HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

**Safety Issues in the Country and City.** Orientation materials and country guides can help you better understand the countries and cities where you will be studying and traveling. Check out the US State Department and CDC information. Know where you’re going and what to do and not do once you get there.

**High-Risk Activities.** Certain activities have higher risk of danger. If you choose to participate, make sure that you have adequate support and lots of insurance.

**Preparedness to Respond to Emergencies.** The more prepared you are for emergencies the better able you will be to respond. Where will you go if you need to leave the country? What will you do if you are a victim of a crime or are injured? What if someone else needs help?

**Crime and Violence.** Be aware of higher risk areas and neighborhoods and avoid protests. Educate yourself on local laws and norms and understand local verbal and non-verbal communication.

**Transportation Safety and Reliability.** Whether you are arranging your own transportation or you are being led by your program provider, look closely at what the safest type of transportation is for where you’re going, what routes you’re taking, and at what time you’re traveling. Have a backup plan if you are in a country with unreliable transportation systems.

**Alcohol and Drugs.** Alcohol use can increase risks of being a victim of crime, violence, accident, and injury. Drug use abroad can result in severe consequences—plan on being treated as guilty (in jail) until proven innocent outside the U.S.

**Communication.** Be able to communicate or have a communication plan so loved ones know when to expect to hear from you. Always let a trusted family member or friend know where you are going and when you will be back. Communication technology you use in the United States may not work abroad.

**Physical, Dental, and Mental Health.** Prior to going abroad, get a physical, complete foreseeable dental work, and consider your psychological stability. Be prepared for the physical and mental challenges abroad. When you get abroad, find suitable care/support facilities.

**Adequate Insurance and 24 Hour Emergency Assistance.** Types of insurance to consider purchasing include major medical (in the U.S. and abroad), emergency assistance, repatriation of remains, travel insurance, and coverage for kidnapping and ransom.

**Quality of Program Provider.** There are no minimum standards in the study abroad field. You need to carefully pick a quality study abroad provider in terms of both academics and student services. Along with costs and courses, find out about the safety problems faced by students in the past.

*Adapted from: http://www.studentsabroad.com/top10/topten.html*