

# International Travel Handbook

Study Abroad, Internships, Research, and Service

2009-10



## PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- ❑ Apply for your passport. If you already have a passport, make sure that it is valid for at least six months past the date of your anticipated return.
- ❑ Collect documents required for your visa (if the country you are going to requires one for entry). Apply for and obtain the visa.
- ❑ Collect other required entry documents (e.g. financial statements, program acceptance letter, immunization records, etc.). Bring several extra passport-size photographs for miscellaneous use.
- ❑ Make flight arrangements. Obtain airline tickets, rail passes, hostel cards, etc., as needed.
- ❑ Photocopy important documents such as your passport and itinerary and provide to family members. Also keep copies with you, separate from your original documents.
- ❑ Make a travel planning appointment with University Health Services or your doctor. Have a physical, dental, eye examination, etc. and make a plan for obtaining prescription medications while abroad.
- ❑ Learn about your destination country and city, including health and safety issues.
- ❑ Make sure you understand what your health insurance plan covers and how it works.
- ❑ Review International SOS services and familiarize yourself with emergency procedures.
- ❑ Register on the University Travel Database at [www.princeton.edu/travel](http://www.princeton.edu/travel).
- ❑ Register with the local embassy/consulate.
- ❑ Arrange with your bank to have \$100.00 in local currency to bring with you. Make sure you have the credit cards, ATM cards, phone cards, traveler's checks, etc. that you are planning to use.
- ❑ Consider purchasing insurance for personal liability, property loss, trip cancellation, etc.
- ❑ Arrange for power of attorney for the person handling your financial affairs in your absence.
- ❑ Make a plan with your family for communication when you arrive and during your stay.
- ❑ Take this handbook with you.

### Emergency Numbers

Medical or security advice and assistance is available 24/7.

Princeton University International SOS Membership Number: 11BSGC000022

Call nearest International SOS Alarm Center:

- Philadelphia: +1-215-942-8226
- London: +44-20-8762-8008
- Singapore: +65-6338-7800

Princeton University 24/7 Emergency Number (Public Safety): +1-609-258-1000

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## INTRODUCTION

Whether you are going abroad for the first time or already consider yourself a seasoned traveler, we want to make sure that you are well prepared for the experience. This handbook is designed to address issues that may arise before, during, and after your time abroad. If you have questions or need assistance, please feel free to contact the Office of International Programs or other University offices listed in this handbook.

Your experiences overseas will almost certainly challenge and stimulate you, and we anticipate that you will look back on your time abroad as one of the highlights of your undergraduate career. If you are like many Princeton students who have spent time abroad, you will return to campus with a greater understanding of yourself, a different perspective on world affairs, a host of new friends, and an eagerness to continue to explore newly discovered interests. Best wishes for a productive and memorable experience!

## PRINCETON POLICIES

### Travel Registration

Any student participating in the Study Abroad Program or traveling abroad with funding from a Princeton entity (for study, an internship, research, or co-curricular activity) must register on the University Travel Database at [www.princeton.edu/travel/database](http://www.princeton.edu/travel/database). Registration on the Travel Database includes completion of the *Terms and Conditions Form* and *Travel Medical Profile and Consent for Care Form*.

### Immunizations and Health Review

All students must discuss their travel plans with medical professionals and obtain required vaccinations and, if necessary, medicine for the duration of their stay abroad. In case of an emergency while abroad, all students should carry a medical profile and an up-to-date copy of their immunization records.

### Health Insurance

All students must carry health insurance that is valid overseas for hospitalization and physician care. Private insurance must meet or exceed the coverage provided by the Princeton Student Health Plan.

### Conduct

While participating in Princeton-sponsored travel abroad, students remain enrolled as degree candidates at Princeton University and, as such, agree to adhere to the University's standards of conduct as described in *Rights, Rules, Responsibilities*.

Students must understand and agree to observe the laws of the country in which they are residing and all applicable academic and disciplinary regulations in effect

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on the program or at the host institution abroad. If students do not abide by applicable regulations, they will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions, including premature termination of participation. In such cases, students will return to the U.S. at their own expense.

### **Travel to Countries on U.S. State Department Warning List**

Princeton University will not fund or sponsor undergraduate student travel to countries on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning List or to countries where the U. S. has issued travel restrictions. Students who have a compelling educational reason to travel to such countries may submit a request for an individual travel exemption. The travel exemption process is a time intensive process. Travelers should allow at least four weeks for the review process.

### **Driving Abroad**

Except for emergencies, undergraduate students receiving Princeton sponsorship may not rent or drive cars or motorbikes in foreign countries (exception: Canada).

## **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

### **Passports**

Apply for a passport as soon as you decide to go abroad. You must have a valid passport to show border and customs authorities when you enter or leave the U.S., when you cross most other national borders, and on all occasions that require official verification of your citizenship.



U.S. passports are issued by the Department of State and are good for a period of 10 years if issued at age 16 or older. Information about obtaining a U.S. passport (including the application) can be found at [travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html). Some countries require that your passport be valid six months or longer beyond the dates of your trip. Please check with the embassy or nearest consulate of the country that you plan to visit for requirements. If you already have a passport, but it will expire before you complete your time abroad, you must apply for a new passport before you leave the U.S.

Your passport is your most important legal document while traveling overseas. Keep it in a very safe but accessible place. Before leaving the U.S., make two copies of your passport. Keep one copy with you but separate from the actual passport, and leave the other copy with your family. Having a copy of your passport speeds up securing a replacement.

Loss or theft of a valid U.S. passport while in the U.S. should be reported immediately to Passport Services. Directions for completing the "Statement Regarding Lost or Stolen Passport" can be found on the State Department's website at [travel.state.gov/passport/lost/us/us\\_848.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/lost/us/us_848.html). If the loss occurs while

abroad, immediately notify the nearest U.S. consulate or embassy. Contact information for U.S. embassies and consulates can be found at [www.usembassy.gov](http://www.usembassy.gov). Theft of a passport should also be reported to local police authorities.

### **Visas**

A visa is a stamp or document from a foreign government that grants official permission to enter that country on or after a certain date for a defined length of time and purpose, such as study, tourism, or work. Check well in advance for the visa requirements of your destination (for some countries, obtaining a visa can take more than two months). Visa procedures and customs requirements vary depending on citizenship. Make sure you check all requirements for your country of citizenship and for all the countries you plan to visit. If you are a U.S. passport holder, you can find visa requirements for a specific country in the Entry/Exit Requirements section in the Country Specific Information on the State Department's website at [travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1765.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html).

If you are on an F-1 visa, be sure that your I-20 is signed before departing the U.S. so that you may re-enter more easily. Your I-20 must be signed and validated once per year. If you will be abroad during the entire academic year, mail your form to Dean Rachel Baldwin (313 West College) for her to sign and return to you before you plan to re-enter the U.S. Contact Dean Baldwin, at [rbaldwin@princeton.edu](mailto:rbaldwin@princeton.edu) or 609/258-3053 if you have any questions.

### **Other Entry Requirements**

Check the entry requirements of the country or countries to which you are traveling (information can be found on the country's embassy website). To enter a country (with or without a visa) and/or to obtain a visa, you may be required to show any of the following:

- Proof of sufficient funds for the duration of your stay, such as a bank statement or a statement from the Financial Aid office
- Letter of acceptance from your overseas program, university, or host organization
- Letter of support from Princeton University
- Proof of medical insurance and required vaccinations
- Letter of good conduct from local police department
- HIV/AIDS test results

### **Power of Attorney**

If your signature will be needed for any official or legal document during your absence, you should arrange for your legal Power of Attorney to be held by an appropriate person to act on your behalf. Obtain a Power of Attorney form and have it notarized by a notary public.

## Insurance

All travelers should consider purchasing personal insurance to cover, at least partially, any financial loss incurred by trip interruption or cancellation, as well as loss of baggage and personal effects while either traveling or living abroad. Many, but not all, homeowner's insurance policies contain a clause extending this coverage worldwide. Check to see if your family's policy contains such a clause. Normally, a copy of the police report filed at the time of loss or theft is required by the insurer before any claim will be considered.

## International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

A number of privileges and discounts are available to students, including discounts on travel and specially priced or free admission to museums, theaters, concerts, and historical sites. To qualify, you must be able to prove your student status. The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) provides this proof wherever you go. It is the most widely recognized proof of your student status. The cards are available at the University Store for \$30 plus an additional \$5 for a photo. You can also order one online at [www.myisic.com](http://www.myisic.com) (\$22 plus \$3 for standard shipping).

## Arranging International Transportation

Book your travel as soon as you know when and where you have to arrive and when you have a good estimate of your return date. Make sure you check exam schedules, if relevant, before booking your flights. It is strongly recommended that you book a round-trip ticket. Although changing your return flight date can incur a heavy surcharge, one-way return flights are usually very expensive. Additionally, some countries may require that you have a return ticket as part of their entry requirements. Whatever your travel arrangements, it is your responsibility to re-confirm your flight, with your specific airline carrier, at least 72 hours before departure, at both ends.

Visit the Princeton University Travel Portal at [www.campustravel.com/university/princeton](http://www.campustravel.com/university/princeton) to access a variety of booking options, including international discount carriers and consolidators available exclusively to students. The Travel Portal also provides links to many other travel-related resources.

## Luggage and Shipping

Check luggage and carry-on regulations of the airline on which you will be traveling. We recommend a visit to the Transportation Security Administration website for information about permitted and prohibited items in carry-on and checked baggage. The website can be found at [www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm).



Excess luggage can be very expensive to transport, but if you feel there are things you must have that do not fit into your airline's luggage limit, you can 1) pay for

excess luggage on your flight (do not forget that you will still have to transport it from the airport to your destination!) or 2) have packages sent to you via post office parcel post (surface/sea mail).

## Immigration and Customs Inspections

Upon entry to any country, you must show your passport and any required visas and/or proof of immunizations. At an airport, this usually occurs just after you deplane, but before you recover your luggage. Remember that admission to the country is entirely at the discretion of the immigration officer. It is wise to be polite and to dress neatly. The immigration officer, who determines the length of stay to be authorized and stamped into your passport, will normally ask you about the purpose of your visit and how long you plan to remain in the country.

After your passport has been stamped and you have collected your luggage, you must pass through a customs inspection. You will probably receive a customs declaration form to be filled out on the plane (or train), and customs officials will examine it when they look at your luggage. Your bags may be carefully examined, and you may be detained or asked to pay duties if there are any irregularities or violations of customs regulations. You may also be waved through with no special attention whatsoever. Do not joke about bombs or smuggled items.

## Duties and Tariffs

Thinking ahead to your return to the U.S., you will want to register any camera, audio recorder, radio, personal computer, etc. (particularly new and foreign-made items) that you are taking with you. By registering these items with U.S. Customs before you leave, you avoid being questioned about whether they are subject to any duty when you return. Consult the U.S. Customs Service website, [www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel](http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel), in advance of your departure for further information and to review the publication "Know Before You Go." You should also save receipts for any major purchases you make overseas and intend to take home.

## Returning to the U.S.

U.S. residents are usually permitted to bring \$800 worth of foreign souvenirs and gifts into the U.S. duty free. All articles acquired abroad and in your possession at the time of your return to the U.S. must be declared to Customs officials, either orally (if you do not exceed the \$800 limit) or in writing. Declaration forms will be distributed during your flight back to the U.S.

Personal belongings of U.S. origin taken abroad may be sent back by mail duty-free if, on the outside wrapper, it is stated that the articles were taken out of the U.S. as personal effects and are being returned without having been repaired or altered while abroad ("American Goods Returned"). Should you need assistance on matters relating to U.S. Customs while abroad, customs representatives are available in the American embassies.

## Rail Passes

In many countries, trains go almost everywhere one might wish to visit and are a widely used form of transportation. Unlike in the U.S., one must often reserve a seat in advance in addition to having a ticket. You can reduce the expense of train travel in most countries by buying a rail pass—which, for a certain price, offers you almost unlimited travel for a specified period of time. With a rail pass, you will not have to line up to buy a ticket, though you still may need to make reservations.



Information about rail passes (Railcard, Eurail Pass, Japan Rail Pass, etc.) can be obtained online or from a travel agent (two useful websites are [www.eurail.com](http://www.eurail.com) and [www.europeonrail.com](http://www.europeonrail.com)). Please note that these passes can only be purchased in the U.S., so you must obtain the one you want before departure. If you expect to limit your travel to a single country, you may wish to explore rail pass availability for travel within the borders of that particular country. Information on such national rail passes can be obtained from the respective national railroads.

## Hostels

You can save money when traveling by staying at low-cost hostels. Many youth hostels require that you have an International Youth Hostel Pass. Information can be obtained from Hostelling International at [www.hihostels.com](http://www.hihostels.com). The Hostelling International Guide is published annually and lists locations, facilities, and telephone numbers for all IYHF hostels around the globe. The books are available for purchase from some bookstores, or directly from the Hostelling International USA website: [www.hiusa.org](http://www.hiusa.org).

## Tips for Securing Valuables

**Packing:** Do not carry everything in one bag! Never pack essential documents, medicine, or anything else you cannot do without in your checked luggage. Put these items in your carry-on bag (check to make sure none of the items is prohibited in carry-on bags at [www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm](http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/airtravel/prohibited/permitted-prohibited-items.shtm)).

**Cash:** Never carry large amounts of cash. Taking some traveler's checks for emergencies is a good idea. For the small amount of cash you need, consider using a necklace pouch or a money belt.

**ATM and Credit Cards:** Take only the cards you will use on the trip. Keep separate a list of cards, numbers, and emergency replacement procedures.

**Insurance:** Keep all names, phone numbers, and your policy number(s) with you in a safe place.

**Luggage:** Mark all luggage, inside and out, with your name and address. If you have an itinerary, put a copy inside each bag. Keep a list of what is in each bag and

carry the list with your other documents. Mark your bags in a distinctive way, so you can easily find them. Count your pieces of luggage each time you travel from place to place! Travel light; it is safer and easier.

**Passport:** Carry with you—separate from your passport—two extra passport pictures, your passport number, date and place issued, a certified copy (not the original) of your birth certificate, and a photocopy of your passport.

## MAINTAINING HEALTH ABROAD

Staying healthy while traveling abroad may depend on three important factors: making adequate preparations, knowing destination-specific health risks, and following sound U.S. and local medical counsel. Living away from your usual cultural environment may also cause a degree of emotional stress—which, in turn, could trigger physiological consequences. The impact on personal relationships, counseling sessions (if you are in therapy), and your general health (especially if you are on medication of any kind) is something to consider as you prepare for your sojourn abroad.

In general, it is a good idea to find out about health care facilities in each of the countries in which you expect to spend time. Learn the name and location of the hospital nearest to your residence abroad and how to summon emergency medical care (many countries have a 911 equivalent).



Traveling in developed countries, such as Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Western European countries, usually incurs no greater health risks than traveling in the U.S. On the other hand, in some regions of Africa, Asia, South and Central America, and the Middle East, sanitation and hygiene may be below U.S. standards. Cities often have better health environments than outlying rural areas, but not always. For information on worldwide health conditions, consult the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel).

All special health needs or medical conditions should be noted on the Medical Profile Form that you are advised to carry with you. If you have diabetes, are allergic to penicillin, or have any physical condition that may require emergency care, carry identification—a tag, bracelet, or card—on your person at all times. The ID should indicate the specific nature of the problem and spell out clearly what must or must not be done should you be unable to communicate this information.

Take good care of yourself while traveling! Do not wear yourself down, watch out for excessive exposure to heat, drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration, and get plenty of sleep!

## Travel Planning Appointments

Travelers who have a chronic medical condition, are pregnant, or are traveling to Africa, Asia, Central and South America, Eastern Europe and the NIS of the former Soviet Union, and the South Pacific (except Australia and New Zealand) should make a travel planning appointment with University Health Services.

At least four to six weeks before your departure, call University Health Services (609/258-5357) to schedule a travel planning appointment to discuss immunizations and prescriptions. Appointments can be made Monday–Friday and last approximately 30 minutes. Make this appointment as early as you can. Students planning to travel in numerous countries and across different continents should schedule their appointment at least ten weeks before departure. Visit [www.princeton.edu/uhs/ss\\_m\\_travel\\_services.html](http://www.princeton.edu/uhs/ss_m_travel_services.html) for more information.

Be sure to bring any application/travel requirement forms to your appointment. This appointment covers general advice about travel and must take place before any immunizations will be given. The clinician will review your immunization record and discuss any safety precautions that should be taken during your trip. Immunization appointments may be scheduled immediately after the travel-planning visit. If a physical examination is also needed, it must be scheduled through a separate appointment.

You are also strongly urged to consult the Travel Medicine Services website provided by UHS: [www.princeton.edu/uhs/ss\\_m\\_travel\\_services.html](http://www.princeton.edu/uhs/ss_m_travel_services.html). Additionally, the UHS Travel Tips website, [www.princeton.edu/uhs/hi\\_travel\\_tips.html](http://www.princeton.edu/uhs/hi_travel_tips.html), offers travel-related information, including jet lag reduction, food and water precautions, and insect and animal protection.

## Required Immunizations

Because of specific health concerns and conditions in various countries, proof that you have received certain immunizations may be required. In such a case, you must carry an official “International Certificate of Vaccinations” form, issued by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and approved by the World Health Organization. This form is available from University Health Services or from many physicians and travel agencies, and it must be filled out and dated by the physician or clinic administering the immunizations. In some countries, you may be asked to present the form upon entry to the country at the same time that you show your passport and any required visa.

## Prescriptions

Should you currently be under the care of a physician or require regular medication or injections (e.g. insulin or allergy shots), be sure to check with your personal physician for any advice concerning your welfare while abroad.



If you need medications regularly, take an adequate supply with you. It is advisable to keep all medicines (prescription or over-the-counter) in their original and labeled containers. A letter from your physician should accompany prescription medicines. This letter should include a description of your condition, the dosage of prescribed medications, and the generic name(s) of the medicine listed. If you are required to take medication containing habit-forming or narcotic drugs, you should consult the embassies of the countries you will visit before departing the U.S. to avoid potential problems.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that persons who require routine injections carry a supply of syringes and needles sufficient to last their stay abroad. Be aware, however, that carrying needles and syringes without a prescription may be illegal in some countries, so take along a letter from your doctor.

## Health Insurance

The Student Health Plan (SHP), obtained through the University, covers you year-round and worldwide. For further details about the Student Health Plan, see [www.princeton.edu/uhs/student-insurance/student-health-plan](http://www.princeton.edu/uhs/student-insurance/student-health-plan). The SHP does not make direct payments to health care providers outside the U.S. It will be your responsibility to arrange for payment (or credit until the claim is handled). Your SHP identification card has the address and phone number of the SHP Office at Princeton and for Aetna Student Health, the plan administrator. Providers can contact either office directly to verify coverage and policy provisions. The SHP Office can be contacted by calling 609/258-3138 and Aetna Student Health can be contacted by calling 1-877-437-6511 (calling from within U.S.) or 617/218-8400 (calling from outside U.S.).

If you are covered by a different health insurance plan, be sure that the policy offers comparable coverage.

You should keep your health insurance card with your plan information and ID number with you. Make sure that you understand your insurance coverage and how the system works. You should know how bills are paid in the case of a medical emergency and for routine treatments. Should you require medical attention abroad, you will need to have sufficient cash or credit card balance to make payment at the time of treatment, since the foreign physician and/or hospital may not be able to bill you. Be sure to obtain a receipt to submit with your insurance claim for reimbursement upon return to the U.S. It might also be helpful to carry a few blank claim forms with you.

## International SOS and Medical Care Abroad

International SOS, a 24-hour emergency assistance program, is available at no additional cost to all Princeton faculty, staff, and students who participate in Princeton-sponsored travel abroad. Contact numbers for International SOS can be found on the inside front and back cover of this handbook.

International SOS services include extensive medical assistance (e.g. information on travel health issues, referrals to English-speaking doctors, emergency and routine medical advice, and repatriation of mortal remains), personal assistance (e.g. legal referrals and lost document advice), as well as security evacuation. Other services, such as emergency personal cash advance or translations and interpreters, are available for an additional fee. For more information about International SOS, consult the University Travel website at [www.princeton.edu/travel](http://www.princeton.edu/travel) (click on the “Emergency” link). Note: International SOS is not medical nor trip cancellation insurance.

You should know what to do when you need medical attention abroad. Find out what arrangements exist locally for routine and emergency health care. Additionally, you should always carry your International SOS card with you.

Two online services offered by International SOS are the Personal Travel Record and Your Emergency Record. The Personal Travel Record allows you to store your medical, travel, contact, and credit card information. You can allow International SOS to access this information in the event of an emergency. If you register Your Emergency Record, you will receive recommendations for appropriate vaccinations and reminders for follow-up boosters.

Weekend travel may present special problems, as you may find yourself in unfamiliar or remote locations. If you are not fluent in the language and need medical attention, remember to use your International SOS card.

### “ICE” (In Case of Emergency)

As an added safety measure, you should store the name and phone number of an emergency contact person in your cell phone under the acronym “ICE” (In Case of Emergency), e.g. “ICE-John Smith” with phone number(s). Many emergency response personnel around the globe are familiar with this convention.

### Jet Lag

Jet lag refers to the physical and mental effects the body suffers when traveling rapidly across time zones and the resulting disruption of the traveler’s normal sleep-wake cycle. As a result, the traveler may experience indigestion, daytime sleepiness, headaches, and changes in blood pressure, fatigue, and poor concentration. Symptoms typically increase with the number of time zones crossed. The Mayo Clinic has put together useful information about jet lag at [www.mayoclinic.com/health/jet-lag/DS01085](http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/jet-lag/DS01085).

### Food and Water

In areas where chlorinated tap water is not available, or where hygiene and sanitation are poor, only hot beverages made with boiled water or canned or bottled beverages may be safe to drink. Where water may be contaminated, ice

or containers for drinking should also be considered contaminated. Iced drinks and non-carbonated bottled fluids made from water of uncertain quality should be avoided. It is generally safer to drink directly from the original beverage can or bottle.



Wet cans or bottles should be dried before being opened, and surfaces that come into direct contact with the mouth should first be wiped clean. If no source of safe drinking water is available, tap water that has boiled for one minute may be safe. Once it has cooled and been put in a thoroughly cleaned container, it can be used for brushing teeth and drinking.

You should be careful in choosing which foods to eat. In areas of the world where hygiene and sanitation are poor, fresh fruit and vegetables should always be selected with care. Avoid unpasteurized milk and milk products, such as cheese, and eat only fruit that you have peeled yourself. Following these precautions will help you avoid intestinal infections, such as travelers’ diarrhea, which are caused by organisms in contaminated food or water. But be warned: following the guidelines is no guarantee, and you may still develop diarrhea.

Many countries offer an abundance of food sold from roadside stands, and, in many countries, it is advisable to avoid such food. Locals may have no trouble with such food or drink because they have developed immunities against indigenous microorganisms.

### Diarrhea

Diarrhea is a common affliction that usually strikes a couple of days after arrival in a new environment and seldom lasts longer than about five days. Diarrhea is nature’s way of ridding the body of noxious agents; intestinal motility serves as the normal cleansing mechanism of the intestine. The most important way of coping with this disorder is to maintain adequate fluid intake to prevent dehydration. Most cases of diarrhea are self-limited and require only simple replacement of fluids and salts lost in diarrhea stools. Drink fluids such as canned fruit juices, hot tea, or carbonated drinks. Your physician may be able to prescribe medication to take along for relief of the symptoms.

It is strongly recommended that you consult a local physician rather than attempt self-medication if your diarrhea is severe or does not resolve itself within several days, if there is blood and/or mucus in the stool, if fever occurs with shaking chills, or if there is persistent diarrhea with dehydration.

### Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Many diseases (e.g., gonorrhea, herpes, etc.) are primarily contracted through unsafe sexual activity. AIDS is the best known and the deadliest, but the same precautions apply to all sexually transmitted diseases. Everything you already know about sexually transmitted diseases and how they are contracted is as true

overseas as it is at home. Whatever the situation in your host country, you are not more likely to contract AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases there than in the U.S.—if you act sensibly and refrain from unprotected sex and other behavior that carries the risk of infection. Since you will not know your overseas environment as well as you know your home environment, or might not be able to control it to the same degree, you should prepare yourself for all eventualities in advance, before leaving the U.S.

If you are sexually active, always use a latex condom. Take a supply with you, as conditions of manufacturing and storage of condoms in other countries may be questionable, and availability may be limited.

**Knowing Your HIV Status:** Some countries require incoming foreigners, including students, to take the HIV antibody test. Check to see if your host country requires HIV testing. You may need a “doctor’s certificate” showing the results of an HIV antibody test. Consulates in Washington, D.C. and/or New York City carry information on HIV testing as well.

If you need to be tested, do so only at a center that offers pre- and post-test counseling. There are many institutions whose primary focus is AIDS counseling. Allow yourself two weeks for the testing process. Consider getting tested twice: first anonymously (which allows you the privacy to decide what you want to do if the result is positive), then again for a doctor’s certificate, if needed.

**Overseas Blood Transfusions and Blood Products and HIV Screening:** Many countries, including the U.S., Australia, Canada, Japan, and countries in Western Europe, screen donated blood for the AIDS virus; others do not. Before you leave the U.S., you should know your blood type and find out from your local Red Cross and/or the relevant embassy about safe sources of blood overseas. In some locations, ascertaining the availability of HIV-screened blood and blood products may be difficult. If you are injured or ill while abroad, avoid or postpone any blood transfusion unless it is absolutely necessary. If you do need blood, try to ensure that screened blood is used. Regardless of the blood screening practices abroad, always take precautions that will reduce the risk of serious injury.

**Overseas Injections and AIDS:** In the U.S., we take for granted that equipment such as needles and syringes are never reused. Be advised that in some foreign countries even disposable equipment may be used many times with different patients. In some countries, if you require an injection, you can buy needles and syringes and bring them to the hospital for your own use. The best rule is to avoid injections unless absolutely necessary. If injections are required, make sure the needles and syringes come straight from a package or have been sterilized with chemicals or by boiling for 20 minutes. When in doubt, ask to see how the equipment has been sterilized. Caution regarding instrument sterilization applies to all instruments that pierce the skin, including tattooing, acupuncture, ear piercing, and dental work.

## STAYING SAFE AND OBEYING THE LAW

### Taking Personal Responsibility

Safety and security depend to a large degree upon being well prepared, listening and heeding the counsel you are given, and remaining vigilant. Here are some essential rules:

- Try not to make yourself conspicuous by dress, speech, behavior, expensive personal accessories (cameras, iPods, laptops, etc.), or careless behavior.
- Avoid crowds, protests, rallies, or any potentially volatile situations, as well as restaurants and places where Americans are known to congregate.
- Keep abreast of local news. Read local newspapers and magazines and speak with local officials to learn about any potential civil unrest. If there should be any unrest, do not get involved.
- Report to the responsible authority any suspicious persons loitering around residence or instructional facilities or following you; keep your residence area locked; use common sense in divulging information to strangers.
- Whenever possible, make reservations at a hotel or hostel before you arrive in a city. Check a map and be sure you know where you are going before you leave where you are staying or your mode of transportation. Looking lost or confused can often make you an easy target.
- Make sure the resident director, host family, or foreign university official who is assigned the responsibility for your welfare always knows where and how to contact you in an emergency. Leave a schedule and itinerary if you are traveling, even if only overnight.
- Develop a plan for regular telephone or e-mail contact with your family, so that in times of heightened political tension you will be able to communicate with your parents directly about your safety and well-being.
- Be careful when using ATMs on the street and avoid using them in isolated places or at times of day when you are likely to be the only person around.
- Do not impair your judgment through excessive consumption of alcohol, and do not fall under the influence of drugs.

### Local and National Laws

While you are visiting another country, you are subject to the laws of that country. You should make sure you know the laws and obey them scrupulously. Many of the legal protections you may take for granted are left behind when you leave the U.S. Embassies and consulates are very limited in the assistance they can provide should you get caught up in the legal system of your host country. They can give you the names of competent attorneys and doctors, but not any financial assistance in paying for legal or medical services. They cannot intervene on your behalf in the administration of justice in the host country.

Avoid involvement with drugs and all other illegal substances. Do not assume that buying or carrying small amounts of drugs cannot result in your arrest. Drug laws

vary, but in many countries they are extremely severe, regardless of whether the drug in your possession is for personal use or for sale to others.

Bail provisions as we know them in the U.S. are rare in many other countries, and pre-trial detention without bail is not uncommon. The principle of “innocent until proven guilty” is not necessarily a tenet of legal systems abroad. Bail is often not granted for drug-trafficking cases. Pre-trial detention, often in solitary confinement, can last for months. Many countries do not provide a jury trial, and in some cases you may not even be present at your trial. The average jail sentence in drug cases worldwide is about seven years. Americans have been jailed abroad for possessing as little as three grams (about one-tenth of an ounce) of marijuana.

You could be in a country where prison and law enforcement officials do not speak English, the significance of which you may not fully appreciate until you are confined and feeling helpless.

### **Crime and Terrorism**

Depending on where you are traveling, you may be in a place with less, more, or the same level of street crime that exists in the U.S. In any case, being a foreigner and not knowing the customs and patterns of local behavior may increase the odds of your becoming the victim of crimes such as fraud, robbery, or theft. Thieves often strike when people are distracted. When making a phone call, eating at a restaurant, checking a train schedule, or reading a map, stay aware of where you are and always keep your bags in your line of vision or in hand.

Additionally, in some circumstances, it is possible that you will get caught in the midst of political strife that may not be directed at you personally, or even at you as an American, but nevertheless can be dangerous. Students abroad should check the U.S. State Department website for information about any country that they plan to visit: [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). In the case of a serious international incident, International SOS and Princeton University will try to reach you, so keep your phone line open and check e-mail if you can. If you are part of an organized program abroad, follow the emergency plan for your program or university.

### **Registering with the Local Embassy or Consulate**

Embassies exist to provide assistance to their citizens while abroad, including providing information about social and political events, health and safety concerns, and educational and cultural affairs.

We recommend that all students travelling abroad register with the embassy or local consulate of their home countries so they will be aware of your presence and be able to assist you should an emergency arise. Should you encounter serious social, political, health, or economic problems, the embassy and/or consulate can usually offer limited assistance (for example, contacting next of kin in the event of emergency or serious illness, replacing a lost or stolen passport, trying to ensure that you are treated humanely under international conventions). Non-U.S. citizens

should check with their embassy or consulate in the U.S. to find out what services will be available to them while abroad.

Embassies and consulates cannot act as travel agencies, lend money, cash personal checks, arrange free medical service or legal advice, provide bail or get you out of jail, act as couriers or interpreters, search for missing luggage, or settle disputes with local authorities.

U.S. citizens can register with the U.S. embassy or consulate in their host country through the Department of State’s secure online travel registration system. For information about registering, visit [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov). This registration service allows you to update your contact information at any time. The site also provides up-to-date travel information customized to your itinerary. The data you provide is accessible only by cleared personnel in embassies, consulates, and the Department of State, and releasable only with your permission under the provisions of the Privacy Act.

The U.S. State Department provides information on medical, financial, and legal problems while abroad (888/407-4747 or [travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html#emergencies](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#emergencies)). The U.S. Department of State website also has useful information about travel and residence abroad. “A Safe Trip Abroad,” available at [travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety\\_1747.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html), and “Tips for Traveling Abroad” at [travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html) may be of particular interest.

### **Office of Overseas Citizens Services**

For U.S. citizens, emergency assistance is available through the Citizens’ Emergency Center of the Office of Overseas Citizens Services, operated by the State Department’s Bureau of Consular Affairs. This office can transmit emergency messages from your family, provide protection in the event of arrest or detention, and transmit emergency funds to destitute nationals when banking facilities are not available. The office is open 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. (EST) Monday–Friday and 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (EST) on Saturday (closed on federal holidays). The phone number is 888/407-4747. When calling after hours, you will be transferred to the Overseas Citizens Services Duty Officer. From overseas, call 202/501-4444.

## **COMMUNICATION**

### **E-mail**

You will probably have internet access abroad, but it is worth asking before you go. It is important not to overdo e-mail and other online communication with friends and family at home. Online communication can become a crutch, interfering with immersion in the host culture.



## Laptop Computers

If you cannot function without a computer or will need ready access to one for your research or academic work, you should consider taking a laptop computer. You should realize, however, that there are risks in transporting and storing the computer. Theft of laptop computers has also become common. When traveling, keep your laptop with you at all times; never put it on the seat in front of you or underneath your seat. Make sure the computer is insured.

## Mail

Ordinary surface mail can be slow, but airmail is usually fast. You may need to send and/or receive packages, so make sure you know where the nearest post office is and how it operates. You may also want to find out about services like FedEx, DHL, and UPS, and how different their rates are from those of the standard postal services. They will usually be more expensive for small items, but are often competitive for larger ones.

## Cell Phones

Cell phones are increasingly used in most places both to call overseas and communicate within the country. Keep in mind that most standard U.S. cell phones do not work abroad. Check with your cell phone provider to see if you can temporarily upgrade your service so it works abroad, allowing you to use your current phone number. Be sure to discuss rates and fees as they are likely to be higher than what you pay for domestic service and have more restrictions. You also have the option of buying an inexpensive, disposable phone upon arrival abroad. These typically operate on a pay-as-you-go system.

## International Calls

To make a direct international phone call from one country to another, you need:

1. The International Direct Dialing Number/Code for the country from which you are calling. For example, the International Direct Dialing Number/Code to call from the U.S. to another country is 011. In the United Kingdom and in many other countries, it is 00. Some countries may offer more than one depending on the carrier and type of service.
2. The Country Code of the country you are calling. For example, The U.S. and Canada use the Country Code of 1. The Country Code is dialed after the International Direct Dialing Number/Code and before the city/area code. Country and city codes can be obtained from any overseas operator or at [www.embassyworld.com/directories/global\\_telephone.html](http://www.embassyworld.com/directories/global_telephone.html).
3. The city/area code (if any) for the number you are dialing.
4. The local number.

We recommend using an international telephone credit card, available through most long distance phone companies, since charges are based on U.S. rates, making calls more economical.

## Time Zones

When making phone calls to or from the U.S., keep the time difference in mind, and be sure to remind friends and relatives! Should your friends, for example, call you in France at 9 p.m. EST, they should be aware that you have probably long since gone to bed since it is 3 a.m. in Lyon and Strasbourg. The time zone of every country in the world can be found at [www.worldtimezone.com](http://www.worldtimezone.com).



## MONEY AND BANKING

Note: Although banking has become more uniform, the advice below may not apply in every country. Well before you leave the U.S., you should get accurate information from your bank and from credit card agencies.

### General Financial Information

The safest way to protect your finances while abroad is to diversify them by using an ATM card, traveler's checks, and credit cards. Carrying large amounts of cash is not recommended.

Before you leave home, make a list of international contact numbers for your financial institutions, as well as your account, credit card, and ATM card numbers. Keep this information in a safe location in case any of your cards are stolen. Make sure you let your bank and credit card companies know about your travel plans. Sudden changes in your account activity, such as frequent withdrawals in a foreign country, can trigger a fraud alert and cause your bank to freeze your account.

### Currency Exchange

You may want to exchange about \$100.00 prior to departure to have cash on hand when you arrive at your destination. American currency can be exchanged for foreign currency at most international airports and major banks (and at most major railroad stations abroad). In general, it is wise to exchange money at banks and not at hotels, restaurants, or retail shops, where the exchange rates are unfavorable.

Banks abroad afford you the fairest exchange rate available, but you can expect to pay a commission every time you exchange currency. In some countries, the commission is based on a percentage of the amount you exchange, while in others there is a flat fee regardless of the transaction amount. Often, you can use your ATM card to withdraw money and avoid any commission charge, although your bank may charge you a withdrawal fee. Current currency exchange rates between 164 countries can be found at [oanda.com/convert/classic](http://oanda.com/convert/classic).

### Traveler's Checks

Carrying traveler's checks is safer than carrying cash because they can be refunded if lost or stolen. With the widespread availability of ATMs, however, traveler's

checks are often inconvenient to use and, increasingly, are not used as a major source of funds while traveling abroad. Still, you may wish to carry some reserve funds as traveler's checks in case you cannot access funds through an ATM. If you do not use them abroad, you can use them as cash when you return to the U.S.

### Transferring Money Overseas

Should you run short of cash while abroad, money can be sent from home in a variety of ways. The quickest (and perhaps most expensive) way is by Western Union. With this system you can pick up cash in the local currency within one hour after it has been sent from the U.S. Cable transfer from your American bank to a bank abroad is another safe and fast way of sending money. To pick up the money overseas you will need, in all cases, an official form of identification (e.g. your passport). You might want to visit your bank before your departure to obtain a list of the overseas correspondent banks to which money can be transferred by cable and to let the bank know who is authorized to initiate cable transfers on your behalf. Most American banks have an internationally recognized correspondent bank overseas that can complete the transfer at your study abroad location.

American Express money orders are also relatively fast. Transactions must be initiated at an American Express office in the U.S. and completed at one of their branch offices abroad.

### Credit Cards

Credit cards make foreign currency transactions easy and are invaluable in financial emergencies. Do take a credit card along, but use it wisely; plastic can be dangerous because overspending is so easy. Service fees and interest charges can be costly, and the loss or theft of a card abroad can be a serious inconvenience.



Not all merchants abroad accept credit cards, regardless of the name brand. Visa and MasterCard tend to be more widely accepted than American Express. The amount charged to your credit card bill is based on the exchange rate on the day that your bank or credit card company processes the transaction. If you have a credit card or bankcard that is on the CIRRUS network, you should be able to withdraw money from most ATM machines in Europe.

Before you leave the U.S., notify your credit card company that you will be overseas for an extended period of time and perhaps traveling to neighboring countries. If your bank knows you will be abroad, the sudden onset of charges abroad will not appear fraudulent to their security checks. It is also a good idea to know your credit limit, and perhaps to ask for an increase if you think your spending abroad will be higher than at home.

Do not forget to pay your credit card bill on time! Request an electronic statement, pre-pay, or arrange for payments directly from your bank account.

### Budgeting

The overall cost of living abroad can sometimes be higher than at home in part because you are in an unfamiliar environment making transactions with unfamiliar currency. Depending on your site, you may also be confronted with an almost endless array of entertainment possibilities and attractions. A go-slow approach to buying makes sense. Little is more dismaying than to run out of funds overseas with no easy or quick means of replenishment. This information should be shared in advance with your parents or guardian. General principles include the following:



- Make both weekly and daily budgets and stick to them.
- Learn the value of the money in relation to the US\$ (or another currency you know well) wherever you are and as quickly as possible.
- Be alert to special student rates and discounts and know what is available with your International Student Identification Card (e.g., travel, entrance fees, accommodations, some entertainment, etc.).
- Take advantage of less expensive alternatives whenever possible. Cook for yourself (especially breakfasts) when possible.
- Shop at street markets or major chain supermarkets and avoid specialty shops and convenience stores (which often add a 20-30% mark-up). Put off making major purchases until you have learned the range of available selections and prices—or learned that you do not need an expensive item after all.
- When you travel, stay in hostels or in modest bed-and-breakfast accommodations, as opposed to hotels.
- Sales taxes, as Americans know them, generally do not exist in other countries. But many now impose a Value-Added-Tax (VAT) on certain goods (not services), especially more expensive ones. As a visitor, you can reclaim the amount you have spent on the VAT at the international airport when you leave the country. You will need to show all your receipts and your purchases to claim this refund.

### Opening a Bank Account

If you are studying abroad for the academic year, you may want to open a bank account to avoid ATM withdrawal fees. After arrival, you can become acquainted with the various banks and find the branch office most convenient for your use. If you already have the exact address of a convenient location, you may want to open an account before you arrive.

### ADJUSTING TO A NEW CULTURE

These days it is easy to believe one understands a foreign culture even without having directly experienced it. Images in the media and information gleaned from books or encounters with a few natives can provide the illusion of real knowledge. Living in a culture and having to come to terms with its conventions and customs

is a different matter entirely. Some cultural differences are evident (e.g., language, religion, political organization, etc.). Others can be so subtle that becoming aware of them can be a complex process. A first-time visitor may remain uncomfortable and off balance for quite some time.

In adjusting to your new environment, you will have to deal not only with real cultural differences, but also with perceived cultural differences. Keep in mind that people of other cultures are just as adept at stereotyping Americans as Americans are at stereotyping them—and the results are not always complimentary.

The best way to learn about local social customs is to inquire politely. Expect things to be different overseas. One of the basic reasons for you to travel abroad is to develop an appreciation for the people and customs of a different culture. Anyone who goes overseas demanding that everything be the same as what s/he is accustomed to in the U.S. will be sorely disappointed and probably better served by staying at home. Be flexible and receptive in dealing with differences, and you will find your own life experiences will be greatly enriched.

### “Culture Shock”

It is possible that your initial reaction to life abroad will be euphoria, sparked by a sense of novelty and adventure. It is also possible that the euphoria will give way to a less pleasant emotion, as you try to make your way through an unfamiliar culture. You may realize that you are unable to follow your usual routines. Minor problems may seem like major crises. You may feel anxious because the signs of social intercourse that you are used to are lacking. You may become depressed.

These symptoms are often referred to as “culture shock,” although this is a misnomer. It is important to realize that these are perfectly normal responses to a new environment and, in fact, can be seen as a sign that you are truly immersing into a new culture rather than remaining in a U.S. “bubble.” There is no one-size-fits-all way of dealing with the challenges of this adjustment period, although the more you understand the mechanisms of it, the more effectively you can move past it and use it as a way to deepen your immersion into the new culture.

In his book *Survival Kit for Overseas Living*, L. Robert Kohls suggests the following techniques for adjusting to a new culture: learn as much as possible about the host country prior to departure, look for the reasons things are done or perceived differently, meet local people and find friends with whom you can discuss your reactions, read and speak the local language, and familiarize yourself with local viewpoints and customs. Just as an athlete cannot get in shape without going through a sometimes uncomfortable conditioning stage, so you cannot fully appreciate cultural differences without first going through some stages of psychological adjustment. You should emerge from the experience with the ability to function in two cultures with confidence.

### Fitting In

Because social customs differ greatly from one country to another, it is impossible to give guidelines that are universally applicable. Generally speaking, you should act naturally, always remaining friendly and courteous. Keep in mind that you are a guest in someone else’s country. If your missteps are well intentioned, you are likely to be given the benefit of the doubt as a foreigner who is doing his/her best to fit in.



**Politeness:** In many countries, social encounters are governed by a code of conduct that requires a greater degree of formality than in the U.S. Become familiar with the appropriate expressions of gratitude in response to your hosts’ hospitality and be prepared to offer a formal greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities.

**Speaking the language:** Most people will appreciate your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated even if your command of the language is limited. Be aware of the differences between the “familiar” and the “polite” forms of address (and use them properly).

**Physical contact:** When establishing social relationships, you will need to be aware of the level of familiarity that you should adopt at various stages of your relationships. Physical contact, for example, may not be appreciated or understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of camaraderie; a cheerful pat on the back or a warm hug may be uncomfortable in certain cultures. All cultures have different notions about social space: how far away to stand or sit when conversing, how to shake hands or wave farewell, for example. Restraint is advisable until you learn how the locals do it and what they expect of you.

**Drinking and drunkenness:** Be extremely sensitive to others’ attitudes and feelings when it comes to drinking. You may find that your hosts enjoy social drinking as much as any American, but they might not look upon drunkenness as either amusing or indeed tolerable.

**Photograph etiquette:** Remember that the people you are photographing are not objects of curiosity. Be tactful and discreet; it is always courteous to ask permission before taking someone’s picture.

**Personal questions:** Let your hosts point the way when engaging in “small talk.” While Americans often find it easy to talk about themselves, in some countries your hosts may view such discussion as impolite.

**Humor:** While each country has its own brand of wit and humor, few cultures appreciate the kind of “kidding” to which Americans are accustomed. Kidding comments, even when well intentioned, can be interpreted as unfriendly.

**Price bargaining:** Bargaining over prices is sometimes not only appropriate but expected. At other times, it is inappropriate. If you misread the circumstances, you may find that you have insulted the merchant. You can always test the waters by politely indicating that you like the product, but that the price is more than you had anticipated spending. If the merchant wishes to bargain, he or she now has an opening to lower his/her offer. If bargaining is not part of standard business practice, you can simply (and politely) terminate the conversation.

**Talking politics:** Expect people abroad to be well informed on matters of politics and international relations. Do not be surprised if your new acquaintances engage you in political debate.

### **A Special Note to Women**

Many women from campus environments in the U.S. have a hard time adjusting to attitudes they encounter abroad in both public and private interactions between men and women. In some countries, it is not uncommon for women to be honked at, verbally and loudly appraised, and aggressively addressed in other ways. Local women, who often get the same treatment, have usually learned to ignore it. They know that eye contact between strangers or a smile at someone passing in the street may result in unexpected invitations. In some cultures, American women are seen as “liberated,” and the misunderstandings that come out of this image can sometimes lead to difficult and unpleasant experiences.

Uncomfortable situations can usually be avoided by taking precautions. Dress conservatively. Avoid walking alone late at night or in questionable neighborhoods. Be careful about messages you may unintentionally communicate. You will have to learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do abroad. Prepare yourself by learning about the gender roles and assumptions in your host country. Women can provide support for each other, and returning students suggest that you get together several times early in your stay to talk about how to deal with unwanted attention. Above all, try to maintain the perspective that these challenging experiences are part of understanding another culture, which is one of the reasons you have traveled abroad.

### **Racial and Ethnic Concerns**

No two people traveling abroad ever have the same experience, even in the same program and country. This rule holds true for students from U.S. minority ethnic or racial backgrounds. Some students have reported feeling exhilarated by being outside the American context of race relations; others have experienced different degrees of innocent curiosity about their ethnicity and sometimes familiar as well as new types of ostracism or discrimination.

No returning Princeton student has suggested that the racial or ethnic problems one may encounter abroad constitute a reason for not going abroad. Nevertheless, students should know what they are getting into and be prepared for it. Talking

with other minority students on campus who have studied abroad can be helpful. On campus, the Carl A. Fields Center for Equality and Cultural Understanding ([www.princeton.edu/~caf](http://www.princeton.edu/~caf)) is a good resource.

### **LGBT Students Abroad**

It is important to be aware of the laws pertaining to homosexuality in other countries, as well as the popular attitudes toward gays, lesbians, bisexuals, and transgendered persons. Some countries are more liberal on these matters than the U.S. and some less. Whatever the general rule, there will always be pockets of difference and personal idiosyncrasies. Country-specific information is often available from campus offices and student groups. You should certainly talk with other students who have been where you will be. At Princeton, the LGBT Center is a resource ([www.princeton.edu/lgbt](http://www.princeton.edu/lgbt)). You may also consult the website of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission ([www.iglhrc.org](http://www.iglhrc.org)) and the NAFSA: Association of International Educators Rainbow Special Interest Group ([www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay](http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay)).

### **PACKING SUGGESTIONS**

Most students who travel abroad report that they packed too much, especially clothes. What you take depends largely on where you are going and how long you will be there—and what sort of “identity” you wish to assume. The local style is likely to differ from what you see on campus or in your hometown. Remember that you will often be able to buy what you need abroad.

In general, it is not a good idea to bring more luggage than you can carry on your own. Additionally, don’t pack your bags to their limit. It is very likely that you will buy items while abroad that you’ll need to carry home.

#### **Clothing:**

- The basics: socks, underwear, shorts (inappropriate in some cultures), skirts/trousers, shirts/blouses, pajamas, sweater/sweatshirt
- Waterproof walking shoes and flip-flops/shower shoes
- Rain jacket
- Light jacket or winter coat, gloves, scarf, hat (depending on location and season)
- Bathing suit
- Sun hat (and sunglasses)
- One or two nice outfits

#### **Gift Suggestions:**

- Clothing and items with Princeton logo
- Non-perishable traditionally American foods (maple syrup, salt-water taffy)
- Baseball caps

**Medical Kit and Toiletries:** Unless you are traveling to a truly remote location, don't pack toiletries such as soap and shampoo.

- The basics: toothbrush and toothpaste, comb/brush, deodorant, razors/blades, moisturizer, sunscreen, lip balm
- Prescription medicine (carry copy of prescription and letter from physician)
- Non-prescription drugs you are likely to use (antacids, pain relievers, anti-diuretics, motion sickness pills, decongestant, antihistamine)
- Insect repellent (and/or bednet); calamine lotion or topical antihistamine
- Contraceptives and condoms
- Tampons/pads
- Extra eyeglasses and contact lenses with cleaning solution
- Tweezers, nail files, etc.
- Basic first aid kit

### Documents:

- Passport and visa(s) and photocopies
- International SOS card
- Tickets and rail passes
- Driver's license
- Cash, traveler's checks, credit cards, ATM cards, calling card, etc.
- Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and traveler's checks
- Acceptance letter from program and approval letter from Princeton (if applicable)
- Extra passport sized photographs (useful for ID cards, rail cards, etc.)

### Miscellaneous:

- Money belt or neck wallet
- Linens (if not provided by site), towel/washcloth, hostel sleepsack (a folded-over sheet that is hemmed up the side)
- Umbrella
- Watch (cheap, reliable)
- Camera and film/batteries/extra disks
- Flashlight
- Books, guides, maps, train schedules, and handbooks
- Day pack/small compressible knapsack
- Stuff bags/plastic storage bags
- Battery-operated alarm clock
- Batteries
- Adapter and voltage converter/appropriate plugs (Note: most other countries use different electric current and plugs, etc.)
- Small locks for backpacks or locking luggage to overhead train racks
- American cookbook and measuring cup

**Do not take:** Expensive jewelry, luxury items, etc., which would mark you as a target for a casual thief or pickpocket

## CONNECTING WITH PRINCETON ALUMNI

More than 160 Princeton regional alumni associations exist—all over the world, connecting Princetonians within a certain geographic boundary to each other and the University. The Princeton Alumni Association maintains a list of regional associations on its website at [alumni.princeton.edu](http://alumni.princeton.edu).



## THESIS RESEARCH

### Human Subject Research Regulations

All students conducting research involving human subjects must receive approval from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects (IRB) prior to beginning their research. The IRB reviews all proposed projects conducted in the university.

Researchers must complete and submit either Questionnaire A or Questionnaire B directly to the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects, ORPA, New South Building. Plan ahead! In most cases, a faculty adviser must review and sign the completed questionnaire before it is submitted. The IRB meets once a month and usually asks for further information from students, a process that takes a second month. For more information about the approval process, visit IRB's website: [www.princeton.edu/orpa/irb.htm](http://www.princeton.edu/orpa/irb.htm).

### Tips for Conducting Research Abroad

- Utilize your Princeton connections. Ask professors if they know anyone who might be willing to speak with you and follow up on all suggestions.
- Plan your course of research. Do preliminary research and prepare your questions before departure, so that you can best utilize your time abroad.
- Use your time abroad to do research you cannot do at in the U.S. Check the resources at Princeton libraries before you go to help you prepare and to ensure that you use your time abroad effectively.
- A digital recorder can be useful in interviewing. Keep in mind that some people are not comfortable being recorded.
- Save time by arranging interviews ahead of time.
- Go to the top when trying to schedule interviews. Even though you will most likely be interviewing assistants, supervisors are more likely to respond positively to informational interviews.
- Bring letters of introduction and business cards with your e-mail address. Letters of introduction can help you access libraries and other restricted resources. Business cards are an excellent tool for networking and for introduction when trying to schedule interviews. In some countries, it is customary to exchange cards upon introduction.
- Be aware of local holidays, vacation schedules, and business hours. In many countries, businesses close in the early afternoon.



- Learning to make your way around in a foreign bureaucracy can be difficult and time consuming. Be patient.
- Start writing! It will help you sort through your thoughts and identify areas and topics to further explore while you are abroad.
- Do not expect to come back with all of your questions answered; you may come back with many more questions of your own.

## INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIPS

Your international internship is an incredible opportunity to see the world through new eyes, while immersed in a new environment and culture. At the same time, you will need to adjust to a new organizational culture in which the U.S. concept of an internship may not be particularly meaningful. Most likely, you will need to be pro-active to make the most out of your experience as you will have a limited amount of time.

- Build a relationship with your supervisor before you go. Let your supervisor know what your skills are, what you can offer, and what you are not comfortable doing. Try to tailor the work you will be doing to your interests or academic goals, while assuring that it will be profitable for the hosting organization.
- Concentrate on making an impact and contributing to the organization's goals and objectives.
- Establishing an attainable goal, with concrete tasks within a project, makes intern supervision easier. Many organizations have limited time to supervise or assist a temporary employee.
- Make yourself useful and do things your supervisor needs to get done. If you take on some of the grunt work, you may also be more likely to get assigned challenging tasks.
- Be flexible and independent. Even in the most advanced organizations, needs evolve rapidly. Adjust your expectations to the realities on the ground.
- Get to know all staff, not just your supervisor and the director.
- Remember that your internship is one of the most valuable opportunities you will have to start networking at an international level. Bring business cards and make sure you collect those of the people you meet. The people you meet during your internship will usually be eager to help you in any way they can—whether you are working on a research project or searching for a job after graduation. In addition, they may know other influential people who may be able to help you pursue your goals.
- Wherever you go, be in touch with Princeton alumni living in the area before you get there. They are a great resource for networking and are often willing to help you settle into your new cultural environment.
- Keep in mind that most internships are not part of established programs with support services. The ups and downs and the unknowns may be frequent, sometimes challenging, but, most of the time, extremely rewarding.

## INTERNATIONAL SERVICE

Volunteering overseas—whether as an individual or as part of a group—can be an extraordinary experience, but it is rarely easy. As a volunteer, you are likely to encounter challenges such as working in an environment where you may not know the language, confronting unfamiliar values, experiencing varying senses of urgency and alternative approaches to problem solving, and interacting with people whose responses surprise you.

- Make sure that the volunteer opportunity you join is part of a long-term project that benefits the local community.
- On matters of taste, consider adopting a lifestyle (eating, drinking, dressing, traveling, and entertaining, etc.) consistent with local standards.
- Newly arrived volunteers are often very energetic and optimistic (not a bad thing!). As a result, however, they often set unreasonably high expectations for themselves and for their hosts. Begin by slowing down: allow time to adjust to your new environment, and learn to listen and observe rather than immediately asserting your own opinions and ideas.
- You will be in many situations that you may not understand right away—even when you think you do. Be careful not to judge too quickly.
- Accepting prevailing behavior, norms, and attitudes instead of trying to change or challenge them usually makes for a more productive volunteer experience, especially if you are only in a location for a short time. You may be eager to “change the world,” but be careful not to approach people and situations with the assumption that you know best.
- Follow through on your commitments and respect the time and energy of your host organization and host community.

## SUMMER STUDY ABROAD

### Academic Credit

Summer courses not offered by a Princeton program must be preapproved if you wish to receive Princeton credit. To initiate the approval process, you must complete the *Approval Form for a Course Taken at Another Institution*, which is available at all residential colleges and in the Office of International Programs. This form should be submitted along with the course description/syllabus to the relevant departmental representative and the Office of International Programs for review and approval. Courses that are preapproved must be passed with a grade of C or better to qualify for credit.

The guidelines for preapproval of summer study abroad courses are as follows:

- The course must be offered by an accredited four-year institution that will provide a transcript.
- A one-term course must meet for a minimum of four weeks (five weeks or more is preferable) and have at least 30 contact hours. Language courses and

courses intended to fulfill an ST with lab must meet 60 hours. In the case of an ST course, 30 hours of laboratory must be included in the 60 hours. Visual arts courses require 60 contact hours, with some exceptions.

- The content of an elective course should fit within the general range of course offerings in a Princeton department. In the cases of courses proposed as substitutes for prerequisites or required courses in a Princeton department, the content should be substantially similar.
- The departmental representative may request information about the course beyond the catalog description, such as the reading list or titles of required texts, and the kinds of examinations, reports, lab projects, or papers used to test the student's mastery of the course material.
- Credit will be granted for one 100-level foreign language course only if you place out of all 100-level language courses on the basis of the departmental placement exam in that language. If you begin a language abroad and place out of the 101-102 level, you can, of course, move on to the 105 or 107 level (depending on whether the sequence is three or four terms in length), but you will not receive Princeton course credit.

## ACADEMIC YEAR STUDY ABROAD

### ACADEMIC POLICIES

#### Academic Credit

While abroad, you are expected to take the equivalent of four Princeton courses per semester. The actual number of courses you take abroad may vary according to the institution or program you attend. Students who have completed extra courses at Princeton may, if the program permits, be allowed to take the equivalent of three courses in a semester.

It is also sometimes possible to receive credit for one extra course abroad, if approved in advance. Any extra courses taken during a semester or year abroad reduce the number of outside courses that can be counted toward your degree. Students interested in taking more or fewer courses than the norm while abroad need approval from Dean Kanach.

You must earn the equivalent of a grade of C or above in preapproved courses taken abroad to be granted credit, and you may not take a course on a pass/fail basis. Once you arrive at your destination, you may find that a course is no longer offered, that scheduling conflicts prevent you from taking a course, or that a different course is more appealing than one you had chosen earlier. It is not unusual to substitute one course for another once you have become better acquainted with the course options abroad. Reasonable substitutions are not a problem, but you do need approval from the Office of International Programs. If you wish to substitute one departmental course for another, contact your departmental representative to ensure that the substitution is acceptable.

Before you leave campus, it is a good idea to discuss with your departmental representative the range of courses that would be acceptable for departmental credit. Your departmental representative is responsible for the academic programs of undergraduate concentrators and can answer questions concerning departmental requirements and independent work expectations.

You may use two courses taken abroad to fulfill any two distribution area requirements, but they must be in two different areas. You may have the courses approved for this purpose either before or after your time abroad by the departmental representative in the appropriate department.

If you wish to drop a course during the semester, you must contact Dean Kanach and your college dean to discuss how it will affect your standing at Princeton.

#### Independent Work

Conducting research while living in the part of the world about which you are writing can enrich any scholarly effort and firmly establish the link between foreign study and Princeton departmental work. In some departments, independent work can be supervised by an on-site adviser, appointed by Princeton, who will guide you in your project. Your on-site adviser will evaluate your paper and assign a grade, which will be reported to your department at Princeton.

In other departments, a faculty member on the Princeton campus will advise you. You need to keep your long-distance adviser apprised of your progress by e-mail, phone, or fax. Even if a faculty member at Princeton is supervising your independent work, you should seek advice from professors and scholars on-site. Princeton faculty can often help you identify useful contacts abroad.

Most complications that arise when doing independent work abroad may be circumvented by planning ahead, keeping in touch with your adviser, and by designing a project that takes advantage of what the host country offers.

As is the case with students on campus, you may request an extension if circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the independent work deadline. Taking early stock of research conditions, including such matters as library borrowing privileges and hours of operation, is a good way to avoid last-minute panic. However, if your best-laid plans fail you, do not hesitate to contact Dean Kanach and your department to ask for more time. Extensions must be approved by your departmental representative, the adviser in charge of independent work, and the Office of International Programs, in consultation with your college dean.

#### Transcript and Grades

Approved courses taken for credit while you are abroad during a semester or year will be recorded on your Princeton transcript. The transcript will indicate the institution or program attended and its location. In all but three cases (the

Tropical Ecology Programs in Panama and Kenya and the Kyoto Consortium for Japanese Studies), grades for courses taken abroad will not be recorded on the Princeton transcript. Credit will be indicated by a notation of “T,” meaning “transfer credit.”

Grades earned abroad that do not show up on the Princeton transcript are not used in calculating averages for departmental and university honors. (They do, however, show up on your internal transcript.) Grades for Junior Independent Work completed abroad are reported on the Princeton transcript and are used in calculating averages for departmental and university honors.

Although courses taken abroad will be listed on your transcript, you will find that graduate and professional schools as well as fellowship competitions request original transcripts (with grades) as part of their applications. If you are planning to apply to graduate school or for postgraduate fellowships in the fall after your semester or year abroad, we advise you to order extra copies of your transcript from your study abroad program/university while you are still in the country. Getting transcripts from abroad can be a lengthy process, and application deadlines for graduate school and postgraduate fellowships are strict.

### **Evaluation of Work Done Abroad**

At the conclusion of your program, you should arrange to have an official transcript of your course work sent to the Office of International Programs. Credit will be granted for courses that were preapproved and passed with a C (or its equivalent) or better. (Credit is not granted for courses taken pass/fail.) Credit cannot be given until the transcript is received and duly processed.

Be sure to keep a record of all work done abroad and make copies of all your written work before you turn it in, as professors abroad frequently do not return papers and examinations.

### **Review of the Transcript**

Once your *Study Abroad Evaluation* and *Peer Advising and Consent Form* are received, your transcript will be processed for Princeton credit and a copy forwarded to your department.

## **WHILE ABROAD**

### **Confirmation of Arrival**

As soon as you have a permanent residence or program mailing address abroad, you should contact your family and the Office of International Programs to confirm your arrival and inform everyone of your local address, telephone number, etc. At Princeton, contact Dean Nancy Kanach in the Office of International Programs: Phone: 609/258-5524, Fax: 609/258-1019, E-mail: nkanach@princeton.edu (please give your parents/guardians this information).

### **Setting Up an Emergency Contact Network**

Should your family wish to reach you in a personal emergency, they can contact you directly or contact the Office of International Programs, which will get in touch with you directly or via your on-site coordinator. It is usually best to check with your on-site coordinator first before calling home about something that may be best handled locally. When traveling on weekends or over holiday periods during the course of your program abroad, be sure to keep your local coordinator and your roommates or host family informed of your intended itinerary.

### **Remote Access to Library Resources**

For information regarding using library resources from off campus and remote locations, consult [libweb.princeton.edu/help/remotearchive.php](http://libweb.princeton.edu/help/remotearchive.php). Follow the directions for using a Proxy Server or VPN, as appropriate. Additionally, a *Guide to Library Resources for Princeton Students Going Abroad* has been put together to assist you in conducting academic research while you are abroad: [libguides.princeton.edu/abroad](http://libguides.princeton.edu/abroad). You are also encouraged to contact a subject specialist for assistance, especially for junior paper research.

### **Registration and Course Selection from Abroad**

Students who are studying abroad complete registration and course enrollment for the academic year via SCORE at the same time as all other undergraduates. For the 2009-10 academic year, registration for the academic year begins at 7 a.m. on Wednesday, September 9 and ends at 5 p.m. on Wednesday, September 16.

Please note that enrolling in courses is not registration. These are two separate operations. Registration is a review of your personal and bio-demographic information and confirms your student status for the academic year. All enrolled students, whether on campus or abroad, must register by the deadline. If you do not register on time, you will be assessed a late fee of \$75. Students who have a compelling reason for not being able to register on time should notify the Office of the Registrar at 609/258-3360 or [registrar@princeton.edu](mailto:registrar@princeton.edu) immediately to explain the circumstances and request a waiver of the late fee.

Course selection for the fall occurs in mid-April. Course selection for the spring occurs in late-November. The Office of the Registrar will notify you about each semester's course selection schedule via e-mail. To enroll in courses from abroad, you should first seek the advice of your departmental adviser via e-mail and then enroll in courses online on the specified dates. To participate in this process, you need internet access both to review course offerings and to select courses. If you have trouble accessing the internet for online course enrollment and registration, please notify Deputy Registrar Robert Bromfield at [rbromfie@princeton.edu](mailto:rbromfie@princeton.edu).

The web-based course enrollment process will keep track of and enforce enrollment limits on courses that have them. There will still be, however, a number of courses to which admission is by application only. It is not difficult

to apply from abroad for courses open by “application only.” Applications are usually available online and can be faxed or sent by e-mail to the appropriate office. Some courses may require an interview. Students who are abroad are not expected to be present at an interview.

If the interview is required in addition to the application, you should use the written application to explain fully your interest in the course. If only an interview is required, you can send an e-mail to the professor in charge of the course explaining your reasons for wanting to take the course and any background that you would bring to it. If you have difficulty making contact with the appropriate person on campus, please let the Office of International Programs know so that we can help you.

### Postgraduate Fellowships and Scholarships

Spring semester juniors abroad may be interested in applying for postgraduate fellowships and scholarships in the fall of their senior year. In late spring, you will begin to receive emails about fellowship information sessions. If you have an interest in any of these, you are encouraged to contact Dean Frank Ordiway, Coordinator of Postgraduate Fellowships ([ordway@princeton.edu](mailto:ordway@princeton.edu) or 609/258-1998).



For fellowships with early fall deadlines, students begin drafting application essays and identifying possible recommenders as early as April or May of their junior year. Study abroad students have successfully competed for these prestigious fellowships and scholarships, so be sure to learn about these opportunities.

### A Word on Excessive Travel

You may feel less academic pressure in your program overseas than you do at Princeton; you may have fewer tests and papers. You will simultaneously become aware of how much you can learn by exploring your environment and making friends. Foreign universities often permit more freedom than you may be used to. Responsibility for learning rests squarely on students' shoulders. Independent learning is often not only encouraged but expected.

Do not fall into the trap of thinking that because there may be less work to submit to instructors for grading during the term that less work is demanded of you. The demands are simply different and ask that you take charge of much of your own learning. Students who do not learn this lesson often end up regretting that they did not use their time wisely. In that context, ambitious travel away from the program site, though a great temptation, should be approached with care.

While travel in your free time can be enormously educational (and fun), excessive travel can undercut the primary reason for being overseas, namely to earn credit toward your Princeton degree. You certainly do not need to study all the time, but you should remember that study abroad should be primarily an academic

experience. Be realistic when calculating the amount of travel you can reasonably undertake during your program, keeping in mind your academic commitments. With careful advance planning, you can satisfy your wanderlust without sacrificing the educational benefits of the program.

Parents often visit their children overseas and travel with them. Please be sure that you arrange any visits from family or friends during the breaks in your academic schedule. Missing classes for a week or two to accompany your parents around the country is not acceptable.

## RETURNING TO PRINCETON

### Before Arriving Back on Campus

Before the start of the semester following study abroad, all returning students will be sent (1) information about resuming their studies on campus; (2) an *Interim Health Form*, which must be returned to University Health Services; (3) a *Study Abroad Evaluation Form* and a *Peer Advising and Consent Form*, both of which must be returned to the Office of International Programs.

Only after you complete your evaluation and the peer advising and consent form will Princeton credit appear on your student record and a copy of your transcript be forwarded to your department. The department will then update your record to reflect courses that fulfilled departmental requirements.

### Readjusting to Princeton

You may face a period of adjustment after returning to campus. As you resume your former routines, you may recognize that you have changed as a result of your overseas experience. This change is a healthy and expected result, but your intellectual and personal growth may mean that you will have some difficulty fitting into your old patterns of behavior. For example, you may be disappointed with friends who seem uninterested in detailed accounts of your overseas experiences. You may find that life at home and at Princeton is restrictive compared with what you enjoyed abroad. While you may be eager to be home again, you may also hesitate over resuming all the rhythms and values of your former life.

After an initial period of dislocation, most students who have studied abroad readjust to the familiar rhythms and routines of American academic life. The experience of learning within a different educational system and cultural environment often has a liberating and confidence-building effect. Students returning from study abroad usually perform at a higher level of academic achievement than they did before their departure.

As a study abroad returnee, you will be a valuable source of information for students learning about the various programs. You can help by talking to students who have questions about your program and by participating in the events sponsored by the Office of International Programs.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

### Non-Medical Emergency

Contact Princeton University Public Safety at 609/258-1000. Public Safety is open 24/7 and will contact appropriate administrative staff.

### Medical Emergency

In a medical emergency, call the closest International SOS Alarm Center. Princeton International SOS Membership Number: 11BSGC000022

If calling from:	Call Alarm Center in:	Call collect at:
U.S. or Canada	Philadelphia	800-523-6586 (toll-free) or +1-215-942-8226
Mexico or South or Central America	Philadelphia	+1-215-942-8226
Europe, Russia and former Soviet Republics, Africa, or the Middle East	London	+44-208-762-8008
Asia, Australia, or Pacific Rim	Singapore	+65-6338-7800

### Financial Aid Office: [www.princeton.edu/main/students/aid](http://www.princeton.edu/main/students/aid)

Joel Carstens, carstens@princeton.edu  
220 West College, Phone: 609/258-3330, FAX: 609/258-0336

### Housing: [facilities.princeton.edu/Housing](http://facilities.princeton.edu/Housing)

Angela Hodgeman, hodgeman@princeton.edu,  
MacMillan Building, Phone: 609/258-3460, FAX: 609/258-5898

### Registrar: [registrar.princeton.edu](http://registrar.princeton.edu)

Robert Bromfield, rbromfie@princeton.edu  
101 West College, Phone: 609/258-3360, FAX: 609/258-6328

### Student Accounts:

[web.princeton.edu/sites/TreasurersOffice/LandR/StudentAccounts](http://web.princeton.edu/sites/TreasurersOffice/LandR/StudentAccounts)

Maureen Ciambrello, maweaver@princeton.edu  
3rd Floor New South, Phone: 609/258-5039, FAX: 609/258-2873

### University Health Services: [www.princeton.edu/uhs](http://www.princeton.edu/uhs)

McCosh Health Center, uhs@princeton.edu  
Medical Services Phone: 609/258-3129, FAX: 609/258-1355  
Counseling and Psychological Services Phone: 609/258-3285

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*In the Nation's Service and in the Service of All Nations*

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