

STUDY ABROAD: COUNTDOWN TO DEPARTURE

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Spring 2019 Participants



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INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been prepared to be useful to students as they prepare to travel abroad and also to be a reference while abroad. It is important that you read this document carefully. It contains information that you will need to complete your preparations and succeed with your abroad experience.

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I. Reporting Emergencies

In the event of an emergency abroad requiring immediate attention at Swarthmore, please contact Public Safety at 610-328-8333. Public Safety will contact Off-Campus Study staff or other members of the campus community as appropriate.

II. Travel Documents

Passport

A passport is an official identification document issued by governments to their own citizens and is required for international travel. Your passport is your most important legal document when you are outside of your home country. Do not travel away from your program site, and most definitely do not attempt to cross international borders without your passport.

If you have a passport, check the expiration date. If your passport will expire within six months of the date of return from your abroad program, it must be replaced before you travel abroad.

If you are a frequent traveler, check how many blank pages are in your passport. If you have four or fewer pages you should have additional pages added to your passport.

Details for applying for first passports, renewing or replacing lost or stolen passports, adding pages to an existing passport, or correcting or changing passport information can be found on the following website: travel.state.gov/content/travel/en.html.

When traveling consider securing your passport in a safe place such as in a money belt worn under your outer clothing or in a zippered compartment of a pouch that you wear close to your body. When residing abroad make sure to store your passport in a secure place such as a program office or hotel or hostel safe. If your passport is lost or stolen it must be replaced immediately at the embassy or consulate of the country of which you are a citizen. Take a photocopy of your passport with you and keep it in a separate place from your passport. This will make it easier to have your passport replaced quickly if it is lost or stolen.

Visas

Visas are granted by governments to permit foreign nationals to enter and then reside in their countries for a fixed period of time. The visa can be on a piece of paper or a stamp in your passport. It is important to determine as early as possible what the visa requirements are for your travels and how and when to apply. When in doubt you can check with the Off-Campus Study office. You need to be prepared to be without your passport for the period of time during which you apply for a visa from the appropriate embassy or consulate. Travel plans must be made carefully with the timeline for securing the visa in mind. **Please note that OCS does not cover the cost of the visa.**

Be extremely careful when filling out visa documents. Be sure to sign all appropriate documents. We suggest that you have another person review your documents before submitting them to the appropriate consulate or embassy. Failure to fill in all forms completely and submit all required supporting documents in a timely way is very likely to result in a delay in receiving the visa.

In some cases, you may be advised to consider paying for the services of a company that assists you in the process of applying for a visa.

If you are required to obtain your fingerprints, or a police or FBI background check as part of the application for the visa, you can consult with Sam Smemo, Associate Director of Public Safety, for assistance.

Notary Services

If notary services are required, locally you can go to:
Agency by the Mall, 1301 Baltimore Pike, Springfield, Pa. 19064
<http://www.agencybythemall.com/>

Additional Documentation

Often you will be required to carry other important documents when entering other countries (e.g., proof of insurance, official acceptance letters; medical documents, proof of financial support). OCS will provide participants in the Semester/Year Abroad program with proof of financial support letters. If you are covered by CISI insurance you can print out an insurance letter when you log into their website. Normally your program will provide you with the details of what is required. However, please contact the OCS office should you have any questions. When traveling, it is always a good idea to carry your acceptance letter and other important documents with your passport, in support of your stated plans for being in the country.

Copies of Documents

It's useful to have multiple copies of your passport (e.g., four) – for permits, tickets, SIM cards etc. Students might need to leave a copy behind if they go on a side trip (e.g., in Nepal, you need them to get a trekking permit or to set up a Nepali phone).

III. Arranging Travel

OCS Semester/Year Abroad Participants. Students who participate in the Swarthmore Semester/Year Abroad program will be prompted to book their travel through Key Travel, after they have cleared their post-admission requirements with the Off-Campus Study office, and once they have received definite arrival and departure dates for their program. In some cases, travel may be arranged through the study abroad program.

Travel arrangements should not be made before reviewing how applying for a visa may affect your travel plans (if applicable). If you delay in purchasing your flight and the amount of the flights goes up, you will not be given additional funds, so don't delay in arranging your flight through Key Travel once authorized by OCS and you have assessed how long it will take to receive your visa, if required! **Plan carefully and be aware that change fees can be very substantive and are paid by the student, not by Swarthmore College.**

OCS will cover the cost of up to two checked bags, as necessary.

Other Travelers. Be sure to arrange your travel through a reputable travel agency. Below are travel agencies recommended by members of the Swarthmore community. To be prepared for any delay or emergency involving your travel, always have available the phone number/contact information for the travel agency (e.g., STA, Expedia, Travelocity, etc., as well as the airline).

- STA Travel: www.statravel.com 800-836-4115. Students who book through STA travel must also purchase the ISIC card (from STA)
- Avenue Two Travel: 610-243-1100
beth.heckman@avenuetwotravel.com | 789 East Lancaster Avenue Suite 100
Villanova, PA 19085
- Student Universe: www.studentuniverse.com 800-272-9676

Several factors can affect the cost of airfare: the season when you fly, the airline you choose, the length of stay, the flexibility of the ticket regarding changing dates, departing on a weekend, and how far in advance you purchase the ticket. **Be sure that the ticket allows you to change or refund your ticket for a reasonable fee, should you have to change your departure date, or cancel your flight. Know the change fees charged by travel agencies as well as airlines (you might have to pay both).**

STA Travel and Student Universe offer student tickets, based on availability.

Note that some countries will not allow entry with a one-way ticket. In such cases you have to show that you have onward travel plans, or that your visa allows entry on a one-way ticket. If you have a student ticket usually the fees for changing airline dates are minimal and tickets are usually valid for one year (be sure to check before purchasing your ticket).

Be sure to find out how long the ticket is valid for; what the penalty is if you want to change the dates on the ticket; can you change the routing of the ticket, and what is the penalty. Be aware that budget airlines may have much lower baggage allowances. Make sure you know the limits on the weight and amount of luggage. If your bags are overweight you will have to pay very expensive fees. If possible weigh your bags before you head to the airport! Budget airlines work better for shorter trips once you are abroad when you may be less concerned about the amount of luggage you have with you. Your baggage allowance might change and fees for checking bags may be greater on connecting flights after your first international flight (including subsequent international flights).

Airport Immigration when Leaving U.S.

It's recommended to arrive at the airport three hours before an international flight. Look for the departure boards that will give information about flights (e.g., departure time, departure gate, and sometimes the number of the check-in station). You will check in at the appropriate check-in station for your airline and destination. Determine ahead of time if there are charges for checked bags and limits on the weight of your bags. Fees for overweight bags can be very steep. You will need your passport to check in. It's a good practice to bring with you a printed copy of your airline ticket or e-ticket. After checking in you will proceed to customs. Your passport and boarding pass will be checked and your carry-on items will be screened. You are allowed to bring, in your carry-on, one quart-sized sealable plastic bag with liquids, gels, creams and pastes; no individual item can be more than 3.4 ounces. You will need to remove the plastic bag and run it through the security screening. If carrying a lap top you will need to take it out and put it through screening.

When returning to the U.S., allow for plenty of time to go through security screening, because it can be extensive and time-consuming.

Airport Immigration in Host Country

Upon arrival abroad, you will go through immigration. This usually occurs before you have claimed your luggage. Be sure to carry your passport, and any other required documents for immigration, in your carry-on luggage. Be prepared to provide information about how you are financing your stay, the address of where you will be living, and phone numbers of local contacts. Admission is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer. It is important to be polite and dress neatly. The immigration officer determines the length of stay to be authorized and stamped in your passport.

Customs

Following immigration, you will collect your luggage and go through customs. The customs office has the right to search your luggage. If this occurs you will be responsible for unpacking and repacking your belongings. Do not attempt to bring in any forbidden or illegal items. Note that your computer or other electronic devices can be searched. Research and be aware of items that are not allowed into certain countries (which can include electronic files). If you receive a visa or other entry document, it may be a small piece of paper. Be sure to secure this in a safe place, and determine if you must show this document when you leave the country. **Be careful to not lose these documents and have them available when you depart.**

Your Arrival Plan

When arriving by airport or train it's important to think through how you will get safely to your arrival destination. Have with you the names and phone numbers of your contacts, along with the address of where you will be going. If you are supposed to be met at the airport think of what you will do if your flight is delayed or if there is an emergency and no one is there to meet you. Do not put important contact information in your checked bags. Have it with your passport and other important documents. Plan ahead and know how to make a local phone call and obtain local currency. If you are traveling on your own, make sure you know in advance the recommended way to get from the airport to your destination. When taking a taxi, research what type of taxis or taxi companies are considered safe. Do not take a taxi from an unofficial taxi line, or let someone walk up to you to offer you a ride in their taxi/car. This type of arrival information is often in the US State Department consular information sheets and you can search online for arrival information provided by airports and train stations.

Return to the U.S.: Immigration

Everyone arriving at a port of entry (land, sea, air) is inspected by Customs Border Patrol officers. Customs and Border Patrol have broad legal authority to search at the border. Consider traveling with the least amount of data you need. This is especially true if your device contains sensitive data (e.g., human subjects data). Carry a paper copy of important phone numbers and emails. There are an increasing number of reports of travelers being asked to unlock or provide the password to their phones. If you are pulled aside during immigration and asked to provide the password to your phone or other devices you could be held for hours until you agree to do so. Eventually U.S. citizens must be allowed entry to the U.S. Green card holders must be allowed entry to the U.S. to

have a hearing before an immigration judge. Non-U.S. citizens can be denied entry to the U.S. Forensic software can access all of the information on your phone. The border is technically outside of U.S. jurisdiction and you have very few rights there. Therefore, you should carefully consider what information you travel with on your devices.

Return to the US: Customs

You should get and save sales slips for items you buy and intend to take home. Aside from restrictions on the quantity of tobacco, wine and spirits you can bring into the US, you will usually have an \$800 duty-free allowance on personal items after which you must pay a fee on additional goods. Be aware of items that are illegal to bring into the US (including foods/plants). It's a good idea to have a pen with you when you are traveling to complete customs forms on flights and in airports.

IV. Managing Finances

Initial Funds

You should plan to have a couple hundred dollars with you for travel and initial expenses. It's a good idea to obtain some local currency in advance if possible. It is also a good idea to have some money available as emergency funds. Normally you can access funds from ATM machines in airports upon arrival, but you should check ahead of time if that is going to be the case, and always have more than one way to access funds, should one method not work. You should consider purchasing some local currency before departure from your local bank.

Direct Deposit

Arrange for direct deposit with the business office at Swarthmore for receipt of any monies that OCS needs to give you (e.g., room and board if you are required to manage your own living costs). You can arrange for direct deposit from the menu options in mySwarthmore.

Bank Accounts

Usually students do not open bank accounts in other countries but your program or university will inform you if this is a reasonable option. You should check to see if your US bank has a branch or a relationship with a bank where you are going to be. This would allow you to make banking arrangements before you leave. More commonly you would be in the position of opening a bank account upon arrival. You can then deposit funds into the new account or you can arrange to have money wired from a bank account at home to the new account. You should not plan to deposit a check drawn on an American bank to establish the new account. That could take several months to clear or simply might not be acceptable. You will not be able to pay for things abroad with domestic US checks in US currency.

Credit Cards and ATMs

Master Card and Visa are the most commonly used cards abroad. Be sure to know what your limits are on your cards, and inform your bank that you will be using the cards abroad for an extended period of time (**otherwise you run the risk of the cards being stopped by your bank**). You should also make sure that the primary account on your ATM is a checking account (not savings). Unfortunately, many ATM machines in the US and abroad are rigged so that your account information can be stolen when you swipe your card. Try to use ATM machines in locations that make them less likely to have been

tampered with. Find out what scams are operating in your new town or city abroad. Make sure that someone back home is paying your credit card bills!

Make sure you know what charges you will incur for using your credit card or ATM card abroad. The fees can be steep. Try to negotiate a reduction in the fees before you leave for your travels. See if you can determine in advance ATM fees, locations and availability. Determine if credit/debit cards are used vs. cash in your host country. When using a credit card or making a withdrawal you are asked if you want to convert a payment or a withdrawal to the local currency (in terms of how you will be billed on your account); it is usually best to choose the local currency.

Don't forget, too, that credit cards offer good exchange rates as well, but they do charge foreign transaction fees. A foreign transaction fee is likely to be a percentage of each transaction rather than a straight fee. A small number of major card issuers don't charge any fees at all: e.g., [Capital One](#) and [Discover](#). Discover is only accepted in certain locations (so be sure to check with the company), but Capital One is accepted everywhere Visa or MasterCard are accepted (depending on which card you have). Don't plan on using your credit card for cash advances, since the fees for this are usually very high.

Safety

Get advice from your program or university about the best place to secure your personal belongings, including credit and ATM cards, your passport, and your cash. Once residing abroad, do not carry items with you on a daily basis that you do not need, and that you can leave in a secure place. Have copies of your passport and credit card information (including the numbers to call in the event your cards are lost or stolen) in a location that is separate from the original items.

NEVER put your personal information (social security number, credit card information, etc.) in an electronic document that can be accessed should your computer be hacked into. This also means do not scan or email personal information and send it to yourself by email. Keep separate paper copies of important documents and contact numbers should you need to discontinue a stolen credit card.

It's a good idea to leave copies of all of this information at home with a family member or other trusted individual who can help you if you lose your travel documents and your credit cards.

Save Funds/US Currency for Return Trip

Save some \$US for the return to the US as well as for any unforeseen expenses/travel/emergencies along the way. This is an important concept for any traveler and needs to be part of your personal crisis planning because there are many reasons why your travel could be disrupted and you need to be prepared (e.g., unforeseen health, safety, or security situations that result in either your need to shelter in place for a time or your need to leave your environs quickly). Also, sometimes \$US can be used abroad instead of local currency.

Suggestions from the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union (FMFCU)

Some foreign currencies can be ordered through the FMFCU. Order early since some currencies will take several days to arrive when ordered in the branch office or through ebanking. Be sure to change your mailing contact details prior to going abroad. Use ebanking to see your account activity. **Select “credit” when using your debit card abroad.**

V. Packing

We encourage you to pack as light as you can. Be aware of your airline’s policy on number and weight of checked and carry-on bags. Weigh your bags before you head for the airport! Also keep in mind that if you are taking any internal flights, after your international flight, there may be further limits restrictions on luggage. Start packing at least a week before your flight. That way you will have plenty of time to rethink your packing if you have started with too much to fit! Also, see if you are going to be able to handle your luggage on your own, especially if this is going to be necessary throughout your trip. If at all possible, everything except your carry-on luggage should either be on wheels or be carried on your back. It is not recommended to ship items abroad. It is expensive and you are likely to find that you do not need as much as you thought you did. It is far better to travel light from the beginning. Bring a bag that is a good size for weekend/day trips.

Your program or university, past participants, and travel guides can help prepare you on what to take. Be aware of differences in standard electrical current and wall plug sizes. You will need an adaptor that works with electrical outlets in the countries you will visit, and a converter to change the voltage (if you are using appliances that don’t operate with the local voltage). However, in most cases laptops and camera battery chargers are likely to work with both voltages, but still require appropriate plugs. Check the information from the manufacturer to make sure this is the case. Other electronics will probably require use of a converter. In most cases it will be less expensive in the long run to buy small appliances in the country so that you know they will work (e.g., hair dryers, razors, etc.). Otherwise, even with a converter, small appliances may short out.

Be sure to pack important items such as your travel documents, program addresses and phone numbers, medications, cameras, phones, computers, jewelry, etc. in your carry-on items. This is in case your bags are lost and/or to prevent important items from being removed from your luggage when it is in transit.

You should not take expensive jewelry and other items with you that are likely to make you more of a target of theft. When traveling and on the plane, make sure that your passport, money, and other valuables are secured. Do not leave them in a bag on the floor under your seat or under the seat in front of you. They should be close by your side or under your clothing where no one has access to them. Carry extra clothing in your overnight bag in case your luggage does not arrive on your flight.

The following are suggested items to consider bringing with you. Check with your program to see if there are other suggested items as well and to see what items might be provided by your program or host family before packing.

Clothing

A rule of thumb is to pack for three weeks, rather than three months. That makes it much easier to consider what you will need. Keep in mind the possibility of attending a dress event like a wedding, going clubbing, working, etc. What you need will depend on the climate, activities, and the local cultural norms. But in general, consider that you may need: rainproof walking shoes, flip-flops for showers, socks, underwear, shorts (may not be appropriate everywhere), bathing suit, hat, nice outfits, winter coat/hat/gloves/scarf, skirts/trousers, shirts, sweater/sweatshirt, rain jacket, light jacket. Be sure to check on what is considered to be appropriate attire, particularly in locations where it is important to dress modestly, and adhere to local values and norms.

Miscellaneous

Watch, camera, flashlight and batteries, chargers, address book, journal, guidebooks, books to read and share, daypack, plastic storage bags, laundry soap and line, hostel sleep sack, sewing kit, umbrella, TSA-approved luggage locks and tags, battery-operated alarm clock, moist towelettes, hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol-based), adaptor and voltage converter, portable battery charger, American cookbook/measuring cups, linens (if not provided by program), towel/washcloth, stain remover, water bottle.

For many toiletries like soap, shampoo etc., students really only need bring small amounts, because they can replace them in their host country. Depending on the country, however, some items (e.g., contact solution, tampons) might not be available or at least not easy to find, and others might be particularly expensive (e.g., sunscreen, face wash), so students should bring enough of these to last. You can get advice about specific items from your program or from other people who have lived in your host country before.

Medicine and Toiletries

Prescription medications in the original container (carry a copy of the prescription), toothbrush/toothpaste, soap/shampoo, comb/brush, sunscreen, lotion, cosmetics, deodorant, first-aid kit, contraceptives/condoms, pain/fever relievers, antibiotic ointment, anti-diarrhea medicine, insect repellent with deet, band-aids/tape, non-prescription decongestant, tissues, tampons/pads, shaving equipment, extra eyeglasses and sunglasses (with a copy of your prescription), contacts/cleaning solution (subject to restrictions on liquids in carry-on luggage on flights), tweezers/nail files, scissors (in checked luggage), small mirror.

Documents

Passport/visa and photocopies, tickets, financial documentation, insurance cards, hostel membership, money belt/wallet, cash/credit cards/copies, extra passport photos.

Gift Suggestions

Anything handmade from your home country, baseball caps, non-perishable local foods (e.g., peanut butter candy, maple syrup), scenic drawings/photos/calendars, items with Swarthmore logos, or logos of famous sports teams on them, cookbooks with American recipes.

VI. Food and Water

It is important for you to research how your established dietary preferences and practices may be affected in your abroad environment. Do not assume that the foods you are used

to will be available. Consider the extent to which you can be flexible in your food choices and how this may affect your experience abroad if there are practices and preferences that you feel you cannot change.

Safe Water

In areas where chlorinated tap water is not available, or where sanitation and hygiene are poor, you should only drink beverages made with boiled water, such as coffee and tea, or canned or bottled beverages, preferably carbonated. When the water supply is not treated, ice cubes should be considered to be contaminated. Wet containers should be dried before drinking from them.

When the water supply is considered unsafe to drink take efforts to not imbibe any untreated water. This includes not brushing your teeth in the water (bring an extra toothbrush in case you contaminate yours). An easy way to remember is to attach your toothbrush with a rubber band to the bottle of purified water that you are using to brush your teeth. When in the shower, keep your mouth closed.

Water Disinfection for Travelers by Howard D. Backer from the following website: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/the-pre-travel-consultation/water-disinfection-for-travelers> provides information on simple methods to ensure safe drinking water.

Be sure to seek advice from your host program, or travel experts for the region you will travel to, about how to secure safe food and water.

Traveler's Diarrhea

The following information is provided by the Centers for Disease Control (<http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/yellowbook/2018/the-pre-travel-consultation/travelers-diarrhea>)

Travelers' diarrhea (TD) is the most predictable travel-related illness. Attack rates range from 30% to 70% of travelers, depending on the destination. Traditionally, it was thought that TD could be prevented by following simple recommendations such as "boil it, peel it, or forget it," but studies have found that people who follow these rules still get ill. Poor hygiene practice in local restaurants is likely the largest contributor to the risk for TD. ... What is commonly known as "food poisoning" involves the ingestion of preformed toxins in food. In this syndrome, vomiting and diarrhea may both be present, but symptoms usually resolve spontaneously within 12 hours.

The most important determinant of risk is travel destination, and there are regional differences in both the risk for and etiology of diarrhea. The world is generally divided into 3 grades of risk: low, intermediate, and high.

- *Low-risk countries include the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and countries in Northern and Western Europe.*
- *Intermediate-risk countries include those in Eastern Europe, South Africa, and some of the Caribbean islands.*
- *High-risk areas include most of Asia, the Middle East, Africa, Mexico, and Central and South America.*

Untreated bacterial diarrhea lasts 3–5 days. Viral diarrhea lasts 2–3 days. Protozoal diarrhea can persist for weeks to months without treatment.

Carrying small containers of alcohol-based hand cleaners (containing at least 60% alcohol) may make it easier for travelers to clean their hands before eating.

Care in selecting food and beverages for consumption might minimize the risk for acquiring TD. Travelers should be advised that foods that are freshly cooked and served piping hot are safer than foods that may have been sitting for some time in the kitchen or in a buffet. Care should be taken to avoid beverages diluted with nonpotable water (reconstituted fruit juices, ice, and milk) and foods washed in nonpotable water, such as salads. Other risky foods include raw or undercooked meat and seafood and unpeeled raw fruits and vegetables. Safe beverages include those that are bottled and sealed [from safe sources] or carbonated. Boiled beverages and those appropriately treated with iodine or chlorine may also be safely drunk.

Fluids and electrolytes are lost in cases of TD, and replenishment is important.

For traveler's diarrhea, consider bringing powdered electrolytes to mix into water – if going to high-risk areas.

VII. Physical and Mental Health Considerations

Required Travel Health Consultation at Worth Health Center

All students who have been approved to participate in the Semester/Year Abroad program or who participate in other College-funded and supported activities are required to have a travel health consultation at the Worth Health Center. Do not delay in making your appointment. If you are traveling to a country with required immunizations that must be staggered over a period of time you should make this appointment as early as possible. Your immunization and other travel medicine needs will be reviewed, including what supplies you should take with you. Don't put this off until the last minute. Some immunizations need to be done over a period of weeks or months. **Please be advised that the health center does not carry all of the vaccines that may be required to visit a foreign country. If you require vaccines that the health center does not carry, you will be directed to where you may obtain them.**

To schedule an appointment phone ext. 8058.

If a physical is required by your designated study abroad program, you can make an appointment for this at the Worth Health Center as well.

All students who are participating in the Semester/Year Abroad program, or who have an OCS travel registry, are required to enter their medical history into their OCS application or travel registry and to upload a copy of the immunization record they will receive from the Health and Wellness Center.

Additional Medical Preparations

It is important to have complete medical and dental check-ups prior to departure so that if a health problem is identified, you can address it before leaving the country.

If you have a health condition that may require treatment while you are abroad, you will need to determine your medical needs beforehand, and make all indicated preparations. You should notify your abroad program or host of any medical needs. Do not assume that you will have access to the medications and care that you are used to; you must verify that will be the case. Hosting programs and universities will do everything they can to support you, however the possibility always exists that your needs might not be able to be met at all overseas sites.

Students who participate in the Semester/Year Abroad program and other College-sponsored activities will be covered by either the College CISI insurance plan or a plan provided by their study abroad program. You can contact these companies in advance of travel to obtain information about physical and mental health services while abroad and for information on how to handle your medications, keeping the above caveats in mind.

Arrange to have copies of all pertinent medical records to take with you. You will also need to make arrangements to procure abroad (after determining if this is possible) or take with you any required prescription medications. If you carry prescription medications with you, be sure to have them in the original containers and with a copy of the prescription. Some medications that are legal in the US might be illegal in another country. You must determine the legality of your medications before traveling abroad with them. (Students who are covered by CISI insurance can contact CISI to obtain information about the best way to travel with their medications). It is better to arrange with your insurance company to purchase and take with you an ample amount of medication (when possible), rather than considering having medications shipped to you (which could easily result in the medications never getting out of customs and therefore not reaching you). Consult Mary Jane Palma at Worth Health Center about how they may be able to help you communicate with your insurance provider about this. See the medicine and toiletries section under “What to Pack.” Be sure to bring your medications in your carry-on, not in checked luggage, to reduce the chance of theft. Be aware of the risk of theft of prescription medications from your luggage, but also from anywhere you keep your medications, and learn how to secure them. Worth Health Center can provide a small lock box to take with you for this purpose.

Shipped items may be held up in customs and may never reach you. This is not a good strategy for obtaining medications.

Mental Health

Living abroad represents many new challenges as well as changes to familiar routines. If you currently see a counselor, it is extremely important to discuss your plans to study or live abroad. If you need to meet with a counselor on a regular basis, discuss this with your current counselor to get advice about locating an appropriate professional at your abroad site. You should also make your counseling needs known to your host program. Students covered by the College’s CISI travel policy can explore access to counselors that have been identified by CISI by logging on to the CISI website.

Keep in mind that cultural adjustment is a normal part of living abroad. However, if your period of adjustment begins to affect your relationships, your academic work, and/or your daily life, you should seek to talk to a counselor. **Please note that appropriate mental health professionals may not be available at all study abroad locations. Consult with your study abroad program or university in advance about what services will be available.**

CAPS

In the event of an acute mental health concern, CAPS may provide consultation services to established CAPS clients in coordination with OCS and the host program. In most cases, CAPS consultation would be an adjunct to any assessment or evaluation that the host program might require and would not serve a primary diagnostic or evaluative function. CAPS does not offer distance counseling or psychotherapy to a student while studying abroad. However, while away from campus you do have access to the **CAPS 24/7 On-Call phone service – 610-328.7768.**

If you are in counseling it is important to make sure that your counselor is aware of your study abroad plans and that you discuss any needs that you may have for ongoing therapy and/or access to medications. Do not assume that you will have the same level of availability of services and access to specific medications that you have in the U.S. Both CAPS and staff of the Worth Health Center can help you with questions concerning managing your physical and mental health needs while abroad. Do not hesitate to discuss any concerns or needs that you may have with the Off-Campus Study office staff as well.

Safer Sex

The same considerations for safer sex that you have at Swarthmore College should be applied to any new environment. If you are sexually active, use a condom and/or dental dams. Take a supply with you as conditions of availability and purchase may be limited, and conditions of manufacture and storage may vary.

It is also important to understand cultural norms around sexual roles in your host country and program/university environment. It is extremely important to not put yourself in potentially dangerous situations. The use of drugs and alcohol can make you increasingly vulnerable to both poor decision-making as well as dangerous situations.

It is important to ask questions of your study abroad hosts and not make assumptions about the nature of consensual sex in any country in which you live and travel.

Alcohol and Drug Use

Depending on where you will live abroad, you may be in a country where it is legal for someone your age to drink alcohol, or it may be expressly forbidden. Be sure to know the regulations and abide by them. If consumption of alcohol is legal, act responsibly, and think of your well-being as well as the impression you make on others.

Do not use illegal drugs. There may be severe penalties in your host country. Know before you go! Research laws relating to drugs and alcohol in your host country.

Ask your host university or program about any known hazards or risks, including the use of date rape drugs. Learn how to protect yourself from these hazards. Know if drinking on the street or on public transportation are considered criminal activities.

Make sure your prescription medications are not considered to be illegal narcotics. You should have a letter from your Doctor explaining any prescription medications that you are taking with you and this should include the generic names of the drugs. Always bring medications in their original containers with clear labeling.

Be sure to never carry a package abroad for someone. If you are caught with illegal substances ignorance will not be considered an excuse. There can be very severe consequences for importing, purchasing, using, or having illegal drugs in your possession.

Remember, while alcohol and drug use can surely result in legal and conduct-related penalties, it is fundamentally a health and wellness matter that should be made with careful planning, awareness of culture, and an understanding of one's values and boundaries. If you would like to plan further or seek additional support for your travel, please contact Josh Ellow, the Alcohol and Other-Drug Counselor & Educator.

VIII. Health and Travel Insurance

CISI Insurance

Semester/Year Abroad Program: Students who participate in the Semester/Year Abroad program are covered by health and travel insurance through either their study abroad program or the College's policy through CISI (Cultural Insurance Services International). Students are responsible to obtain their own insurance coverage for periods before or after the official enrollment dates of their program. Students should carefully review the policy, including exclusions pertaining to pre-existing conditions and any other exclusions to the policy.

Students who participate in other College-sponsored activities and complete the Off-Campus Study travel registry will be registered for CISI insurance by the Off-Campus Study office. Once registered they will receive an email from CISI with login information to the CISI website. Students should print out a copy of their insurance card to take with them and retain their login information. The CISI website provides information on physical and mental health providers in cities throughout the world who will accept payment directly from CISI. Otherwise students must provide payment for services and submit reimbursement requests to CISI. Through the CISI website students can access a range of country-specific information, medical and security information, and search for health providers by country and city.

Keep in mind that if you are traveling before or after the dates of your program you must make sure that you have health insurance and emergency travel insurance that will cover you at your own cost. If you are covered by a CISI policy it is easy to extend the coverage as needed (at your cost) by logging into your CISI portal and paying for additional insurance to cover the additional days.

Download the myCISI mobile app. It provides instant access to the following information: Email/view your travel documents. Onscreen display of your ID card. Offline document availability. View country specific travel alerts and warnings. Learn more about the region you are traveling to. Personal security assistance information. Search medical providers worldwide. Claim related help.

How to Contact CISI

If you have any questions regarding your benefits or the claims submission do not hesitate to contact CISI. Be sure to include your policy number on all communications by email or mail.

Policy Number: 18 GLM NO6566212

In cases of medical emergency, contact the emergency assistance provider:

Emergency Assistance Provider: AXA ASSISTANCE

Phone: 855-327-1411 (calling toll-free within the US). 312-935-1703 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted)

Email: MEDASSIST-USA@AXA-ASSISTANCE.US

Questions and Claims Information:

Phone: 800-303-8120 ext. 5130 (calling toll-free from within the US)

203-399-5130 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted)

Email: claimhelp@culturalinsurance.com

Mail: 1 High Ridge Park, Stamford, CT 06905

National Health Insurance Plans

In some cases, students will be required purchase national health insurance plans for their study abroad country. OCS will cover those costs for students who participate in the Semester/Year Abroad Program.

Proof of Insurance

If you are applying for a visa, you may have to provide proof of insurance. This requires a letter directly from your insurance carrier. You must contact your insurance company and have them write a letter stating your coverage. You will need this letter in writing at least four weeks before you visit the consulate to apply for your visa. If you are on the college health insurance plan, please contact Mary Jane Palma at the health center so that she can request a proof of insurance letter for you from the current insurance carrier.

If you are covered by the College's CISI plan you can obtain a proof of insurance letter from CISI using the logon information you receive once you are enrolled in the policy.

Print out your CISI insurance card. You should have your health insurance card in your possession at all times. If you do not have one, you should contact your insurance carrier for a duplicate card.

Be sure to keep any medical bills, documents, and receipts that you are given abroad in case you need to seek reimbursement for your expenses upon your return.

If you have any questions about CISI insurance contact the Off-Campus Study Office. For other insurance questions, contact Mary Jane Palma, Medical Administrator/Insurance Coordinator at 610-328-8062 mpalma1@swarthmore.edu

Independent Student Travelers who do not Receive CISI Health Insurance Benefits: Health and Travel Insurance Policies

If your international travel is not sponsored by the College and you find that you do not have adequate travel health insurance, you should consider obtaining an insurance plan that would cover you outside of the US. These policies also typically offer a level of coverage for other potential travel needs such as medical evacuation and repatriation. You should also consider purchasing insurance to cover loss or theft of personal possessions while abroad. You should never travel internationally without having travel insurance in place. The following companies will give you a comparison of travel insurance policies.

HTH Students

http://www.hthtravelinsurance.com/students_plans.cfm

Wallach and Co., Inc.

www.wallach.com

UnitedHealthcare Global

www.uhcsafetrip.com

Cultural Insurance Services International

www.culturalinsurance.com

ISIC Insurance

For international travelers not covered by CISI or other travel insurance: If you purchase the ISIC card note that it provides some basic medical/accident/repatriation insurance for necessary covered expenses, due to sickness or injury. Be sure to review the benefits that come with this card. However, also keep in mind that the travel insurance that comes with this card cannot substitute for a good health insurance policy.
(<http://www.isic.org>)

Students not Covered by CISI Insurance

If you are not covered by CISI insurance you will need to evaluate your level of health insurance coverage using the guidelines below.

Evaluating Your Insurance Policy

The following information is provided by the Worth Health and Wellness Center:

- 1) Does your current health insurance plan cover you while you are abroad? If not, you will need to purchase insurance privately or through the college health plan.
- 2) If your parents' health insurance plan covers you while out of the country, you and your parents should contact your insurance carrier to find out what steps are necessary to seek medical attention outside of the United States.
- 3) Does the plan cover all medical problems - emergency and non-emergency care?
- 4) How will bills be handled while you are out of your coverage area?

Additional questions to pose to your insurance company:

- 1) Will your plan cover hospitalization for accidents and illnesses for the entire period while you're abroad? (Some policies may cover medical expenses for brief stays abroad but not for the full term of a study abroad program).
- 2) Will the plan cover doctor visits and medication prescribed abroad?
- 3) Is there a deductible? If yes, how much is it?
- 4) What is the dollar limit to the amount of coverage provided?
- 5) What are the procedures for filing a claim? Do you need to pay up front and submit the receipts for reimbursement? Be sure to obtain receipts for treatments. Have an emergency fund so that you could pay for medical treatments. What would you do if you did not have money to pay for treatment up front?
- 6) If you are already an international student in the US, do you have insurance coverage for the countries to which you plan to travel?
- 7) Will you have insurance in the US while you abroad so that if you decide to return to the US, or you have to return to the US because of illness, you will have health insurance?
- 8) Does the insurance policy cover the cost of repatriating you to your home country for treatment if you are seriously ill?
- 9) Does the insurance cover high-risk activities such as driving any type of vehicle, parasailing, mountain climbing, scuba diving, skiing, bungee jumping, and off-roading?
- 10) What are the exclusions? Common exclusions include accidents related to drug and alcohol use.
- 11) Does this policy cover pre-existing conditions?
- 12) Does the policy require pre-authorizations or second opinions before emergency treatment can begin?

Property Insurance

Check to see if your family's homeowner's insurance policy will cover your personal property while abroad. Strongly consider purchasing property insurance available from CISI or another provider. You are also strongly encouraged to purchase insurance for loss of property due to the relatively high incidences of pickpocketing and other theft abroad. Think of what you would do if your computer, camera, or other valuables were lost or stolen. The College does not provide insurance for your personal possessions. If you do have a loss abroad you normally need to obtain a police report from when you reported the theft to submit to your insurance company.

IX. Safety Guidelines

Listed below are guidelines intended to assist you in living safely during your time abroad. These guidelines are adapted from "Responsible Study Abroad: Good Practices for Health and Safety," prepared by the Interassociational Advisory Committee on Health and Safety and Study Abroad.

Responsibilities of Participants

Participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

Participants should:

1. Read and carefully consider all materials issued or recommended by the sponsor that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in host countries.
2. Consider their personal health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a program.
3. Make available to the sponsor accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that is necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
4. Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientations.
5. Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance policies and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
6. Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
7. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host-country laws.
8. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
9. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and wellbeing of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
10. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
11. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
12. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and well-being.

Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families

In study abroad as in other settings, parents, guardians and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

When appropriate, parents and guardians should:

1. Obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by the sponsor and other sources.
2. Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
3. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
4. Be responsive to requests from program providers for information needed regarding the participant.
5. Keep in touch with the participant.
6. Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.
7. Obtain/update passports so that you can travel quickly in the case of an emergency.

X. U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Consular Affairs

Travel Registration

Whenever traveling abroad, students (U.S. citizens) should register their travel using the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program - **STEP** (<https://step.state.gov/step/>). Students who participate in the OCS Semester/Year Abroad program, or who receive funding from the College are required to do so. Travel registration is a free service provided by the US government to US citizens who are traveling to, or living in, a foreign country. Registration allows you to record information about your upcoming trip abroad that the Department of State can use to assist you in case of an emergency. Americans residing abroad can also get routine information from the nearest US embassy or consulate. Students who are American Citizens who participate in the Swarthmore Semester/Year Abroad program are required to register their travel with the Smart Traveler Enrollment program. Non-U.S. citizens should see if their government provides a similar registration system. **In a crisis abroad, in addition to receiving email notices from the US Embassy in your country, the State Department indicates that the best way to follow their notices and advice is to follow the Bureau of Consular Affairs and your local US Embassy through twitter and Facebook.**

Download *Smart Traveler*, the official State Department app for U.S. travelers. It provides easy access to frequently updated official country information, travel alerts, travel warnings, maps, U.S. embassy locations, and more.

The Department of State provides a wealth of travel information (<http://travel.state.gov/>). Students are required to read the State Department consular information sheets for the countries to which they plan to travel. **The consular information sheets contain important travel advice and detail risks to travelers and US citizens in particular including transportation and water safety.**

Students are encouraged to read the following carefully:

International Travel Information <http://travel.state.gov>

Emergencies and Crises <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/emergencies.html>

Students Abroad (<http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en.html>)

XI. What to do in a Health, Safety, or Legal Emergency

Personal Crisis Planning Preparations

Prior to Travel:

- ➔ Register travel with STEP or other home country service. Know how to contact home country embassy/consulate in country.
- ➔ Review the State Department consular information sheet and CIA country profile of your host countries (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/profileguide.html>), which has information about natural hazards (listed in the geography section). Students should research these hazards, since major environmental risks in their host countries and/or important precautions might be different from those in the US.
- ➔ Complete the Swarthmore OCS Travel Registry.

- ➔ Share your itinerary with your emergency contacts.
- ➔ Complete health preparations including knowing how to handle any health concerns while abroad. Know where the appropriate hospitals and physicians are should you need health care while abroad.
- ➔ Determine if you must have a visa to enter your host country(ies).
- ➔ Review how to manage finances and plan to reserve funds for an emergency.
- ➔ Arrange for appropriate insurances.
- ➔ Know how to contact travel agent and airline.
- ➔ Make arrangements for appropriate housing and know how to travel safely from the airport to your accommodation.
- ➔ Research the phone numbers for emergency services (police, fire, (911 equivalent)).
- ➔ Review what phone to use as well as what other electronic devices you will use. See section on cyber security.

While Abroad Emergency Preparations

- ➔ Arrange for a local phone and notify your emergency contacts of how to reach you.
- ➔ Review safety features of your accommodation (e.g., fire safety, locks, are balconies and railings secure?).
- ➔ Some items you should always carry: hand sanitizer, money, ID, photocopy of passport and visa, hard copy of important phone numbers and addresses (of program director, other local contacts, home emergency contacts, embassy etc.). It is important for the numbers and addresses to be a hard copy in case your phone is lost, or out of battery, or the network is down.
- ➔ Other items like extra local money or \$US, passport, flashlight, medicine, and/or other first aid supplies, iodine, glasses/extra contact lenses. These items are specific to particular emergency situations and not practical to carry around every day, but students should be aware of these items in case they need to find them quickly in an emergency or carry them during extended emergency situations.
- ➔ Know your host country's methods for alerting the public to emergencies and familiarize yourself with the vocabulary that would be helpful for an emergency.
- ➔ Review local risks (e.g., water, crime, environmental, etc.).
- ➔ Review what procedures to follow in an emergency situation.

In an Emergency

- ➔ Contact your Resident Director/International Program Office of your abroad program.
- ➔ Keep your parents informed.
- ➔ Notify OCS and Public Safety (610-328-8333) as appropriate.
- ➔ If you have CISI coverage call 312-935-1703 (calling from outside of the US, collect calls accepted) or email them at MEDASSIST-USA@AXA-ASSISTANCE.US.
- ➔ If this is a city or countrywide emergency, make sure to check with your embassy/consulate as well as the local/national authorities. For US citizens: Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies and Consulates abroad and in the U.S., are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the Bureau of Consular Affairs website at <http://travel.state.gov>. Also note that the Office of Overseas Citizen Services in the State Department's Bureau of Consular Affairs may be reached for assistance with emergencies at 1-888-407-4747, if calling from the U.S. or Canada, or 202-501-4444, if calling from overseas.

Note: The U.S. embassy in your host country is likely to keep citizens updated using Facebook and twitter.

XII. Water Safety

The following is excerpted from the University of California Education Abroad Guide to Study Abroad.

Swimming safety

Follow these basic tips for keeping safe:

- Do not swim in unfamiliar bodies of water or at isolated beaches.
- Never swim alone.
- Never swim while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Never dive headfirst.
- Check local information for details of tides, currents, and pollution. Tide changes can produce powerful currents.
- Rip currents and undertows can be very common at many beaches.
- Do not swim where there are no lifeguards present.
- Check for possible hazards from jellyfish, sea urchins, coral, sea snakes, sharks, and venomous fish. Saltwater crocodiles live in coastal estuaries in many countries.
- Human sewage and animal feces make some beaches no-go areas for swimming or even wading.
- If you find yourself unable to reach shore, wave your arms and yell for assistance.

How to Avoid and Survive Rip Currents (*Source: National Weather Service*)

Rip currents are particularly dangerous for weak or non-swimmers. Rip current speeds are typically 1-2 feet per second. However, speeds as high as 8 feet per second have been measured; this is faster than an Olympic swimmer. Thus, rip currents can sweep even the strongest swimmer out to sea. The following tips will help you play at safe.

When at the beach:

- Whenever possible, swim at a lifeguard protected beach.
- Never swim alone.
- Learn how to swim in the surf. It's not the same as swimming in a pool or lake.
- Be cautious at all times, especially when swimming at unguarded beaches. If in doubt, don't go out!
- Obey all instructions and orders from lifeguards. Lifeguards are trained to identify potential hazards. Ask a lifeguard about the conditions before entering the water. This is part of their job.
- Stay at least 100 feet away from piers and jetties. Permanent rip currents often exist alongside these structures.
- Consider using polarized sunglasses when at the beach. They will help you to spot signatures of rip currents by cutting down glare and reflected sunlight off the ocean's surface.
- Pay especially close attention to children and elderly when at the beach. Even in shallow water, wave action can cause loss of footing.

If caught in a rip current:

- Remain calm to conserve energy and think clearly.
- Never fight the current. Think of it like a treadmill that cannot be turned off, of which

you need to step to the side.

- Swim out of the current in a direction following the shoreline. When out of the current, swim at an angle -- away from the current -- towards shore.
- If you are unable to swim out of the rip current, float or calmly tread water. When out of the current, swim towards shore.
- If you are still unable to reach shore, draw attention to yourself by waving your arm and yelling for help.

If you see someone in trouble, don't become a victim too:

- Get help from a lifeguard.
- If a lifeguard is not available, have someone call the local emergency number
- Throw the rip current victim something that floats -- a lifejacket, a cooler, an inflatable ball.
- Yell instructions on how to escape.
- Remember, many people drown while trying to save someone else from a rip current.

XIII. Fire Safety

The following is excerpted from the University of California Education Abroad Guide to Study Abroad. Additional information is also available from the Jasmine Jahanshahi Fire Safety Foundation – www.firesafetyfoundation.org.

Fire safety involves thinking ahead, knowing what to do, and keeping fear under control. Do not take fire safety for granted. Fire safety standards differ drastically around the world. Many overseas locations do not meet U.S. standards in terms of fire protection and regulations (e.g., fire sprinklers, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, etc.), means of escape, and fire-fighting capability. Some older buildings are constructed to minimal standards. Although many fire departments around the world have equipment that can reach above a second floor, most do not have equipment to reach beyond a seventh floor. If you live in a multi-story building, request a room no higher than the seventh floor. Fire safety is a shared responsibility between UCEAP (orientation and training of students), the community (well-trained and prepared emergency responders), and the individual student. You are ultimately responsible for your own safety during a fire. Know how to react should a fire occur. Practice a fire escape plan and fire-safe behavior on a regular basis. During a fire, you may have less than one minute to get safely out of a building. Knowing what to do can mean the difference between life and death. Always consider fire precautions in any building you visit, particularly the means of escape. Take the time to inspect your lodging for possible safety hazards, including lack of smoke detectors, exposed wires, and improperly operating heating and cooking equipment.

Prevention (if your host family or other residence has a fire hazard, you should alert your host study abroad program/university, and/or Off-Campus Study.

Taking a few sensible precautions, you can help protect yourself, and others, from injury—or worse:

- Ensure you have a working smoke alarm and test it weekly (Pack a portable, battery-operated smoke detector for use in private lodgings and/or hotel rooms while traveling during breaks.) A smoke detector should be temporarily located as close to the ceiling as possible in a hotel room, but should be permanently attached to the ceiling in your place of residence.

- Never smoke in bed; when you finish a cigarette, put it out completely and make sure all cigarette ends are cold before emptying ashtrays into bins
- Be aware of where fire alarms are located and fire equipment is kept
- Draw an escape route. Plan and practice it with your housemates
- Keep a flashlight on hand to help guide you through smoke

If you live in halls of residence

If you have any concerns or questions about fire safety in halls (e.g., you've spotted a fire risk) speak to officials at your host institution.

If you have a disability and would need assistance during a fire, let the university or college health and safety officer know when you arrive.

You should also:

- check what the fire safety rules are, such as any ban on candles in rooms
- pay attention to fire drills, if practiced, and never ignore them

If you live in privately rented accommodation

If you live in a private house or apartment, make sure it's fitted with smoke alarms on each level of the property and that they are tested regularly. If there are no smoke alarms, purchase one, and install it. If you cannot mount the alarm on a wall, place it on a high surface, with the top of the alarm not closer than 4 inches or more than 12 inches from the ceiling. Check that your escape route is clear. For example, make sure there are no bikes blocking your exit in the hallway, and be aware of any windows that are barred.

If you are studying in England, you can request a home fire safety visit from your local Fire and Rescue Service. They may provide and fit a smoke alarm for free.

Identifiable Fire Hazards:

- Identify potential fire hazards (see below for partial list) and take steps to minimize or eliminate hazards. Eliminating fire hazards associated with electricity, natural gas, and flammable liquids will go a long way toward reducing your fire risk.
- Smoking in bed or careless smoking. Careless smoking is known to be one of the primary causes of home fires. If you don't discard a cigarette properly, loose embers that are hot can ignite when they come in contact with a flammable surface.

Other significant hazards include:

- Smoke alarms that do not work.
- Expired or inoperable fire extinguisher.
- No escape plan.
- Overloaded extension cord. Overloaded electrical outlets.
- Using a space heater that is not laboratory tested and approved.
- Frayed cord plugged into wall socket.
- Electrical cords under carpets or across high-traffic areas.
- Electrical appliances left on (hair iron, etc.).
- "Daisy-chained" power strips (one plugged into another).
- Power strip without circuit breaker.
- Flammables close to a source of ignition.
- Unattended candle, fireplace, or space heater.

XIV. Earthquakes

Stay low to the ground – hands and knees are good so you can move or cover head and neck. If outside, go to open space away from buildings and other structures that can

collapse, rocks that can fall etc. If inside, go under a sturdy table or bed, or stand in a doorway. Stay away from glass windows and objects that might fall from above. Even when the shaking seems to have stopped, remain aware of surroundings, continue to stay away from possible falling objects, and be prepared to drop to hands and knees again in the case of big aftershocks that might follow the earthquake.

[Note: this advice might be good for most places in the US and Europe and maybe most big cities around the world (such as in Chile), but in some areas where buildings are less sturdy, it might be better to carefully and quickly get outside to an open space if possible.]

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/earthquakes/specificsituations.asp> has information for what to do in some more specific situations.

XV. Legal Considerations

Local Laws Abroad

Be aware of the following sources of potential legal problems:

1) Many countries impose harsh penalties for violations that would be considered minor in the US. The US government cannot bail you out of jail. In some legal systems you are considered guilty until proven innocent. Ignorance of the law is no excuse. You need to be informed.

2) Keep track of the credit limits on your credit cards. It's possible to be arrested for exceeding your credit limit in some countries. Know how to report any problems using your card to your credit card company.

3) In some countries you can be arrested for photographing security-related institutions, such as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas, and transportation facilities. When in doubt, ask if it is okay to take photos.

4) In some countries you can be arrested for purchasing souvenirs that are actually antiques or appear to be antiques (especially in Turkey, Egypt, and Mexico).

5) Make sure your prescription medication is not considered an illegal narcotic. See the section on *Additional Medical Preparations* above.

6) Don't agree to transport packages for anyone. If you are caught, ignorance is no excuse. If the package contains illegal drugs or substances, the fact that you didn't know will not reduce the charges.

7) Don't import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Drug charges can carry severe penalties.

8) Do not carry weapons. Even a pocketknife can result in a serious weapons charge while on foreign soil - even if the knife is found during a search or arrest for an unrelated offense.

9) Avoid participating in demonstrations and other political activities. Political activities in other countries can result in detention and/or deportation by officials. Even demonstrations that are intended to be peaceful can sometimes turn violent, and you don't want to be caught in the middle.

10) For U.S. citizens: If you find yourself in a legal jam, contact the closest U.S. embassy or consulate for assistance. Keep in mind, U.S. Consular employees cannot arrange for local officials to release detained American citizens.

Power of Attorney

Power of attorney is a document that gives legal authority to someone else to handle many kinds of important affairs for you including financial affairs (e.g., writing checks on your account), filing tax returns for you, and signing legally binding documents on your behalf. This should only be invested in someone in whom you have complete trust (e.g., a parent). A signature on a power of attorney must be notarized.

XVI. Language Learning

If you are going to a country where you are unfamiliar with the language you should do some language study prior to leaving. Try to spend at least 10-15 hours studying appropriate language tapes prior to departure. This will allow you to get an ear for the spoken language and you can equip yourself with a few phrases for everyday use. McCabe library offers a campus-wide subscription to Mango Languages, the online language-learning program that teaches basic conversational skills for 34 foreign languages. On the library's homepage enter "Mango Languages" into the Tripod search box and follow the link. When away from campus you can access Mango by logging into Off-Campus Access.

XVII. Important Travel Resources

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov)
- US Department of State (travel.state.gov)
- World Health Organization (www.who.int/)
- The United Kingdom Foreign Office's Travel Advice by Country (<http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/travel-advice-by-country/>)
- Canada's Foreign Affairs and International Trade Travel Reports and Warnings - <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- New Zealand's List of Travel Advisories by Destination <https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/>
- Australia Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (<http://smartraveller.gov.au/>)

XVIII. Communications

Putting your communication strategy in place within the first few days of arrival should be one of your top priorities. If studying abroad with College sponsorship, be sure to send your local address and cell number to OCS as soon as you know them upon your arrival. You will be asked to log on to your OCS homepage to do this.

In many locations, it may be most economical and convenient to purchase or rent a cell phone and then purchase minutes to use on the phone. This is the best option when

making local calls. It is best to inquire of your study abroad program or other host about the best way to go about this. In some cases, students may be provided with a cell phone by their program. If setting up a new phone abroad, students should look into what documents (e.g. copy of passport, visa) are needed.

When using traditional landlines, direct dial calls to your home may be less expensive than operator assisted or collect calls. You can contact the international operator for rates. Should you direct dial to the US, dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the US country code (always “1”) following by the regular area and local number.

You may want to look into international calling plans offered by your phone service. However, it is likely to be less expensive to buy minutes from other calling card providers. You should also look into ways to speak over the Internet, which is relatively inexpensive. Examples of companies providing this service are Vonage (www.vonage.com) and Rebtel (www.rebtel.com).

It may be possible for you to use the cell phone that you already have. Check with the provider to see if this possible and what the charges would be (this is often a very expensive option and you will need to make sure that your phone has been unlocked). An economical alternative if you have an unlocked phone is to buy a local prepaid SIM card, which gives you a local number at local rates. You can recharge the cards, an often you do not pay for incoming calls. But, if you are calling someone with a US international calling plan it may be considered an expensive international phone call for you.

If using your own phone and a phone service, be sure to determine if local calls are billed at a local rate or as if they are international calls.

A callback account (which is charged to your credit card) lets you call a US number and let it ring once, which triggers a call back to you abroad (incoming calls to your cell phone may be free depending on the country). When you answer you get a US dial tone, and can call any US number and be charged the outgoing US rate.

By far the cheapest way to call is through your computer over the Internet, which may be popular to use in country as well. You can use services such as Yahoo chat, Skype (www.skype.com), Google Hangout, Whatsapp, Line, or Kakko. You should find out where free Wi-Fi is available for Skype and other apps.

In some countries (e.g., France) people will tend to not answer an incoming call that is not from a local phone number. Therefore even if you have a calling plan on your US phone, it may not be useful in communicating with local people. Keep in mind that a call from a US number may cause an expense to the recipient.

Note: In an extreme emergency situation, if cell phone service is not available, it may be very important to have access to a landline.

XIX. Cyber Security (adapted from information provided by the FBI)

Telephone, Laptop & Mobile Device Security

If you can do without the device, Do Not Take It! If you need a computer, consider bringing a Chromebook or similar device rather than your laptop.

Do not leave electronic devices unattended. Do not transport them (or anything valuable) in your checked baggage. Shield passwords from view. Avoid public and free Wi-Fi networks if you can. In some countries, they are controlled by security services or criminals; in all cases they should be considered insecure. Where not prohibited by law, use Swarthmore's VPN to access personal or sensitive information on college websites (including email).

Sanitize your laptop and mobile devices prior to travel and ensure no sensitive contact, research, or personal data is on them. Backup all information you take and leave that at home. If feasible, use a different phone and a new email account while traveling. Note that Customs and Border Protection may require you to disclose the passwords to your devices upon return to the United States.

Use up-to-date protections for antivirus, spyware, security patches, and firewalls if you bring your device(s) with you (including Macs and Android devices). When downloading software patches, be sure to only download from the software vendor's actual site (e.g., Adobe, Apple, Microsoft, etc.) Don't use thumb drives given to you or that you find – they may have malicious software on them.

During the Beijing Olympics, hotels were required to install software so law enforcement could monitor the Internet activity of hotel guests.

Clear your browser after each use: delete history files, caches, cookies, and temporary Internet files. You can set this to occur automatically in the settings or options for your browser.

In most countries, you have no expectation of privacy in Internet cafes, hotels, airplanes, offices, or public spaces. All information you send electronically (computer, telephone, mobile devices) can be intercepted, especially wireless communications. If information might be valuable to another government, company or group, you should assume that it will be intercepted and retained. Security services and criminals can track your movements using your mobile phone and can turn on the microphone in your device even when you think it is turned off. To keep your online data private, try to access websites via https (encrypted) wherever possible and not prohibited by law in the host country. Don't use your password with websites that have certificate errors.

Beware of “phishing.” Foreign security services and criminals are adept at pretending to be someone you trust in order to obtain personal or sensitive information.

If your device is stolen, report it immediately to the local US Embassy or Consulate (or that of your host country).

Change all your passwords including your voicemail and check devices for malware when you return. Do not store passwords in text files or documents on your computer. *Cyber criminals from numerous countries buy and sell stolen financial information including credit card data and login credentials (user names and passwords).*

XX. Protect Yourself from Foreign Intelligence Service Targeting (the following advice is provided by the FBI)

Depending on your study abroad location be aware that you might be a potential target of interest for foreign intelligence services. Foreign intelligence services may develop initial relationships with US students overseas under seemingly innocuous pretexts such as job or internship opportunities, paid paper-writing engagements, language exchanges and cultural immersion programs.

How to protect yourself: Be skeptical of “money for nothing” offers and opportunities that seem “too good to be true.” Be cautious of people who show undue interest in your personal or family background and your career plans. Be cautious of people offering free favors, particularly those involving government processes such as issuing visas and residence permits. Minimize personal information you reveal, particularly through social media. Minimize contact with people with questionable government or criminal affiliations.

Properly report any money or compensation you receive while abroad on your taxes and in compliance with US law. US citizens should report any suspicious activity to the local US Embassy or Consulate and regional security officer. Report any suspicious activity to your local FBI field office upon your return.

XXI. Mail and E-Mail Forwarding

While you are abroad, the Swarthmore College Post Office will forward your first-class mail to any US address you provide. Be sure to change the mailing address for all magazines, newspapers, newsletters, and any other first-class mail that you regularly receive.

Be sure to read your Swarthmore email on a regular basis and check your quarantine/spam folder as well. Off-Campus Study will communicate with you by sending messages to your Swarthmore email account.

XXII. Photos

Passport-photos can be obtained at the following locations:

CVS (on Route 320 in Swarthmore). Call ahead before you make the trip.

XXIII. Housing Concerns at Swarthmore

For information regarding seeking campus housing for the semester following study abroad, please visit the following website: <http://www.swarthmore.edu/living-swarthmore/seeking-campus-housing-study-abroad>. For any general questions contact Isaiah Thomas, Director of Residential Communities.

XXIV. Considerations for LGBTQI Students

Living in a new country requires learning about all aspects of the new society. Spend time learning about your study abroad location well in advance of traveling. It is important to understand the customs and attitudes in the host country as they pertain to expressions of LGBTQI sexuality and community. The laws of the host country may either be more supportive of their LGBTQI citizens than in the US, or less so. Be aware and seek out reliable information. In some countries, the penalties are very severe for engaging in same sex sexual activity. In many countries, consensual same-sex sexual activity, public gathering, or dissemination of pro-LGBTI material may be illegal. Read the [country information](#) for your destination for more details.

Recommended Resource: <http://ilga.org/>
International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association

The following is adapted from *For LGBTI Traveler Information*:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html>

*Laws and attitudes in some countries may affect safety and ease of travel. Legal protections vary from country to country. Many countries do not **legally recognize same-sex marriage**. More than **seventy** countries consider consensual same-sex sexual relations a **crime**, sometimes carrying severe punishment.*

Penalties in these countries vary from a minimum penalty to long-term imprisonment or even a death sentence. Violence against LGBT travelers also remains a concern in some countries, as detailed in the State Department's [Human Rights Reports](#). Remember, civil and human rights are only as protected as the local laws allow. You are subject to the laws and the justice system where you travel.

Travel Tips

- *If you experience difficulties, don't be afraid to contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Consular officers will protect your privacy and will not make generalizations, assumptions, or pass judgment. Let them know if you experienced any inappropriate treatment or harassment.*
- *Thoroughly investigate the country you're traveling to. LGBT travel guides provide country-by-country advice. It's also worth checking for local gay newspapers or websites to obtain more information. After all, no one understands the local attitudes better than those who live there.*
- *Use discretion. As an American, you may already stand out. Outside gay neighborhoods or resorts, public displays of affection may draw even more attention, especially in more conservative countries or regions.*
- *Check for LGBT or "gay friendly" hotels and lodging. Some hotels won't accept bookings from same sex couples – others actively seek LGLBT bookings.*
- *Be cautious of potentially risky situations. Don't do anything you wouldn't do at home.*
- *Watch out for entrapment campaigns. Police in some countries monitor websites, mobile apps, or meeting places, so be cautious connecting with the local community.*
- *You are more likely to experience difficulties in rural areas, so be discreet.*

- *Be wary of new-found “friends.” Criminals may **target** or attempt to extort LGBTI foreigners.*
- *Some resorts or LGBTI neighborhoods can be quite **segregated**. Be aware attitudes in surrounding areas can be much less accepting.*

Be alert and try to avoid potentially unsafe environments. The general openness of LGBT settings can sometimes be taken advantage of by criminals. Look out for yourself and your friends, especially late at night.

Update Your Passport

Some travelers have reported difficulties entering a country on a passport bearing a name and photo that no longer corresponds to their gender presentation.

- To change your **name only**, see [Change or Correct a Passport](#).
- To update the **gender designation** on your passport, see the [Gender Designation Change](#) page.
- If you were **born abroad**, follow the instructions on how to [Replace or Amend a Consular Report of Birth Abroad](#) (CRBA) to update gender marker.

Other useful links

- [TSA Transgender Passenger](#) information/National Center for Transgender Equality. <http://www.transequality.org/issues/travel>
- [IGLTA, the International Gay/Lesbian Travel Association](#). <https://www.iglta.org>
- [Equaldex](#) collaborative LGBT knowledge base. <http://www.equaldex.com>
- The [Trevor Project](#) is a private organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTI young people ages 13-24. <https://www.thetrevorproject.org>

XXV. Cultural Norms and Travel

Some of the information in this section was written by and for women, however most of the advice given could easily apply to any traveler.

The following is from the Information for Women Travelers page at travel.state.gov.
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

Be cautious when sharing information about your plans and itineraries with strangers. Don't feel the need to be overly polite if you are bothered by someone. While it may seem rude to be unfriendly to a stranger, creating boundaries to protect yourself is important. Use facial expressions, body language, and a firm voice to find off any unwanted attention.

In some places, it is inappropriate to spend time alone with a man (or vice versa) – not only with local men but also with other foreigners. Other restrictions or sensitive activities include traveling alone (even locally), smoking, or drinking alcohol.

Even if immediate danger is not an issue, it is still best to follow cultural norms. Engaging in inappropriate activities or behaviors could give the wrong idea or offend/provoke people, either of which could then lead to safety issues as a result. At the least, it could alienate people and get in the way of relationships with local people in the long term.

Note: Local people will not always take the lead to ensure that foreigners follow gender norms (often offering things to foreign women to be polite even though they would be taboo for local women), so it is up to students to observe what local women do/don't do. (A very specific example from Nepal from a recent study abroad participant: "While I was staying with a family in the village of Simigaun, where local alcohol is an important part of culture and daily life, I was often offered homemade alcohol. At first I – along with the other students – always accepted it. After a while though, I noticed that the local women, at least in my family, never accepted it themselves, and it was often only the men and American women drinking. At this point, because I wanted to participate as naturally as possible in my host family's life, I chose to stop accepting the alcohol myself. My host father later told me that I was correct in my observation and my choice.")

XXVI. Voting for US Citizens

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/while-abroad/voting.html> (go to this website for information on registering to vote and requesting an absentee ballot). Almost all U.S. citizens 18 years or older who reside outside the United States are eligible to vote absentee for candidates for federal offices in U.S. primary and general elections. In addition, some states allow overseas citizens to vote for candidates for state and local offices, as well as for state and local referendums. For information regarding your specific state, visit the Federal Voting Assistance Program's Voting Assistance Guide or the Overseas Vote Foundation website. The Overseas Vote Foundation is a non-partisan voter advocacy organization.

XXVII. Swarthmore Libraries and Study Abroad

While you are studying abroad, the Libraries can provide many services to help with your studies:

Online Articles and Ebooks: Sign in through Off Campus Access at proxy.swarthmore.edu/

Articles and Book Chapters through Interlibrary Loan: Email request to emailill@swarthmore.edu.

Print Books: After consulting with staff at Access and Lending you may take three books with you while you're abroad. Please note that we cannot ship them to you once you depart.

If you receive a recall notice, please reply to the email so that we can work out a good solution for the person requesting the book.

Is there is a book that would be helpful to you that you'd like to suggest the Libraries purchase before you go? Just complete this purchase suggestion form at www.swarthmore.edu/libraries/suggest-a-purchase.

Languages: Need a refresher on a particular language? Mango Languages offers useful tutorials for real-life situations and actual conversations. Go to connect.mangolanguages.com/swarthmore.

Research Advice: Email your questions to librarian@swarthmore.edu or to your research librarian subject specialist listed at www.swarthmore.edu/libraries/research-support.

XXVIII. International Students Abroad

International students at Swarthmore may be subject to different travel requirements for leaving the US, entering their destination countries, and re-entering the US, than those to which US citizens are subject. International students must consult with the International Student Adviser about their plans well in advance of their scheduled travel and must explore what the student visa requirements are for their destination country (if any).

XXIX. Sexual Assault and Harassment Resources <http://www.swarthmore.edu/share>
*Note that the College's Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy applies to all activities of the College, including participants in the Swarthmore Semester/Year Abroad Program. The College expressly prohibits any form of discrimination and harassment on the basis of any College-recognized protected classification, including sex, race, color, age, religion, national or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, pregnancy, marital status, medical condition, veteran status, or disability in any decision regarding admissions, employment, or involvement in a College program or activity in accordance with the letter and spirit of federal, state, and local non-discrimination and equal opportunity law. This policy addresses all forms of sexual discrimination, including sexual assault and harassment.

The College is committed to treating all members of the community with dignity, care, and respect. Any individual affected by sexual assault or harassment, whether as a complainant, a respondent, or a third party, will have equal access to support and counseling services through the College. The College recognizes that deciding whether to make a report and choosing how to proceed can be difficult decisions. The College encourages any individual who has questions or concerns to seek the support of campus and community resources. These professionals can provide information about available resources and procedural options and assistance to either party in the event that a report and/or resolution under this policy are pursued. Individuals are encouraged to use all available resources, regardless of when or where the incident occurred.

Swarthmore College's Sexual Assault and Harassment Policy is available on the Swarthmore College Sexual Assault Resources website:
<http://www.swarthmore.edu/share>

The Student Handbook (<http://www.swarthmore.edu/studenthandbook>) also provides detailed information on policies and procedures related to sexual and discriminatory harassment.

****Please Note: Types of harassment that would be rare or unheard of at Swarthmore, might be common in some other countries or regions. Research local behaviors and strategies for these situations.**

What should I do if I am the victim of sexual misconduct?

Sexual misconduct represents a continuum of behaviors ranging from physical sexual assault and abuse to other forms of sexual harassment and intimidation. Students who are the victim of sexual misconduct are encouraged to report the incident immediately and seek the support services they need.

Students are encouraged to discuss their concerns with their in-country study abroad program directors and with the Off-Campus Study Office.

Reports may be made to:

Bindu Jayne, Title IX Coordinator (bjayne1@swarthmore.edu) (610-690-3720). Provides a compassionate space to make a report and to learn more about resources and support.

Hillary Grumbine, Interim Violence Prevention Educator and Survivor Advocate, (hgrumbi1@swarthmore.edu, 601-328-8538). Provides **confidential** support and advocacy to victims/survivors and their family/friends, including information, referrals, and access to resources.

XXX. Learning Resources and Student Disability Service

Students who receive accommodations at Swarthmore to support their individual needs should discuss their study abroad plans with a study abroad advisor in Off-Campus Study and with the Office of Learning Resources and Student Disability Services. Not all programs will be able to provide all services, but with careful planning students should be able to find a program with which they can work to meet their needs.

Students are responsible for finding out how accommodations are handled in their proposed study abroad program and what kinds of information they need to provide the disability service office for that program. It is important to discuss these requirements with the Student Disability Services office at Swarthmore early in the application process, and should it be necessary for the office to compile materials and send them to the proposed program, at least two weeks notice must be given.

Mobility International USA – MIUSA (<http://www.miusa.org>) is an excellent resource for information on going abroad with a disability. For 32 years, MIUSA has been empowering people with disabilities around the world to achieve their human rights through international exchange and international development.

XXXI. Career Services

Career Service advisors are available 8:30am-4:30pm EST via Skype. Email careerservices@swarthmore.edu to set up an appointment. While abroad network with professors, career centers, host families, friends, program coordinators, and Swarthmore alums (check the on-line directory or LinkedIn). Take advantage of school breaks to set up an externship with a Swat alum or other contact.

To look for summer internships sign up for Handshake to access online databases. Keep in mind that some internship places may not be flexible about their start and end dates. Also consider volunteering opportunities. To set up an externship in the U.S. look for a time that works with your schedule.

Through handshake you can access a section on international careers, including access to an online service called *Going Global* to explore international jobs and internships and to obtain expert advice on CV, resume, work permits and visa requirements for work abroad.