

STUDY ABROAD PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST

1 to 3 Months Before:

- Check student visa requirements and if needed, apply for visa
- Notify everyone that depends on you about your departure:
- Email host university itinerary and see if airport pick-up is available and make other arrangements if not.
- Attend a travel health and safety class and sign up for a comprehensive physical;
 - Get vaccinations and immunizations, if needed. You might have to include your medical record with your study abroad package. Get an international yellow vaccination card from your doctor.
 - Stock up on any prescription drugs you take. Have your doctor's note authorizing their use (and refills). Make sure any drugs you carry are legal in the host country.
 - Stock up on contact lenses if needed. It would also be helpful to take along a copy of your eye prescription in case you lose contacts or eye glasses and need to get replacements.
 - Buy medical insurance for your time abroad. It's often included in program fees, but it's still best to check.

A Few Weeks Before Departure:

- Fill out a change-of-address form and have it forwarded to your permanent address while you're away. Update your MSU online account with your permanent address.
- Schedule a meeting with your academic advisor to address final concerns about your plans and coursework.
- Double check all financial documents (scholarship applications, loans, and FAFSA renewals) are up to date. Know your disbursements dates, amounts, etc.

1 Week Before Departure:

- Buy a small gift for your host family or for a local who may help you out a lot.
- Make multiple copies of all important documents -- leave one set with your parents, another with the study abroad coordinator, and keep one for yourself. This usually includes at least:
- Exchange a small amount of US currency for foreign currency at your local bank. Ask for small notes in addition to larger ones.
- Call your bank and all credit card companies to make sure your ATM card will work in your host country and to let them know when and where you will be traveling (don't forget layover cities). Make sure you know what the fee is for international withdraws/transactions.
- Confirm your flight.
- You may want to buy both a plug adapter as well as a voltage converter if you want to take electronics such as an electric toothbrush, hair dryer, or electric razor, iPod, etc.
- Review airline luggage restrictions and start packing. Be sure you can carry it all easily on your own.
- Review the Pre-Departure Orientation packet and any documents/emails you received from the institution abroad.

**The Night Before:**

- ❑ Re-confirm your flight and luggage requirements.
- ❑ Pack your carry-on bag. Include the essentials: passport, one change of clothes, toiletries, wallet with cash and credit/debit card(s), valuables, medications with doctor's notes and important documents including airline ticket/e-ticket confirmation, emergency contact information, and address and contact information of destination.

The Day of Departure:

- ❑ Arrive at the airport well ahead of time (about 3 hours or so before your departure time).
- ❑ If the plane is delayed and someone is going to pick you up, email or call to let them know the new arrival time.
- ❑ If no one is picking you up at the airport, know which cab company to take, bus to catch, etc. Arriving in an unknown city and taking the first cab offer that comes your way can be expensive and dangerous.

Upon Arrival at Host Country:

- ❑ Call your parents or guardian/friend to say you've arrived safely.
- ❑ Attend orientation meetings, excursions, lunches, and other events offered by your program. That way you'll also start getting to know your classmates and coordinators – people you'll be seeing on a daily basis.
- ❑ Be aware of your surroundings and if you need assistance, ask for it.
- ❑ Vive la différence! (That's French for Long Live the Difference!) Yes, it's different, but that's why you're there, right?