates.
- **Listen to your radio or television for news and instructions.**
- **Do not leave a place of safety without notifying someone of your plans.**
- **If it is absolutely necessary to relocate then only do so after ensuring the route is clear and that you have notified someone of your plans.**
- **Maintain communications throughout;** even when telephone lines are down, email and broadband links can stay in operation. Consider “Dead Letter” drops.
- **When safe, return to a pre-determined assembly area.** (Hotel, school, etc.)
- **Avoid likely targets,** US facilities, local military or police HQ, etc.

## ENCOUNTERING A DEMONSTRATION

Demonstrations may be planned or spontaneous. They may only involve a few dozen demonstrators or thousands.

- Stay updated using multiple sources, not only news media but also local contacts, and police and government warnings. Real-time, local knowledge allows you to minimize movement during high-risk periods and reduce exposure.
- The U.S. Embassy will send out emails to all those that are registered on the STEP program in advance of a planned demonstration and provide some risk-mitigating strategies.

Being enrolled in the Smart Traveler Enrollment program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State is one way to get advanced notice of planned demonstrations. U.S. embassies and consulates send out security or emergency messages to alert U.S. citizens to fast-breaking events, such as demonstrations, coups, approaching storms, and crime. And these messages will be emailed to your USF email address, so make sure you are monitoring it.



Certainly, if you know in advance about a demonstration, you can avoid it. But, what to do if one happens without warning, right where you are planning to travel?

- Avoid locations known to attract protests, (government offices, US embassy, military facilities)
- **Do not participate or loiter** in the vicinity of demonstrations or protests.
- **Do not take pictures.** Participants may be afraid that their photograph may be seen by government officials so they may try all means to prevent you from keeping a picture of them. Students' have been harmed and even lost their life taking pictures at a demonstration.
- **Follow the directions of law enforcement agencies.** You should also expect, but not be unduly alarmed by, a noticeable increased security presence in major cities. Always comply with instructions issued by security and law-enforcement agencies.

Change your itinerary. Go to a safe location. Hotels generally offer adequate security, as well as access to support services such as multi-lingual staff, medical support and reliable drivers.

## MUGGINGS AND ARMED ROBBERY

Even after studying the risk of crime at your location, you still may find yourself facing someone who wants to steal your belongings and possibly do you harm. The number one rule in such a situation is....**DO NOT RESIST!** If you have done your homework and prepared well, you are not carrying anything of value. Let it go. Whether it is your wallet, your purse or your backpack, everything can be replaced – except you!!

A travel blogger shared her hard lessons when it comes to international travel and being a victim of robbery: <http://theplanetd.com/lessons-learned-from-being-mugged-abroad/> She recounts the story of a woman who fought back to keep her purse from a robber with a knife. He stabbed her and she spent the next three weeks in the hospital. The camera in her bag was not worth it.

Other things that you can do to help minimize the risk of a robbery or mugging include:

- Try to blend in and remain self-aware and alert
- Avoid travelling alone at in the evening, or in secluded areas
- Avoid displaying cash or expensive jewelry, cameras, laptops
- Purge wallet of excess cash & credit cards when walking around

## TRANSPORTATION SECURITY

In this section, you will learn about various transportation security concerns. These concerns range from bus hijackings, roadblocks, selecting the licensed and regulated taxis, and issues with renting a vehicle while abroad.

### BUS HIJACKINGS OR ROADBLOCKS

Though relatively rare, a bus hijacking can be a harrowing experience. Increasingly more common are road blocks where authorities stop traffic looking for a thief or terrorist. Often times you may not realize that it is a roadblock and panic. In either event, if this happens to you it is extremely important to remain calm.

Hijackings of buses by armed criminals are generally limited to countries with weak infrastructures and a weak police presence; however, they can happen in any country. Reported bus hijackings have been noted in parts of Central and South America as well as on the African continent or Eastern Europe. Often times they occur at night and along rural bus routes between major city centers.

A number of travelers have experienced hijackings and armed robberies after just having arrived on international flights, most frequently in the evening, and shortly after the shuttle leaves the airport grounds. In the most common scenario, tourists or business travelers who land at the airport after dark are held up by armed men as their vehicle departs the airport.

Note: It is not just about large buses. Private vehicles, taxis and small shuttle buses have all been targeted by criminals. Typically, the assailants steal money, passports, and luggage, and in some but not all cases, the

assailants steal the vehicle as well. In some cases, assailants have been wearing full or partial police uniforms and have used vehicles that resemble police vehicles, indicating that some elements of the police might be involved. Surprisingly, some armed robberies have occurred within minutes of a tourist's vehicle having been stopped by the police.

So, what can you do to reduce your chance of becoming a victim? Here are some tips:

Be Prepared:

- Know the local threat
- Only carry what you really need
- Separate cash & valuables – keep in multiple places
- Have your passport hidden in a safe place
- Pack away documents and valuables
- Never plan to travel at night. Make sure your flights arrive during daylight hours and leave you plenty of time to reach your hotel during daylight hours.
- While riding cross country or even in the city, always lock your doors and roll up your windows.

If this happens to you:

- Stay Calm
- Do not get out of your seat
- Make sure that your doors are locked and windows rolled up
- Follow instructions from Bus Driver/Faculty Leader
- Avoid eye-contact with anyone entering the bus
- Gently wake up people next to you
- Do not take pictures
- Threat or use of violence is likely if guns are drawn – Don't Resist
- Follow the robber's instructions. Do not hesitate to give them any property they ask for.

## TAXIS

Taxis in foreign countries are for the most part safe, but bad things can happen. Remember that some illegitimate taxi drivers are criminals in search of victims. Passengers of unlicensed taxis have been robbed, kidnapped, and/or raped. It is important to know that the taxi you are about to use is a legal and licensed taxi and that the vehicle has been maintained to the local countries specifications. How to do that?

Try following these tips:

- Only use licensed and regulated taxis. You can find these at the taxi stand or by calling their phone number to request a taxi.
- Don't let taxi drivers pick you – you should pick out the taxi driver.
- When in line at a taxi stand, never accept an unsolicited offer by someone who approaches you and recommends you skip the line and travel with them. Never.
- Don't share taxis with strangers. If someone else is in the taxi besides the driver, do not get in.
- When in doubt, ask the hotel, club or restaurant staff to summon a reputable taxi for you. Do not hail a taxi on your own after dark.

**A special note about Uber:** This ride sharing service is all the rage around the world. Passengers can summon an Uber vehicle using a downloadable app. However, it is very new and Uber's ability to adequately screen their drivers is in question. There have been many reports worldwide of Uber drivers assaulting their passengers. Therefore, at this time USF does not recommend using Uber when abroad.

You can read more about taxi safety go here: [http://studenttravel.about.com/od/foreigntaxis/tp/taxi\\_safe.html](http://studenttravel.about.com/od/foreigntaxis/tp/taxi_safe.html)

## DO NOT PLAN TO RENT A VEHICLE!

Traffic accidents are one of the most common and debilitating incidents that one can experience on study abroad. Therefore USF strongly discourages and absolutely does not want students from operating a motor vehicle of any kind

while on a USF education abroad activity, even during their “free” time. This includes not only cars but scooters and other motor vehicles.

USF will not assist students with renting/leasing and operating motor vehicles such as cars, trucks, motorcycles, scooters, boats and jet skis while participating on an education abroad experience.

And absolutely, under no circumstances should students transport other students. Students are prohibited from operating vehicles used to transport any USF students and associated participants on an education abroad experience, ever. Only assigned faculty and staff may do this. Under very strict circumstances a Graduate Student who has been hired specifically to assist with a program may be allowed to drive and transport students.

## NEED ASSISTANCE OR HELP TO REPORT AN INCIDENT?

In this section, you will understand the significance of USF 24/7 International Assistance phone number. Along with learning the many functions of this phone number, you will learn how to call abroad, selecting a cell phone that you can use while abroad and the importance of always monitoring your official USF email address.

### USF 24/7 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

USF 24/7 International Assistance is not just for emergencies. You can contact USF 24/7 International Assistance any time you have a question or concern. You can even contact us if you have something positive to share with the USF community. Finally, USF will want you to use USF 24/7 International Assistance to report certain incidents abroad.

A dedicated phone number that can be called direct or collect from anywhere in the world, **+1-813-317-5815**, is monitored every day, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and 365 days a year to support all members of the USF community who are traveling abroad on university business or education abroad. These individuals may be faculty, staff, students, volunteers, alumni, donors, contractors, colleagues from other institutions, government officials and anyone else participating on USF sanctioned international travel.

USF 24/7 International Assistance is also there to support USF international travelers’ concerned family, friends and colleagues. For education abroad travelers, your emergency contacts will receive information on using this assistance line before you depart. Feel free to share this phone number with anyone who may be monitoring your travel.

A dedicated email address, [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu), is also monitored on the same cell phone that supports the 24/7 phone number. You may also text the cell phone number. Because email and text messages may not be readily noticed, if you want an immediate response always call the phone number: **+1-813-317-5815**

### REPORTING CRIME AND GETTING HELP

#### REPORTING A CRIME OF ANY KIND OR REPORTING SEXUAL HARASSMENT TO USF

***If you experience any of the crimes listed below, or if you experience sexual harassment, please make sure to at least report it to USF. Not only can USF use this information to immediately assist you, it can also become helpful for future program planning.***

The Intersection of Rights and Culture, we discussed that your faculty leader, program leader and accompanying staff and assistants are all considered Campus Security Authorities under The Clery Act. You can tell them of the crime and they will make sure it is officially reported. For Clery Crimes, they do not have to report the name of the student to USF Police, only the description of the incident.

However, for a Clery Crime under Title IX and VAWA, they do need to include your name. If you want to talk about it first, before reporting to a CSA who is a Non-confidential Resource, you can speak to a Confidential Resource.

[Reportable Crimes under The Clery Act and under Title IX/VAWA](#) (Links to an external site.) (Click the title to review official definitions)

- The Clery Act
  - » Aggravated Assault, Arson, Burglary, Destruction or Damage or Vandalism of Property, Hate Crimes,



Intimidation, Larceny-Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, Murder and Non-negligent Manslaughter, Negligent Manslaughter, Robbery, Simple Assault

- Title IX/VAWA
  - » Dating Violence, Domestic Violence, Hate Crimes, Sex Offense (Rape, Fondling, Statutory Rape), and Stalking. Sexual Harassment is also covered by Title IX even if it does not rise to the level of a crime.

The term "sexual harassment" is used as an umbrella term that includes all forms of sexual misconduct from the most extreme to the more innocuous. From Rape (sexual battery is the legal term for rape in Florida) to inappropriate gestures. It includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, Domestic Violence, Dating Violence, and Stalking. The person or persons committing the offense can be a student, an unknown individual, a faculty leader or even a host resident director. [Policy Number 0-004 \(Policy 0-004\)](#) includes a complete definition with links to other resources.

## RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO REPORT A CRIME

While abroad, here are the Non-Confidential and Confidential Resources available to you as defined earlier.

- Non-Confidential
  - » **USF 24/7 International Assistance Line +1-813-317-5815**
  - » Faculty Leader, Program Leader, Other Accompanying Staff and Assistants
  - » Local host resident director, teacher or staff member
- Confidential
  - » **USF Center for Victim's Advocacy Line +1-813-974-5757**
  - » Licensed Counselor or Therapist
  - » Clergy

## PRIVACY LAWS ABROAD - IMPORTANT REMINDER

The privacy laws of some countries might prevent local authorities or local individuals from notifying USF if one of our students has been the victim of a crime or a victim of sexual harassment. For example, if you were mugged and spoke to the local host resident director in Italy who is not a USF employee, they may not be able to directly share that information with USF. Therefore, we ask that you contact our USF resources directly if you have been the victim of a crime, so that USF can begin the process to assist you.

## WHEN YOU RETURN TO CAMPUS

Don't forget to follow-up on your incident when you return to campus, and seek out support as needed. The following resources are available. Visit the [Resources](#) page for more victim support information. There are many more resources than listed below and once you engage someone here on campus, they can help walk you through the system as needed!

- Center for Victim's Advocacy 813-974-5757 24/7 Help Line (Option 2),
- Victim Advocacy web address <http://www.sa.usf.edu/advocacy/page.asp?id=72>
- Counseling Center 813-974-2831,
- USF Office of Student Rights and Responsibility 813-974-9443,
- USF Diversity, Inclusion and Equal Opportunity Office (DIEO) 813-974-4373, and
- Crisis Center of Tampa Bay 813-234-1234

## FREQUENT USES OF USF 24/7 INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE LINE

Your health and safety is of paramount importance to USF, as well as your family and friends while you travel internationally. Remember that your emergency contacts will have access to the 24/7 International Assistance Line, so if there is an event that could be perceived as putting you at risk, we strongly encourage you to call it in and report it to us. It will allow us to quickly put other callers at ease.

The following broad categories are events that we would ask that you minimally make a report using the USF 24/7 International Assistance phone line or [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu) as appropriate.

- Any crime of any kind that may impact you directly or indirectly
- Interaction with Law Enforcement or Military such as being arrested or detained
- Health issues needing professional care (We can help with activating insurance)
- Mental Health issues or concerns
- Discipline problems that are affecting you
- Discrimination, Harassment or Retaliation
- Alcohol related Issues that are affecting you
- Missing student
- Natural Disaster – Floods, earthquakes, typhoons, volcanoes, etc.
- Civil Unrest – demonstrations, riots or acts of war

## SEEKING HELP AND ASSISTANCE IN AN EMERGENCY:

Always know what the local emergency numbers are for the country you are in. If you are in an emergency situation abroad, you will need to know how to contact the police, an ambulance, or even the fire department. Not every country uses “911” as its emergency contact number, as we do in the United States. You can look up the “911 equivalent” number for your destination here: <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/to-go/911-list.html>

Download this **Emergency Contact Card Template**. You can edit it to include important phone numbers and carry it with you at all times. If you are attending an Education Abroad Group program, your program leader will create this card for you and hand it out prior to your departure.

If you or a companion is experiencing a threat to life, limb or eye, call an ambulance immediately and get transport to the nearest hospital or clinic!

You should always identify hospitals or clinics that will be convenient to you prior to departure. You can find out by contacting **UHCG** at [assistance@uhcglobal.com](mailto:assistance@uhcglobal.com). You can also submit a request to [EAassist@usf.edu](mailto:EAassist@usf.edu).

Another important number to identify is the closest U.S. Embassy or Consulate. They can help with identifying medical facilities or helping you navigate the legal system. You can determine that number by visiting the U.S. Department of State Country Information Sheet here: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country.html>

When seeking health care, you should open a case with UHCG. You can contact the USF 24/7 International Assistance Line and request that or you can do it yourself.

If you want to do it yourself, you can call UHCG at +1-410-453-6330. You will need to provide UHCG with your policy number: 902238160.

## HOW TO CALL ABROAD – WIFI OR CELLULAR?

USF strongly recommends that you always travel with a cell phone that can make and receive international calls using a cell network, independently of WiFi. Yes, you will likely use WiFi for the majority of your data needs. There are many convenient apps out there to facilitate communication over WiFi without incurring expensive charges.

However, an emergency rarely waits until you have WiFi. The ability to make or receive a phone call outside of available WiFi can make a huge difference in your experience. Contact your U.S. based cellphone company and ask about ways you can either turn on global calling or unlock your phone to accept a foreign sim card. In an extreme case, consider purchasing a local disposable phone and add international minutes for use in an emergency.

## HOW TO MAKE A LONG DISTANCE INTERNATIONAL CALL

If you are using your U.S. based cell phone with the U.S. cell phone number, remember that when abroad, calling the U.S. is the same as a local call – except the charges will still be at international rates. It also means that calling an



international number will be like calling from the U.S. A good website to explain how to make an international call from anywhere in the world is <http://www.howtocallabroad.com/> Share this site with your family and friends.

**Always test your phone immediately when in-country.** Call someone in the U.S. and then have them call you back. It is always easier to identify a problem with your cell when there is no crisis. It is never helpful to learn there is a problem with your cell when you really have to use it!

Generally when calling the United States from an international number, you need to dial the U.S. country code 00 followed by 1 for long distance then the area code and number. So, for calling the USF 24/7 International Assistance Line would be: 00-1-813-317-5815.

## WHEN CAN USF TRY AND CALL YOU?

USF 24/7 International Assistance may choose to call you. We monitor world events and if it appears that a natural disaster, civil unrest or other activity may impact you or your program, we may try to reach out to you by email and/or phone. Always monitor your official USF email while abroad. This is our only official way to communicate with you. Always keep your cell phone charged and turned on to receive international calls.

USF 24/7 International Assistance may choose to contact your emergency contacts about a situation, in consultation with the program leaders or on-site representatives, without your permission. This is always done with discretion.

Specific instances when this may occur include:

- You are unable to speak for yourself;
- You are not where you are supposed to be and considered missing (USF does not need to wait 24 hours);
- You are perceived to be a danger to yourself or others; or when
- There is a significant health, safety, or security incident affecting the entire program such as a natural disaster or civil unrest.

## POST TRAVEL CONSIDERATIONS

You will learn in this section about the general post travel concerns such as reverse culture shock and what to do if you become ill after you have arrived back home.

### WELCOME BACK! NOW WHAT?

Remember that as you prepare to return to the United States, many of the things you had to think about prior to departure apply. Plan ahead. Get to the airport at least 3 hours early. Make sure that your baggage is within the excess baggage limits to avoid paying hefty penalties. And, do not pack your passport in your checked luggage!

Also, expect a twist upon return. You may have to pay duty on any goods purchased abroad. Do not try and sneak anything back and do not bring back pirated goods or fresh fruits, vegetables or meats. The government requires you to pay duty on goods purchased abroad and brought into the United States. You should know and understand these requirements before leaving your host country so you do not encounter problems upon your return. <http://www.cbp.gov/travel/international-visitors/kbyg/customs-duty-info>

Finally, you will be receiving an email with a link to an evaluation after your return. **Please complete your program evaluation as quickly and as truthfully as you can.** Do not hold back the good, the bad or the ugly! This evaluation will allow our faculty, staff and providers to make adjustments to future programs to better provide for a good student experience.

## CUSTOMS INFORMATION

The government requires you to pay duty on goods purchased abroad and brought into the United States. You should know and understand these requirements before leaving, so there are no problems when you return. You must declare expensive and/or foreign goods you will take with you before leaving the United States so that you are not charged duty

on them when you return. If you are taking imported articles such as cameras, binoculars, watches, laptops, etc., register these foreign-made articles with Customs (before leaving the U.S.) to avoid extra duty charges upon re-entry.

Your exemption is \$800 (retail value) on articles acquired abroad, if:

- Articles are for personal use or gifts.
- Articles accompany you.
- You have been out of the country at least 48 hours (Mexico and U.S. Virgin Islands are exempt from the 48-hour limitation).
- You have not claimed the exemption within the preceding 30 days.
- Articles are not prohibited or restricted.

Upon your return, group purchases together and keep receipts ready for Customs inspection. Should you bring back foreign pharmaceuticals, have the prescriptions ready to present.

You must declare, at the price paid, everything acquired abroad, including gifts given to you and articles worn or used. If you fail to declare or understate the value, penalties may be severe. You cannot bring meat, fruits, vegetables and Cuban cigars into the United States.

Check “Know Before You Go” for more customs information <http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>.

## HEALTH AT HOME: WHAT TO DO NEXT

If you reported an illness while abroad, your study abroad health insurance may still cover you for up to 30 days after you return, for that same illness. If you have any questions or concerns, call the international health insurance company's 24-7 number. Except in that occurrence, your study abroad coverage ends when your program ends.

If you plan to travel before or after your study abroad program, it is very important to obtain additional medical insurance coverage as the medical insurance provided for your study abroad experience only provides coverage during the dates of the study abroad program. While you may believe your domestic health insurance policy will cover the costs for any medical care needed abroad, it is likely you will be required to pay upfront and later seek reimbursement. Keep in mind that hospitalization or evacuation abroad can cost as much as \$40,000. Do you have immediate access to that much money on a moment's notice?

Therefore, plan ahead and before you travel. Make sure you have a health insurance policy in effect that will cover you when you get home. Also, look into additional coverage before leaving the United States if you plan to travel after your program ends. If you would like to purchase coverage for your additional travel, contact the UHCG enrollment center at +1-800-732-5309.

Remember, you will need to independently purchase this **separate insurance coverage** (you **cannot** extend the USF study abroad coverage -- a "new" policy must be obtained). Read more here: <http://educationabroad.global.usf.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad>.

In any event, if you become ill within 12 months after traveling, make a medical appointment and be sure to inform your physician of all the countries you visited while abroad. Sometimes a general illness here may have a relationship to the international travel you experienced up to a year earlier.

If you have been taking anti-malarial medications because of your travel abroad, do not stop just because you returned home. Continue to do so for the prescribed amount of time after you return home. If you have any questions, ask your physician.

As discussed earlier, it is not uncommon for participants to be sexually active abroad. If you were sexually active abroad, it is highly recommended that you consult with your physician and ask about getting tested for sexually transmitted diseases. You can do it right here on campus. <http://www.usf.edu/student-affairs/student-health-services/services/gyt.aspx>

## CULTURE SHOCK REVISITED

Believe it or not you will experience some measure of reverse culture shock when you return home. The best way to handle reverse culture shock is to understand it exists and **to not ignore the symptoms**. Finally, always keep in mind that it is normal and there are resources right here on campus prepared to help you adjust back to life here in the States.

Here are 10 challenges to be aware of with re-entry:

1. Boredom
  - » After all the newness and stimulation of your time abroad, a return home to old routines can seem dull. It is natural to miss the excitement a trip abroad brings on a daily basis so look for new ways to get involved at home, in your community or on campus.
2. “No one wants to hear your story”
  - » This is a tough one, because there is so much to share. People aren’t rejecting your achievements abroad, but the endless stories and plethora of pictures can be exhausting. Be realistic with your expectations of other and keep your stories brief. Finally, if you are looking for a group of people that never get tired of your stories and can put them to good use join the [GloBull Ambassador Program](#) (Links to an external site.). It’s the perfect solution.
3. You Can’t Explain
  - » It will be extremely challenging when attempting to explain certain transformative aspects of your experience abroad. This is okay! Do your best and realize it’s the personal growth that counts and explaining exactly how the experience changed you may take time.
4. “Reverse Homesickness”
  - » This is just like when you missed home after arriving overseas. Understand this is natural and should be anticipated.
5. Relationships Have Changed
  - » Expecting that no change has occurred during your absence is unrealistic. Keep in mind that some relationships between family and friends may have changed and whether for good or bad you should remain open minded and flexible to their situation.
6. People See “Wrong” Changes
  - » Be self-aware! This is a skill most likely acquired abroad so please understand that some of the changes that may have occurred to you while abroad may be seen as “bad” from others point of view. This may be caused by jealousy, fear or other feelings, but try and take the high road and understand these feelings are normally short lived.
7. People Misunderstand
  - » People may misinterpret words or actions in such a way that communication is difficult. Be cognizant of your behavior and understand that your new clothing style or sense of humor may come off as arrogant or smug to others. Keep in mind they may not have experience with other cultures and customs and you should not assume they understand why you are behaving in a new manner.
8. Feelings of Alienation
  - » The reality of being back home can be difficult to manage. When real daily life is less enjoyable or more demanding than you remembered keep in mind that it is natural to feel some alienation. Only time can help you find that balance.
9. Inability to Apply New Knowledge and Skills
  - » You learned so much abroad and it is only natural to be eager to show off your newly obtained knowledge and skills. Just know that the opportunity to do so may not be as available as you may think. This can take time and require you to seek out more opportunities on your own. Our Gateway Office in the Marshall Center is a great place to discuss these opportunities.
10. Losing the Experience
  - » So many things are going to happen all at once when you come home. School, work, family and friends





all take their toll and require your attention. Many students fear that with all there is to catch up on they will forget about portions of their experience abroad. You don't have to let that happen: maintain contacts abroad, seek out opportunities to talk with other study abroad participants, practice your cross-cultural skills and for the language learners seek out opportunities to practice your skills.

*Compiled by Dr. Bruce LaBrack School of International Studies, University of the Pacific for use by the Institute of International Education, San Francisco. Aspire Newsletter, Spring 1996.*

**NEED MORE HELP? CHECK OUT THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:**

- [Re-entry Tool-Kit](#) from SIT World Learning
- [Reverse Culture Shock](#) from the Center for Global Education
- [Re-entry Challenges, Advice and Suggestions](#) by Dr. Bruce LaBrack
- [What's Up With Culture, "Welcome Back, Now What?" \(Module 2\)](#), from the University of the Pacific
- [Duke University Student Affairs Resource](#) and for the language learners seek out opportunities to practice your skills.



## **IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY**

International Assistance Line\* .....(813)-317-5815

### **International Assistance Line:**

1. Dial the international access code for the U.S.\*\*
2. Then dial (813)-317-5815
3. Identify yourself as a USF study abroad student and give the country where you are currently located
4. State your name
5. Tell the person what is wrong
6. Tell the person how to contact you
7. Respond to questions and listen carefully to any instructions

International Assistance Email.....[EAssist@usf.edu](mailto:EAssist@usf.edu)

\*This phone is staffed 24 hours a day for emergency use

\*\*To prepare in advance, learn the international access codes for calling to the U.S. from abroad at the Country Codes Web page. Write the numbers on the back of the card.

## **EMERGENCY REFERENCE NUMBERS:**

### **UnitedHealthCareGlobal Insurance (UHCG)**

In the event of medical emergency, call .....+1 (410) 453-6330

Questions regarding your insurance .....+1 (410) 453-6330

Email.....[assistance@uhcglobal.com](mailto:assistance@uhcglobal.com)

Policy #.....**902238160**

### **US State Department Emergency**

Office of Overseas Citizens Services in US.....(202)-647-5225

