



COLLEGE <sup>OF THE</sup>  
ALBEMARLE

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Study Abroad

College of The Albemarle  
Study Abroad Program  
Participant Handbook

Updated November 2025

## **General Information about the College of The Albemarle Study Abroad Program**

What is study abroad? It is an opportunity for participants to combine study with international travel. The Study Abroad Program at College of The Albemarle is a short-term travel abroad program. The purpose of the program is to create cultural understanding and awareness on an international scale.

COA's Study Abroad Program provides an opportunity for participants to learn about new cultures and people. In this ever-increasingly connected world, travel is a gateway to improved understanding and empathy for those who are unlike ourselves. Participants benefit from the many lessons study abroad can provide, both personally and professionally; today's employers and university programs often prioritize international experience when evaluating applicants. The COA Study Abroad Program, furthermore, features High Impact Practices (HIPs) that benefit participants from many backgrounds whenever possible. These can include:

- A learning community – This is exhibited in the cohort concept of the program, both in preparatory coursework and through travel.
- Common intellectual experiences – Coursework, travel, and service-learning provide this to participants.
- Service learning – Service learning occurs through volunteer activities such as tutoring and mentoring, or physical labor, and as a main component of the study abroad trip when available.
- Diversity/global learning – Study abroad introduces participants to different cultures and global regions, showing them the effects of interaction and the interconnectivity of the modern world.
- Capstone project – A capstone would be the culmination of the program and application of the concepts learned, allowing participants to reflect on their growth, both academic and personal, over the course of study and travel.

The Study Abroad Program further fits within the North Carolina Global Distinction program hosted by the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill World View Center. It is “a collaboration between NC community colleges and UNC at Chapel Hill to globalize the curriculum and increase faculty and student involvement in global issues, activities and dialogue through the implementation of a global distinction program.”

Participants in this program must complete the following requirements in order to obtain certification on their College of The Albemarle student transcript that they are global scholars:

- complete at least fifteen credit hours of globally intensive courses
- participate in eight international activities and dialogue

- gain global experience (thirty (30) hours of participation in one of the following
  - Study Abroad through COA or another approved program
  - Pre-Approved International Travel Abroad Trip
  - Global-Oriented Mission trip
  - Domestic intercultural experience
  - Virtual Study Abroad Experience by completing the Study Abroad Association Global 360 NCSGD Course (FREE for COA students)
- give a capstone presentation related to their global learning participation

The Study Abroad program provides in-depth training and preparation for all participants. It holds regular meetings throughout the school year prior to trips to discuss how to travel. Topics include packing requirements and limitations, proper storage of documentation and money, airport navigation, and safety procedures. In addition, all participants may be provided basic language guides for the host country when the host country's primary language is not English. Participants form relationships with each other during these preparatory meetings and at fundraisers. Fundraisers are held each year to support the COA Study Abroad Program. Examples of fundraisers include yard sales, silent auctions, car washes, and raffle ticket and coupon sales. Fundraisers are planned and prepared by the participants in the program with the guidance of faculty trip leaders. Limited support funds are also provided by the College of The Albemarle Foundation.

The program also shares information about travel to the COA campus and the community at large. This has included information tables, newspaper articles and interviews, and radio interviews. Participants are given many opportunities during their time working with study abroad to volunteer, fundraise, and coordinate with others.

Overall, by participating in the COA Study Abroad Program, individuals become well-rounded and well-educated in topics beyond the scope of a traditional classroom environment. They obtain skills in many areas that can assist them in their future endeavors and help them grow into the globalized community leaders of tomorrow.

## **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

For a participant to travel with Study Abroad, they must meet the following requirements:

- Participant must have or obtain a valid U.S. Passport. If an International Student, then, proper visa and status must be in place before the trip occurs.
- Participant must not have been convicted of a felony.
- Participant must obtain approval for participation in the program from the study abroad coordinator by completing the application form.
- Preference in admission to the Program and attached trips will be given to College of The

Albemarle students.

Interested individuals should schedule an appointment with the program coordinator prior to the completion of an application for the program. During that meeting, prospective participants can be provided with an information packet about the program including costs and expectations of the program's participants.

### **AGE RESTRICTIONS**

Participants must be at least 15 years old to apply for the Study Abroad Program, provided they meet all program requirements and have discussed their interest with the program coordinator. However, all participants must be at least 16 years old at the **time of travel** to be eligible to participate.

### **COA FOUNDATION SUPPORT FUNDS**

Participants should also note that Study Abroad Support Funds have additional requirements.

- Participants must be students at College of The Albemarle at the time of travel.
- Participants must complete and/enroll in at least 12 hours of academic credits at COA by the start of the spring semester.
- Participants must participate in the NC Global Scholars Program at COA with the hope they will complete the program prior to graduation.
- Participants must complete the required application and essay.
- Participants must actively engage in college fundraising for the Study Abroad program.
- Recipients may be required to complete a reflection essay at the conclusion of the trip, speak at civic donor meetings, or help promote the program in other ways.

### **PAYMENTS AND EXPENSES**

All payments for travel are made directly to the travel company. Participants should assess their ability to pay the required amount prior to signing up to travel abroad with the program.

Tours differ in personal expenditures (e. g., tuition, food costs, extra events, souvenirs, etc.).

Therefore, it is critical for participants to review the additional costs required for each tour with the program coordinator.

The participant is responsible for any debts or expenses incurred by traveling abroad with the COA Study Abroad Program. The program will **not** assume liability for participants' personal debts and expenses.

### **WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES**

To withdraw from the program prior to travel, the traveler shall notify the program coordinator and contact the tour company. All cancellation requests must be submitted in writing by email to

cancellations@explorica.com.

Refunds may be available for participants who withdraw from the program. The amount of refund is determined by the cost of the travel, the level of travel insurance the participant has selected, and the time frame in which the withdrawal occurs in reference to travel. For more information on Explorica's cancellation policy, visit: <https://www.explorica.com/fees-faqs.aspx>. All participants are **required** to obtain travel insurance through the tour company. The Travel Protection Plan Plus is the required level of insurance. For more information on the Travel Protection Plan Plus visit: <https://www.explorica.com/resources/travel-protection-plan.aspx>. Travel insurance may also cover lost luggage and medical expenses incurred during travel. Travelers should consult the policy offered.

## **DEADLINES**

The final deadline to sign up for a study abroad tour is generally November/December of the year prior to travel, especially for trips that occur over the college's Spring Break. However, it is recommended that participants sign up prior to this date to assure a lower overall price. Early enrollees may qualify for travel company scholarships and discounts.

Payment deadlines are set by the travel company. Participants are responsible for checking their account balance and coordinating payments on time with the travel company.

## **PRE-DEPARTURE PLANNING**

To prepare for travel abroad, participants are expected to attend meetings during the year prior to travel. These workshops cover a variety of topics that assist participants in preparing for their travel abroad, but vary in content from year to year depending on the travel destination. Topics discussed include:

- Passports and other required documentation
- Health requirements, including vaccinations
- Travel safety
- Financial requirements and currency exchange
- Communication while abroad
- Effective packing (a packing check sheet is provided before travel)

Meetings with participants may be based on the availability of the participants. Additionally, email is used to share information with participants.

A copy of each participant's emergency contact information and application is given to the program coordinator or other responsible party prior to tour departure.

A color copy of each participant's passport and information concerning medical and allergy needs and accommodations must be submitted to the program coordinator prior to tour departure.

## **BAGGAGE**

Participants need to check with the airline prior to departure regarding baggage restrictions and possible fees.

**Please remember that you** are responsible for **your** luggage. At **every** transfer point, be sure that you have all of your belongings. Never leave your belongings unattended! **Do not pack your passport in checked luggage.** Your passport should be easily accessible. Also, do not pack any money, jewelry, cameras, or expensive electronic equipment in your luggage. Carry these with you.

## **PASSPORT**

While abroad, participants are required by local laws to carry identification with them at all times. They should not, however, carry their passports with them unless the situation specifically requires it. Instead, they should carry a photocopy of the passport and any other relevant documents. Note: replacing a lost U.S. passport overseas typically costs in excess of \$200.00 U.S. It also requires considerable time and effort to obtain on the part of the participant and chaperone, especially if not near a US Consulate. In short, it can easily blight the whole travel experience.

## **European Travel Information and Authorisation System**

Starting in late 2026, the European Commission will roll out a U.S.-style electronic travel authorization system for visitors from countries that are currently not part of the EU. These visitors have been granted visa-free access to the EU and Schengen member countries through virtue of their good track record on security issues and, thus, have not been deemed as a threat to EU security. However, the EU wants to strengthen its border security as well as digitally screen and track travelers entering and leaving EU countries.

ETIAS stands for the European Travel Information and Authorisation System. The system will check the security credentials and charge a fee to travelers visiting EU member countries for business, tourism, medical, or transit purposes. Travelers who currently visit Europe visa-free are able to enter EU and Schengen Member countries cost-free and without any digital security screening prior to their arrival to Europe. ETIAS is not a visa and is more accurately referred to as a visa waiver. The ETIAS, like the ESTA, is a travel authorization for travelers not requiring a visa to visit Europe. Under the ETIAS, these visitors will undergo additional security checks prior to being permitted to enter the EU. The ETIAS will be mandatory for citizens of such countries as the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. Learn more about the various aspects and implications of ETIAS by visiting the FAQ. <https://etias.com/>

Participants traveling to countries in the European Union should expect to have their fingerprints recorded electronically upon arrival at the EU port of entry. Additionally, any participant traveling to the EU on or after late 2026 will be expected to apply for and receive an electronic authorization to visit the country (ETIAS) at their own expense. At the time of writing (March 2025), the ETIAS will cost €7 per person. This can be paid using a variety of online payment options. The following are exempt from this fee at the time of this writing:

- Applicants under the age of 18
- Applicants over the age of 70
- Family members of EU citizens
- Family members of non-EU nationals who have the right to move freely throughout EU countries

Prior to departure, the Study Abroad staff will ensure that all participants have completed and received their electronic authorization.

**Additionally, the United Kingdom has its own Electronic Authorization for travel called ETA.** This system is already in place as of April 2025 and costs 10 British Pounds. Participants traveling to the United Kingdom after April of 2025 will be expected to acquire the ETA. Learn more about ETA by visiting:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/check-when-you-can-get-an-electronic-travel-authorisation-eta>

The app to acquire the UK ETA can be downloaded here for Android devices:

[https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.gov.HomeOffice.ho3&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.gov.HomeOffice.ho3&hl=en_US)

And here for Apple devices: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/uk-eta/id6444912481>

Here is a video explaining the process of acquiring the ETA:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uG1zaOMl63M>

## **TAKING MONEY ABROAD**

The Study Abroad staff strongly encourages participants to consider several methods of accessing and bringing funds to their study abroad site. ATM cards may be “eaten” by certain machines; credit cards may not work for an unknown reason, etc. Make sure you have a “backup” plan for the methods selected.

**Personal Checks:** It is virtually impossible to cash personal checks abroad. Travelers should **not** expect to cash personal checks abroad.

**Plastic (Credit Cards and ATM Cards):** Automatic Teller Machines (ATMs) are available overseas. Participants should make sure they are able to check the account balance. Most banks will charge a fee to use ATMs in international locations. They also typically charge a conversion fee for currency exchange. Participants should plan on bringing both an ATM card and a credit card. The credit card could be reserved for “emergencies.” Many foreign banks will give cash advances in local currency charged to the major credit cards. Check with the bank and/or credit card company for a list of banks and ATMs in the study abroad site. **Participants should inform their bank and/or credit card company if they are planning on using their card overseas to prevent them from being suspicious of fraudulent card usage.** Don’t forget the PIN number.

## **ROOM ASSIGNMENTS**

### **Student Rooming**

While on tour, three to four students under the age of 23 of the same gender will be sharing a room. COA Study Abroad Co-Leaders will assign these roommates. Hotel rooms are furnished with either single or double beds; single beds sleep just one person and double beds may be shared. The gender noted at enrollment will be used for room assignments. Participants aged 22 and younger may choose to upgrade to stay in a twin room (room with 2 twin beds) for an additional \$45 per night (\$70 per night on cruises and ferries). Special room accommodations may be made upon request.

### **Adult Rooming**

Adults (23 years of age or older) are automatically placed in twin rooms unless a single room is selected and paid for at the time of enrollment. The adult rooming supplement fee for U.S. travelers is \$45 per night (\$70 per night on ferries and cruise ships) and \$85 per night for a single room. Single rooms are not available on night trains, cruises and ferries. Roommates are assigned by the COA Study Abroad Co-Leaders and requests should be given to your COA Study Abroad Co-Leaders 60 days prior to your departure. The deadline for requests for single room upgrades is 60 days before departure. While every effort is made to pair participants with members from COA’s group, it is possible that roommates could be from other colleges that are participating in the group trip.

### **Overnight train accommodations**

During overnight train travel, students will sleep in couchettes with four to six berths (beds) and have access to a shared restroom in each car. Please note that couchettes on overnight trains are considered public transportation, and rooming is not guaranteed to be private or gender exclusive.



## **CONDUCT EXPECTATIONS**

1. Participants will maintain eligibility requirements for the program while enrolled in the program.
2. Participants will sleep in their designated rooms.
3. Participants will not access the belongings of others without permission.
4. Participants will be courteous to others.
5. Participants will listen to and follow the instructions of the tour director and tour leaders on the tour. Likewise, participants will heed the instructions and warnings of additional tour guides and facilities visited on the tour.
6. Participants will participate in all planned tour activities.
7. Participants will use the buddy system. No participant is to leave the hotel or other travel location on their own.
8. Participants will not use dating applications or other meet-up methods while on tour.
9. Participants will not get any piercings, tattoos, or other body modifications while on tour.
10. Participants will act in a manner that represents themselves, their college, and their country appropriately.

Further information on participant expectations can be found on the Participant Conduct Form in the Appendix.

## **CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES**

While studying and living in another country, participants are subject to the laws of that country. This applies especially with regard to the use or sale of controlled substances, i.e. drugs and alcohol. The use and sale of drugs is illegal and can result in severe penalties. A U.S. passport will not protect anyone from arrest or detention. Furthermore, the judicial procedure in many countries provides for lengthy investigatory detention without bail and the U.S. embassy will not be able to assist you to a great extent. While local customs and laws regarding alcohol use vary greatly, there are laws and ordinances regarding its abuse. It is the participant's responsibility to familiarize him or herself with these laws. It is the responsibility of each individual to understand the gravity of any violation of local laws, legal requirements, or behavioral norms when in another country. Copies of the U.S. Department of State "Consular Information Bulletins" containing information on penalties for violation of local laws are available on the Internet. (<http://travel.state.gov>)

It is the policy of the Study Abroad Program that any illegal drug use or the abuse of alcohol while abroad will result in disciplinary sanctions, up to and including immediate dismissal from the program. Such actions not only affect the individual but also put others in the group and the entire program in jeopardy. Such actions may also result in campus judicial proceedings against the offending individual(s).

## **PARENTAL NOTIFICATION POLICY**

The College and the Study Abroad program recognize participants' developing independence, responsibility, and accountability. However, the VPSSEM or their designates has the authority and reserves the right to notify parents or other guardians in the following circumstances and conditions:

**Emergencies:** The College reserves the right to notify parents or guardians, regardless of age, status, or conduct, in health and safety emergencies, hospitalizations, or when in our judgment, the health or well-being of a student or others is or may be at risk.

**Participants Conduct Overseas:** The College reserves the right to inform parents or guardians of participants when:

- That participant's behavior has been the cause of a disturbance to others on or off campus.
- That participant's behavior has been the cause of a disruption of other students' education.
- That participant's behavior caused or had the potential to cause harm to persons or property.
- That participant's behavior led to an arrest in which the student was taken into custody.
- That participant's behavior resulted or could have resulted in the student being removed from study abroad.
- That participant's behavior affected his/her ability to fulfill the essential functions of a student.
- The participant has demonstrated a pattern of unacceptable disruptive behavior, even if these incidents are minor.
- The participant has become physically ill and/or required medical intervention as a result of use/abuse of alcohol and/or drugs.

Whenever possible, participants will be informed that a parental/guardian notification is planned so that they have an opportunity to discuss the issue with their parents/guardian directly.

## **LIABILITIES**

Travelers participating in the Study Abroad Program are subject to the liability clauses of both the College and the tour company hosting the tour associated with the program.

Travel insurance is provided through the tour company hosting the tours associated with the program. Students are required to obtain travel insurance.

It is the participant's responsibility to inform the program coordinator of medical conditions and allergies prior to travel. Participants are responsible for bringing any required medications

needed during the time of travel. Prescription medications should be packed in the original prescription container or packaging with the participant's name on it while on tour. Any participant who requires medical equipment and potentially questionable prescriptions (such as narcotics) should also travel with documentation from their medical professional.

Tour companies hosting the tours associated with the program may provide accommodations for participants with food allergies. Participants should contact the tour company to discuss allergies and medical accommodations.

All participants are required to read and sign the Release and Waiver of Liability and Program Participation Agreement for College of the Albemarle Study Abroad Programs (see Appendix). By registering for a tour via the Study Abroad Program, participants understand they are signing a liability waiver with the hosting tour company. Liability information for tour companies is available for view on the tour companies' websites and from the COA Study Abroad Program coordinator.

All participants are asked to sign the COA Media Consent & Release Form (see Appendix).

## **HEALTH, SAFETY, AND EMERGENCIES**

### **Providing Health Care**

Travel abroad can bring out a variety of minor illnesses and ailments—and medical catastrophes are always possible. Faculty/administrative leaders should not perform the function as the group nurse or medic. However, one should be prepared to direct participants to appropriate sources for healthcare advice and be familiar with the local healthcare delivery system, as well as how participants may obtain routine health remedies. Under no circumstances should the leaders serve as "in-house pharmacist" by dispensing any kind of over-the-counter medicines or medical counsel. The pre-departure orientation on health issues should have informed participants about bringing their own supply of whatever they might need. On-site orientation can provide an overview of how to treat minor health problems locally and what to do in the case of emergencies. The location of the program is naturally a major factor in the health risks participants may encounter. In all cases, health and medical care are important topics to be discussed. If a participant becomes ill during the course of the program, they must inform on-site staff, so that an informed decision can be made regarding treatment. While the program does not realistically expect participants to inform leaders of every cold or upset stomach, ailments which do not disappear in a few days should be reported. Prompt treatment may eliminate the need for hospitalization. In most cases—e.g., colds, the flu, sore throats, and minor ailments—there is likely to be satisfactory treatment at local hospitals and clinics, again, depending on the location. In the event of more serious injuries or illnesses, the faculty/administrative leader should be prepared to accompany the participant to a medical facility for care, having made

pre-arrangements for someone to take over the leadership role in the interim. It will be important to ensure the participant, if able, can communicate effectively and understand the medical options and instructions.

It is COA policy to inform parents/guardians immediately if situations arise in which extensive medical treatment is required. The faculty leader will be responsible for communicating any serious medical events to a designated Study Abroad staff member.

## **IMMUNIZATIONS**

Most immunizations are not *mandatory*, but provide valuable protection; therefore, it is highly recommended that participants remain up to date in their immunizations prior to departure.

### **GENERAL IMMUNIZATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

The US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has an excellent website with information for travelers about recommended immunizations and possible health issues in travel destinations worldwide. (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/travel-vaccines>) They recommend the following immunizations all travelers:

- COVID-19
- Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap)
- MMR
- Hepatitis A
- Meningococcal
- Varicella (chicken pox)
- Influenza

For more details on a particular travel destination, please consult the website listed above.

## **PRE-EXISTING MEDICAL CONDITIONS**

Any participant who will be on medication regularly, has a chronic medical condition, or may need medical services or doctors while abroad, should make an appointment to see the Study Abroad Director. Please schedule this appointment in a timely manner so that appropriate arrangements can be made with the program abroad.

## **PRESCRIPTIONS**

Participants, who take prescription medications, including anti-malarial medication, should carry an adequate supply for the duration abroad in the original container with their name on it. The Study Abroad staff cannot deliver medication to participants abroad. Family members will be unable to mail medication to participants abroad. Mailed medication (even if sent by a private carrier such as FedEx or DHL), will be confiscated by customs officials. Please carry a card, tag, or bracelet that identifies any physical condition that may require emergency care. Participants

who may not be able to obtain enough medication to take them for their program may have a health care provider give a summary of the conditions and treatments (including the medications prescribed) for the condition. Upon arrival, participants may schedule an appointment with a local physician and receive a local prescription that may be (re)filled at a local pharmacy. Participants are still encouraged to carry at least one month's worth of medication. Participants in programs in Central or South America, Asia, Africa or sections of the Middle East may need a prescription for malaria prophylaxis. Please consult a reputable travel clinic for a prescription. For participants currently taking a controlled substance, such as any form of Ritalin or Adderall, please bring a letter from the prescribing Doctor indicating the current medication, dosage, and medical indication for taking the medication. Depending on program location, participants may need to find a substitute as these medications are considered controlled-substances and are illegal (e.g. Thailand, Costa Rica).

## ALLERGIES

Participants should know how to express allergies in the native language and make sure that travel companions are aware of any severe allergies. If any cause anaphylaxis, carry an epi-pen (be sure it doesn't expire while abroad). Teach companions how to locate and use the epi-pen.

## MEDICAL INSURANCE

All participants participating in study abroad are **required** to have hospitalization and medical insurance that is valid outside the United States. All students should supply College of The Albemarle with proof of insurance prior to their departure. This covers hospitalization and other related costs in a catastrophic event. Students should contact their insurance provider for details about what is covered outside of the United States. Many doctors and hospitals in the U.S. require only that you present a policy number at the time of service. This is not the case abroad: regardless of what insurance you have, **participants will be expected to pay all medical bills themselves at the time of service**. However, this is generally much less expensive than in the United States. United States insurance companies will not pay directly overseas. Participants will have to get itemized statements and present them to the insurance company so that they can be reimbursed for medical expenses. Participants should check with their health insurance companies for further information on the type of documentation required.

## WHILE ABROAD AVOID

- Raw food and unfiltered water and ice
- Undercooked meat
- Live poultry around homes and/or markets
- Piercing and tattooing.
- Mosquitoes, ticks, stray animals including dogs, cats, and monkeys.
- Swimming in freshwater.
- Excess alcohol intake

## **Dehydration**

It is not uncommon for participants to report feeling dehydrated. Most participants do not drink enough water or liquids while on study abroad. Alcohol and caffeine increase fluid loss.

Signs and symptoms of dehydration:

- Rapid heart beat
- Lightheaded when change position
- Dry mouth
- Deep breathing
- Irritability
- Reduction in urine output, increase in yellow color
- Cool and mottled extremities
- Lethargy

If participants have a chronic medical condition, please see a medical provider soon after arriving in the country to “establish care.” This establishes a relationship prior to the participant’s potential need for healthcare, and allows a more prompt appointment when one needs it.

## **ILLNESS**

Some participants may report getting sick during their time abroad. This could be as simple as an “intercontinental cold.” Participants are encouraged to visit the local doctor if they are sick for more than a few days. The local contact/tour director will be able to provide participants with a list of local doctors. No matter the insurance, students should keep a copy of the receipt that includes the diagnosis in case symptoms return back to the states. What participants eat and drink will affect their health. If a participant is not sure if they should eat or drink something—don’t. Be aware that host national friends are not competent sources of information in this area. They have grown up in this place; they have a different immunity than newly arrived participants. Don’t take risks with health to be interculturally sensitive. In the case of accidents or injury, participants should inform the Trip Leader as soon as possible. For more information regarding health risks at the study abroad site, consult any County Health Department’s Travel Clinic or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>).

## **UPON RETURN**

Participants should follow up with a healthcare provider if:

- They were in an area with high risk of exposure to Tuberculosis. It is recommended that students have a TB Test ten (10) weeks after return.
- They were significantly ill and saw a healthcare provider while abroad. Bring all medical documentation.
- Symptoms develop or continue after return.

## TRAVEL WEBSITES

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/destinationList.aspx>

<http://www.mdtravelhealth.com>

<http://www.who.int/en>

<http://www.iamat.org>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/index.cfm>

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety\\_1747.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html) (A Safe Trip Abroad)

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs\\_1237.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/living/drugs/drugs_1237.html) (Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad)

## U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE-SAFETY INFORMATION

Stay informed about developments in the host city and country and in the world. U.S. foreign policy does affect how people overseas will treat travelers. Before participants travel, please check with the nearest U.S. consulate as to what the current situation in that country is. If the United States decides to launch a military or economic action, U.S. citizens will immediately become a representative of the United States. If the travel destination is having political or military difficulties—ranging from demonstrations to terrorist attacks to civil war—don't go! The U.S. Department of State is an excellent source for all types of safety and travel information. Participants can find information on travel documents, health facilities in the study abroad country, guidelines for emergencies to list just a few topics important to travelers.

**Study abroad participants who are not U.S. citizens** have access to the information posted on the website shown above and the links that follow, but cannot utilize the services of the U.S. Department of State. Many countries provide information and services to their overseas citizens through the Consular sections of their embassies. Taking the time to become familiar with these services and contact information for a participant's home country is an important step to prepare for study abroad.

### A Glossary of Important Resources from the Department of State

**Country Specific Information factsheets** are available for every country of the world and include details such as the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate in the subject country, visa/entry regulations, health requirements, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. To access country specific information, go to:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_4965.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html)

**Travel Warnings** are issued to describe long-term, protracted conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable. A Travel Warning is also issued when the U.S. Government's ability to assist American citizens is constrained due to the closure of an embassy or consulate or because of a drawdown of its staff. Recent Travel Warnings are posted at

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html)

**Travel Alerts** are issued to disseminate information about short-term conditions, generally within a particular country, that pose imminent risks to the security of U.S. citizens. Natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, anniversaries of terrorist events, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or regional sports events are examples of conditions that might generate a Travel Alert. Recent Travel Alerts are posted at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/pa/pa\\_1766.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html)

**Warden Messages and Embassy Notices** are public announcements to U.S. citizens on current safety and security issues. These communications are posted by local embassies or consulates usually on their websites and typically include recommendations or instructions. U.S. citizens registered with STE or an embassy or consulate abroad often receive these announcements by email.

### **Links to Department of State Safety and Security Information**

- *How to Have a Safe Trip:* [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html#safe\\_trip](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#safe_trip)
  - Practical recommendations for preparing to travel abroad.
- *Tips for Traveling Abroad:* [http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html)
  - Offers precautions regarding crime and scams.
- *Smart Traveler Enrollment Program:* <https://travelregistration.state.gov>.
  - STE is a free service and allows the State Department to assist U.S. citizens in an emergency.
- *Emergency Assistance:*  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies\\_1212.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/emergencies/emergencies_1212.html)
  - Telephone numbers and hours for the Office of Overseas Citizen Services.
- *Special warnings about drug offenses abroad:*  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips\\_1232.html#drug\\_offenses](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html#drug_offenses)
  - Outlines travelers' responsibilities, consular services and consular limitations with links to specific penalties for breaking drug laws abroad.
- *Students Abroad:* <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/>
  - Security considerations specifically for college and university students.

## **RESPONDING TO NATURAL DISASTERS AND POLITICAL EMERGENCIES**

As the on-site representative, it is the leaders' responsibility to coordinate an appropriate response to any natural, political, or social emergency that may arise. A determination must immediately be made as to the level of risk confronting participants and what course of action is most prudent. A first step, if there is time and according to communications procedures established in advance, is usually to contact the Study Abroad staff and/or the local program coordinator to provide complete and accurate information about the nature of the emergency and how it has impacted the participants, or might. An emergency involving the physical well-being



of participants clearly dictates a more rapid response than, say, a national strike or political coup, where damage assessment can take a more measured pace. The continuing role in emergency response situations is for you to act as liaison with the Study Abroad program, which will assemble a team of College of The Albemarle representatives to evaluate further response to the emergency, based on the leader's recommendation. Once the situation on-site is stabilized, decision-making responsibility will be largely assumed by the Study Abroad program.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Participants on study abroad programs may find that other cultures and societies have a much different understanding of what might be considered sexual harassment than is typically the case in the United States. Likewise, there can be great variation in the roles of men and women and also in their forms of social interaction. Part of the study abroad experience is to learn how another culture and society organizes everyday life.

While American laws do not extend beyond the borders of the United States, the Student Code of Conduct, Civility, and Academic Integrity applies to all participants of any college-sponsored program. If a participant feels that she or he has been the subject of sexual misconduct during a study abroad program, the participant should immediately report this to the program staff. If the harassment allegation involves members of the College of The Albemarle community, the college will make every effort to follow the procedures used on campus with adjustments for the distance, the rules, and the mores of the partner institution. To ensure the safety and well-being of others, COA reserves the right to suspend or terminate an accused individual's participation in the study abroad program. **The College remains obligated to respond to all reports of sexual misconduct.** The College's concern for the participants' health, safety, and well-being while abroad may require that all details relating to the incident be communicated to the Study Abroad program staff and/or proper officials for investigation.

## SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

### Essentials:

- Passport
- Tickets (electronic – bring original itinerary)
- Credit Card
- ATM/Debit Card
- Photocopies of all Documents, Prescriptions, etc.
- Prescription Medicines (in original packaging if needed)
- Health Insurance information
- **Near essentials to consider:**
- Travel Insurance
- Money Belt or Pouch
- Local Currency

- **Other things to consider:**
- Extra Contact Lenses, Solution, Glasses
- Sewing Kit
- Swiss–Army Knife (pack in checked baggage)
- Full Toiletry Bag: Soap, Shampoo, Toothpaste, Toothbrush, Shaving kit, Sanitary supplies, etc.
- Small First–aid Kit
- Water bottle (preferably metal)
- Raincoat
- Swimsuit
- Shorts
- Long pants
- Comfortable clothes
- Insect spray
- Closed toed shoes
- Ziploc bags
- Light jacket
- Beach towel
- Hat
- Backpack
- Water shoes/footwear/Crocs
- Journal
- Pen (several)
- Sunglasses
- Electronic chargers

#### **MEDICAL/HEALTH ITEM TO CONSIDER PACKING**

- Aspirin, acetaminophen, or ibuprofen for pain or fever
- Antihistamine (such as Zyrtec or Benadryl) for allergies, to ease the itch of insect bites or stings, and to prevent motion sickness
- Chewable tablets for diarrhea or as an antacid.
- Triple antibiotic ointment for cuts and scratches
- Bandages, Band-Aids, moleskin for blisters
- Tweezers
- Disposable or digital thermometers
- Cold and flu tablets and throat lozenges
- Mole Skin for blisters
- Contact lens solution/cleaning system and an extra pair of glasses
- Hand sanitizer/disinfecting hand wipes

- Insect repellent-CDC recommends repellants with 20-35% DEET which lasts up to 12 hours (lower percentage means more frequent application).
- Sunscreen and lip balm with SPF, aloe gel for sunburns
- Feminine hygiene products (they are sometimes difficult to find abroad)

### Students

- Money for luggage fees (This is usually \$30.00 per checked bag per trip)
- Notify bank if using credit/bank cards out of country
- US dollars can be used in country (low denominations - under \$20.00)
- Pack as light as you can - suitcase weight/souvenirs
- Be sure to budget funds for entire trip (travel day food is not included)
- Use WIFI at hotels or get international plan for phones
- Leave electronics to minimum
- Bring medicine in original packaging and personal items with you
- 3 oz rule for carry on.
- Pack items in carry-on in clear Ziploc bag
- Don't bring jewelry

### **Additional Resources from Explorica**

Source: <https://www.explorica.com/get-ready.aspx>

Get ready: Get important travel information, useful tips to prepare for your tour, and information about what to expect during your trip.

- [Transportation:](#) Learn more about getting to and from your destination by plane, train, or ferry, in addition to what you can expect at the airport and what it means to sign up as a Land Only participant.
- [Beating Jet Lag and Culture Shock:](#) Discover how to reduce the effects of jet lag and read our tips for overcoming the totally normal feeling of culture shock.
- [Hotel quality and student rooming:](#) Understand the differences in hotel quality and location, learn more about student rooming assignments, and read up on overnight train accommodations.
- [Behavior guidelines:](#) Read through Explorica's Code of Conduct and understand your agreement to abide by all local laws while on tour.
- [Food on International Tours:](#) Learn more about your meal options on tour and be sure to notify your Program Leader of any dietary restrictions or food allergies.
- [Inoculations and vaccines:](#) Understand when and where to get vaccinated before traveling.
- [Packing for your trip:](#) We've curated some tried-and-true tips to help you successfully pack for your trip!

- [Spending money and currency:](#) See how much spending money to bring with you and how to access money while abroad.
- [Tipping on tour:](#) Read Explorica's guide to tipping Tour Directors, bus drivers, and local guides.
- [Passports and visas:](#) Get information on how to obtain or renew your passport, as well as how to obtain a visa through Visa Central.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Websites

You may want to take a guidebook with you—perhaps one from the “*Let’s Go*” series, “*Lonely Planet*” series or a *Rough Guide*.

<http://allabroad.us/resources.php> - Contains resources to help find funding opportunities, information about making study abroad support career development, reasons to study abroad, information to support diversity in study abroad, and information about discrimination abroad.

<http://www.diversityabroad.com/> - “...connects talented diverse and underrepresented students and graduates to international education and career opportunities that prepares them for leadership in an interconnected world.”

<http://www.purdue.edu/cie/learning/global/toolkit/> - includes 8 modules designed to help students learn about cultural worldview frameworks, intercultural openness, intercultural empathy, and cultural self-awareness.

<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/her-own-way> - Canadian Government’s resource guide for traveling women

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/go/lgbt.html> - U.S. Government’s resource guide for travelers who identify as LGBTQ

<https://baniamor.com/> - Bani Amor

Blogs, interviews, and posts that revolve around identity, place and the colonial nature of travel culture; Has a series of interviews with travelers of color and an article listing travelers of color to follow

<https://www.librarything.com/search.php?search=culture+shock&searchtype=media&searchtype=media&sortchoice=0> - Culture Shock! Country specific guide to etiquette and behavior

[http://www.expatica.com/nl/moving-to/Moving-home-Reverse-culture-shock\\_104957.html](http://www.expatica.com/nl/moving-to/Moving-home-Reverse-culture-shock_104957.html) - Article on Reverse Culture Shock

[http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural\\_etiquette/cultural\\_etiquette.htm](http://www.ediplomat.com/np/cultural_etiquette/cultural_etiquette.htm) - Cultural etiquette by country

### Books

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*Personal Relationships Across Cultures*, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1996.

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Williamson, Wendy, *Study Abroad 101*, Second Edition, Kalamazoo, MI, Agapy Publishing, 2008.

## RESOURCES

Beaufort County Community College Study Abroad Program, Washington, North Carolina

Davidson Community College Study Abroad Program, Lexington, North Carolina

Forsyth Technical Community College Study Abroad Program, Winston-Salem, North Carolina

Garrett College, McHenry, Maryland

Center for International Programs, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan