

BEFORE A WSU SPONSORED STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM BEGINS

1. Review the study abroad program details

Be sure you clearly understand the academic requirements of the study abroad program such as pre-requisites, assignments to be completed prior to leaving, in-country, or after returning to the United States, mandatory and optional program activities, itinerary etc. You should know the dates you leave and return to the USA and your arrival and departure dates to the countries you'll be traveling. Become familiar with the cities you'll be visiting and where you'll be staying in each of those locations

If you have special needs, inform the Program Director of this as soon as possible. The Program Director has the right to identify the selection criteria to be used with all trip participants, including age, educational background, physical fitness and/or required medical exam, or other criteria necessary for the successful completion of the program. Some programs require that participants be in a state of high physical fitness. Other programs require language proficiency. It is the program director's responsibility to see that participants meet the minimum requirements.

Be sure you understand and can pay for all the anticipated program costs. You are required to make your payments as scheduled. Failure to do so could result in removal from the program. Deposits are non-refundable.

2. Obtain the necessary identification documents for study abroad

If you don't have a passport or if your passport will expire within six months, apply for one as soon as possible (processing can take as long as six weeks during the peak travel season). Some countries also require a visa; the Study Abroad Program Director can advise you on the need for a visa. See <http://travel.state.gov/passport> for detailed passport application procedures.

You may also want to obtain an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) which grants you access to student discounts and benefits in over 90 countries. If you are 25 years of age or younger and not a student, you are eligible for an International Youth Travel Card (IYTC). Teachers are eligible for the International Teacher Identity Card (ITIC). Both these cards offer

benefits similar to the ISIC. To get your international identity cards, apply online at www.counciltravel.com.

It is your responsibility to see that you have all the necessary documents before you leave.

3. Make plans to travel smart and light

A key to easy and safe travel is to be able to carry all you need without a struggle. Suitcases with wheels may be difficult to maneuver on cobble-stone streets, and duffle bags are hard to carry for long periods of time. Consider your luggage needs for your particular program. For some programs, a suitcase may be ideal, while for others a convertible back pack will meet your needs.

Traveling light means you should choose your wardrobe carefully. Take clothing that can be mixed and matched and pack a bag for dirty laundry so you can wash some of your clothes in bathroom sinks or local laundry facilities. Use small bottles of toiletries and replace them in-country if necessary. Be sure to include copies of prescriptions for any medicine you need to bring with you. Before you depart, put everything you think you will need into your suitcase or back pack, and take a nice long walk, preferably in hilly terrain. Then review what's inside and decide what to leave at home before you go abroad.

Leave at home anything you absolutely cannot bear to lose either for its cash or sentimental value. Make two photocopies of important documents (passport, tickets, credit card numbers, etc); take one set of copies with you and leave the other set at home with a relative or friend. Some students have found it convenient to photograph their passport and send it to themselves in an email so that they have easy access to the document information should it get lost or stolen and need to be replaced. Consider leaving most of the contents of your wallet at home and only take those materials which you have in your wallet which will be essential for study abroad. A money belt which can be worn inside your clothes is a good place to store your passport, credit cards, debit cards, tickets, cash, etc.

4. Insurance

The cost of your program includes accident and health insurance. The Study Abroad office will direct you in how to file a claim should you need to.

Health insurance

All study abroad program participants must have comprehensive health insurance coverage adequate for In addition to adequate health insurance coverage,

some study abroad programs may require clearance from a physician in order for participants to complete scheduled trip activities. Your Study Abroad Program Director will advise you of the need for this.

Trip cancellation insurance

Most study abroad programs require a substantial amount of money up front, and usually several months before the actual program takes place. If a personal emergency arises and you are no longer able to go, you could forfeit the money you have already paid. We strongly recommend that you purchase cancellation insurance that can refund your money if a last minute emergency causes a change in your plans.

5. Attend a pre-departure orientation session

Approximately one month before the trip departure, a mandatory orientation session will be held for all study abroad participants by the Program Director and the Study Abroad Office. The following topics are usually discussed:

- academic course requirements and procedures
- travel details
- codes of conduct/cultural issues
- health and safety concerns
- emergency management plan
- WSU travel and study abroad policies
- other issues specific to your trip

6. Become familiar with international codes of conduct

Depending on your destination, you may be venturing into a culture unlike anything you've experienced. How do you keep from doing something embarrassing or offensive? During the pre-departure orientation, there should be a discussion of the applicable codes of conduct for the areas you will be visiting, as well as the consequences of noncompliance. Publications called "Culturegrams" also provide helpful information for more than 160 areas of the world. Besides historical and political background, each four-page "Culturegram" report explains country-specific customs, courtesies and lifestyles that differ from those in the United States. To order, visit <http://www.culturegrams.com/individual.htm>.

7. Make plans to stay healthy while abroad

Staying healthy while studying abroad is probably the most important thing you can do to assure a successful international experience. Health topics are frequently discussed during the pre-departure orientation; the exact content may vary depending on the health issues

and health resources of the country being visited. At a minimum, a pre-departure orientation should cover the following health topics:

- basic hygiene
- water and food issues
- alcohol and drugs (legal and illegal)
- personal responsibility and health status
 - existing conditions, special care needed
 - prescriptions, eye wear, etc.
- sexuality and relationships
- accident and injury prevention
- health care availability abroad
- diseases psychological issues
- common sense

Many other resources are available to provide information on specific health topics. The WSU Student Health Center can provide information not only on immunizations but also how to respond to simple health care needs such as upset stomachs, cold and flu symptoms and just plain homesickness. Other good sources of information include faculty and students who have traveled abroad, country guidebooks, public health hotlines such as local and state health departments, and the Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>.

8. Become familiar with the emergency management plan for your study abroad program

International travel has always had its joys and its hazards. Terrorist acts have usually been directed at government officials and business people representing large US firms, but all Americans are at risk while studying and traveling abroad. Regardless of how safe an international location seems to be, it is important that an emergency management plan be in place and reviewed prior to the trip departure. This review often takes place at the pre-departure orientation.

You are responsible for understanding the risks associated with travel to the specific locations of your study abroad program. The State Department regularly issues warnings for specific areas; see http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html. In addition, the nonprofit ASIRT (the Association for Safe International Road Travel) promotes road travel safety through education and advocacy. Its staff of 50 statisticians, lawyers and physicians around the world work pro bono to compile yearly updated road travel reports on over 60 countries that are available to members. Contact ASIRT, 5413 West Cedar Lane, Suite 103 C, Bethesda, MD 20814; telephone 1-301-983-5252; web site: <http://www.asirt.org>

NOTE: The right is reserved by WSU, in its sole discretion, to cancel the study abroad program or any

aspect thereof prior to departure, if WSU determines or believes that any person is or will be in danger if the program occurs.

An emergency management plan should also include provisions for health care which might be needed during the program. Before you leave, find out about the health care delivery systems found in the various trip locations. This includes the kind of health facilities which exist, their locations, their hours of operation, their methods of payment, and whether or not they will treat foreigners.

In the case of an emergency during your study abroad program, your Program Director will promptly report to the appropriate law enforcement agency and to the WSU University Police any accident or other incident which, in the course of a study abroad program, causes physical injury to participants or other persons. In addition, the Program Director will evaluate the real danger to the trip participants by considering such factors:

- the event's impact on the availability of food, water, and medical supplies
- the presence of military or emergency personnel
- the feasibility of continuing the trip or its activities
- advice of the nearest US embassy or consulate

Your Program Director will relay the above-listed information to the WSU Study Abroad Office; this office will consult with appropriate WSU administrators to decide what initial and long-term strategies are needed to deal with the emergency. Based on that discussion, your Program Director will take appropriate action based on the on-site situation and the WSU responses, including evacuation procedures, if necessary.

9. Sign a release form

All participants must sign a Statement of Understanding/Release. If participants are less than 18 years of age, their guardians must also sign. This form also requests an emergency contact telephone number for you while you are abroad. These signed release forms are collected when you first register for a study abroad program. Read the form carefully and become familiar with your rights and responsibilities.

Weber State University does all it can to minimize risks inherent in study abroad. However, keep in mind that the legal system, for the most part, considers individuals who study abroad to be adults and to be responsible for their own actions.

In summary, BEFORE you leave on a study abroad program:

- review the program details
- obtain necessary identification documents
- plan to travel smart and light
- attend a pre-departure orientation session
- become familiar with international codes of conduct
- plan to stay healthy while abroad
- understand the emergency management plan
- sign the release form

10. Refund Policy

The deposit is non-refundable, as are all expenses incurred up to the point of cancellation.

DURING A WSU-SPONSORED STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM

Your Study Abroad Program Director is the official in-country representative of Weber State University and has responsibility for enforcing WSU's study abroad policies and other relevant university policies during the program. Enforcement may involve limiting or excluding individuals from continuing to participate in the study abroad program, including returning them to WSU before the conclusion of the program.

For your own safety and that of the other participants, use these common sense strategies while traveling abroad:

1. do not accept responsibility for non-trip participants' luggage in the airport
2. do not leave your bags or articles unattended
3. do not check bags for anyone outside of the trip group, or carry gift packages for anyone you do not know very well
4. do not take anyone else's luggage through Customs
5. avoid suspicious, abandoned packages in the airport and elsewhere and report them to security personnel
6. get in and out of airports, train, bus and subway stations as promptly as possible
7. watch for and report suspicious behavior and don't be shy about it
8. avoid large crowds or demonstrations; get out of the area immediately and do not photograph these events
9. take care with what you photograph because many individuals and groups do not want their picture taken
10. keep informed through local radio and television broadcasts and develop a political

- awareness of local conditions (the Study Abroad Office may also assist in monitoring in-country conditions while the trip progresses)
11. if necessary, implement evacuation procedures as outlined in the emergency management plan

NOTE: The right is reserved by WSU, in its sole discretion, to cancel the program or any aspect thereof after departure, requiring that all participants return to the United States or to WSU if WSU determines or believes that any person is or will be in danger if the program or any aspect thereof is continued.

As accidents or emergencies arise, your Program Director may seek local medical care as needed, but the Director is advised not to distribute medicine to participants. Even over-the-counter medicines can be lethal for some people. Consequently, you should use the pain relievers, anti-diarrheal drugs, antacids, etc, which you have brought with you. If this is not possible, find a local pharmacy for assistance. Be aware that drugs sold over-the counter in other countries may often contain stronger doses than found in the U.S.