EDUCATION ABROAD TEAM

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Studied abroad as an undergraduate junior on a semester exchange program to Japan and lived with a host family. Taught English in South Korea for a year upon graduation while traveling to Taiwan, Macao, and Hong Kong. Studied abroad as a graduate student on a faculty-led program to China. Regularly travels to meet with international partners.

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Started traveling abroad in high school with Spanish class and also as an exchange student to Australia. In college, studied abroad for a semester in Lithuania and participated on service-learning trips in four different countries. After college had one of the best years of my life living in Vienna, Austria as an au pair. Continues adventuring abroad to taste new food and visit friends and family.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preparation Before Travel ....................................................................................................................... 1
  Study Abroad Orientation .................................................................................................................. 1
  International Health Insurance ........................................................................................................ 2
  Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) .................................................................................... 4
  Personal Physical and Mental Health Review .................................................................................. 5
  Vaccinations .................................................................................................................................. 7
  Prescriptions and Medication .......................................................................................................... 8
  Researching the Destination ........................................................................................................... 9
  Program Logistics .......................................................................................................................... 11
Preparation Upon Arrival ..................................................................................................................... 14
  To-Do List Upon Arrival ................................................................................................................ 14
  Safety Tips and Information .......................................................................................................... 15
  Physical and Mental Health Tips and Information ........................................................................ 19
  Legal Tips and Information ........................................................................................................... 22
Emergency Protocols .......................................................................................................................... 24
  IPS Emergency Preparation .......................................................................................................... 24
  Emergency Contact Information ................................................................................................... 25
  Emergency Protocols .................................................................................................................... 26
I. STUDY ABROAD ORIENTATION

All study abroad participants are required to attend the study abroad orientation program. Orientation consists of two separate events: the Health & Safety Presentation, and the Launch Party.

**Study Abroad Orientation Part 1: Health & Safety Presentation**
This portion of Study Abroad Orientation is designed for participants and their families to learn and discuss health and safety information and protocols, to prepare for their international travel. The presentation generally covers the topics outlined in this handbook.

Sample topics include:
- Health & safety tips
- Emergency protocols
- Overview of insurance plan
- Travel notification forms

This event also includes several breakout sessions to allow participants and their families to review important topics or ask more specific questions. Participants and family members can attend separate breakout sessions. During registration, participants will register themselves and their guests for a session.

Sample breakout sessions include:
- Review of academic Policies
- Review of financial Policies
- Tips for First Time International Travelers
- Individual Meetings with a Peer Mentor

**Study Abroad Orientation Part 2: Launch Party**
This portion of the Study Abroad Orientation is designed for participants to prepare for the cultural adjustment that will occur when they travel abroad. Participants are encouraged to attend without their family members. Students will engage in activities and discussions to help them reflect on their goals for study abroad.
II. INTERNATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

All study abroad participants are required to secure international health insurance. Students should be covered from their initial departure date to their return to the U.S.

GeoBlue Insurance
Millersville University partners with GeoBlue which provides international health insurance coverage for colleges and universities. Participants can enroll in the GeoBlue insurance plan on our website.

GeoBlue Self-Service Tools
Members can access the following information online at www.geobluestudents.com and through the mobile application: The GeoBlue customer service team is available 24/7/365 to assist members

- Find providers, hospitals, and pharmacies
- Schedule appointments
- Arrange direct billing to secure cashless access to care
- Translate medications and medical terms/phrases
- Access and email/fax ID Cards to providers as necessary
- Request direct pay or file a claim
- Review local embassy and emergency information
- Receive daily alerts on the latest security and health issues in a specific destination

GeoBlue Summary of Plan Benefits
Medical Benefits:

- Physician office visits
- Inpatient hospital services
- Hospital and physician outpatient services
- Emergency hospital services
- Inpatient and outpatient treatment of mental and nervous disorders
- Dental treatment (including extractions)
- Outpatient prescription drugs including oral contraceptives and devices
- Pre-existing conditions covered

Plan Highlights:

- Repatriation of mortal remains
- Emergency medical, political, and natural disaster evacuation
• Emergency family travel arrangements: Aids with the cost one economy round-trip air fare ticket, and hotel accommodations in the place of the Hospital Confinement for 1 person.
• Emergency reunion: Aids with the cost one economy round-trip air fare ticket to return home in the event of the death of an immediate family member.

Requirements for Health Insurance by Host Countries
There are certain countries with national healthcare systems which require study abroad students to be enrolled in the country’s healthcare plan. Additionally, there may be host universities with specific health or liability insurance requirements.

These host country insurance plans do NOT cover participants during travel to and from the country, and they do not cover for travel outside host country. Additionally, these plans typically do NOT include coverage which IPS deems necessary for study abroad participants.

Participants are required to purchase insurance in the host country to meet their legal requirements and are required to purchase additional insurance through the IPS-recommended provider.

Other Program Insurance
If you are participating on a study abroad program through one of the approved study abroad vendors (AIFS, API, ISA, Global Experiences), you are not required to purchase additional insurance through the IPS-recommended provider because you will have insurance included through the vendor. However, not all insurance includes the same coverage limits and benefits.

As you review your health insurance plan, check to see if you have the following coverage:
• Are you covered if you travel outside your host location? (Ex. You study in Germany, but you take weekend trips to France or Italy.)
• Are you covered for personal travel if you arrive early or stay beyond the program dates?
• Does the insurance plan have the following?
  o Emergency medical evaluation
  o Political/Natural disaster evacuation
  o Repatriation of remains
  o Accidental death and dismemberment
  o Dental coverage
  o Mental health coverage
• What are the coverage limits?
• What is the deductible on the plan?
• Are pre-existing conditions included?
III. SMART TRAVELER ENROLLMENT PROGRAM (STEP)

Study abroad participants are required to register for the smart traveler enrollment program (STEP). The State Department developed this program to better aid U.S. citizens in emergency situations. By registering with the STEP program, you will receive updates, information, and travel warnings via email from the U.S. Embassy regarding your host country while you are abroad. Registration also notifies the State Department in the case emergency evacuation is necessary. You can enroll online at https://step.state.gov/
IV. PERSONAL PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH REVIEW

Notify IPS of Your Physical and Mental Health Needs
On the study abroad application participants may disclose and communicate to IPS staff known physical or emotional/mental health conditions, including medical or environmental allergies and dietary requirements, and prescription medication. By notifying the office, IPS will:

- Confirm medications can be brought into the host destination: Some prescription and over-the-counter medication are controlled substances abroad. Travelers need to be aware of the laws of access and use in the countries they plan to travel to.
- Assist students in accessing needed resources prior to departure and while abroad.

Health Check-Ups
Travelers should schedule health exams to ensure any existing concerns can be addressed prior to participation. Consider making appointments for the following:

- Annual physical exam
- Prescription updates
- Vision check-up
- Dental check-up
- Gynecological exam

As cultures differ from country to country, so does the perception of physical and mental health issues. Laws and customs may vary from country-to-country in terms of what is available and what can be provided for those requiring support services or accommodations. The most important quality for any traveler is flexibility and an open mind. You are going abroad to experience a different way of life, which may also include a different way of dealing with your health and accessibility concerns.

Your Physical and Mental Health Needs and the Program Location
Reflect on any physical or mental health supports you may need to ensure that you can be prepared.

- Do you have a disability that could require accommodations in order for you to be successful in the classroom, at your placement, or while traveling? Some countries may not have accommodations available for certain disabilities, so do your research well in advance.
- Will you be comfortable with the daily physical challenges of some locations such as walking long distances, uneven terrain, or others?
- Will you need to bring your prescription medication into your host country? Some medication is not allowed through certain countries’ customs and may place restrictions on certain medication or amounts. Make sure you have a backup plan in case medication is lost or stolen but do not assume that you can ship medication to your host country.
- Do you have any dietary restrictions that will need to be considered? Some regions present more dietary challenges than others. Be sure to do research on your host city to be sure you can access the foods you need to maintain your diet and/or lifestyle.
- Are you currently receiving any counseling or therapy services that you will need to continue abroad? If so, find out if you will have access to these services in your host country. Work with your counselor to create a plan for the length of your study abroad term.
- Understand what is included in your international health insurance plan. What are you covered for?
• What are some coping strategies or techniques that I can employ that would help me in transitioning to living in a new country and culture?
• How transparent am I willing to be with support staff or instructors in my host country regarding my mental health?
• What support or resources does my study abroad partner program or host university have for students (counseling and mental health professionals on staff, contacts in the local community, group therapy options for students, etc.)?

Accessibility
IPS is committed to supporting international travel for all students, faculty, and staff, and to offering education abroad experiences to all Millersville students. Travelers should be prepared for how the term "disability" may be culturally defined in the host country, the attitudes towards disabilities, and knowledge that levels of accessibility can vary greatly from country to country.

Before you go, find out as much as you can about your host culture and how local people view various types of impairments and accommodations by reading, talking to other students, checking out local vloggers, and other resources. The more you know, the better prepared you will be for the interaction between you and your new environment. While international travel can be challenging, an overseas experience can help you learn more about yourself and your capabilities.

Resources:
• Mobility International

Students that need accommodations should complete the official Millersville University Special Assistance Request. IPS will need a copy of your official accommodations request. IPS will make every reasonable effort to accommodate your needs by working with your host university/ provider to assess the situation on the international campus, the housing options, the host city, and for program excursions.
V. VACCINATIONS

It is important to educate yourself about the health and safety in your travel destination. Consult official health resources to learn about possible concerns, recommended immunizations, and precautions to take in the countries / regions in which you will be studying and traveling.

While no specific immunizations are required to travel abroad by the Office of International Programs and Services or by Millersville University, depending on where you travel, you will want to consider receiving certain immunizations before leaving the U.S.

Important Notes
Since many immunizations require more than one visit to a clinic or cannot be taken together, you should plan appointments in advance. If you plan to travel outside your host country, check the health requirements for those additional countries. In most cases, health risks will be very similar to what you would experience in your own country. However, there are some countries or regions for which you may require additional immunizations, or where you may need to take additional precautions for the handling and consumption of certain foods and/or water.

- Some countries require specific immunizations to enter the country for visa and immigration requirements.
- Traveling in larger cities may not require certain immunizations but you may want to consider it if you plan on traveling to remote areas.
- Some airlines may require specific vaccinations.
- Some hotel, hostel, on-campus housing, or homestay families may require specific vaccinations.

Consult a medical professional or a travel health specialist to make an educated decision regarding immunizations.

- Travel Health Services or Passport Health here in Lancaster, PA
- The Center for Disease Control
- The World Health Organization
VI. PRESCRIPTIONS AND MEDICATIONS

Access to certain medications can be limited while abroad, especially in some developing countries, so you should talk to your doctor about how to take care of all prescriptions before you leave. Some countries may limit the amount of a particular drug that you can transport in and out of the host country. Additionally, some prescriptions and over-the-country medication can be illegal in your host country.

Important Notes

- Depending on the medication, it may be more important to bring enough medication to last the entire term you are abroad.
- Shopping medication overseas by mail is prohibited in many countries.
- Make sure all drugs are in the original pharmacy containers and are clearly labeled.
- Carry copies of your prescriptions
- Bring a letter from your doctor or pharmacist describing your medicines, their dosage, and a generic name for them as well as the condition being treated. This letter could help avoid problems with Customs, and it could be helpful in cases of emergency.
- Bring a copy of your vision prescription along with an extra pair of glasses/contact lenses.
- During travel to your program site, put any prescription medication, eyeglasses, and contact lenses in your carry-on bag. Do not take the risk of these items being delayed lost with your checked luggage.
- Learn the generic name of common over-the-counter drugs in case you need to purchase them while abroad.
VII. RESEARCHING THE DESTINATION

It is important for study abroad participants to find resources and research the host destination to prepare themselves for traveling and living abroad.

Important Notes

- Seek out literature and other resources regarding your host location.
- Access the U.S. State Department and Centers for Disease Control web resources for up-to-date information and health advisories.
  - The U.S. State Department’s Before You Go website.
  - The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Health Information for International Travel (“The Yellow Book”) is a comprehensive prevention and health guide for international travelers, covering a broad range of health topics from infectious disease to jet lag.
- Learn about all of the required or recommended immunization/vaccinations for your host destination.
- Research the larger known risks including news of disease, food and water safety, and others.
- Identify areas in the country, region, or host city where it may not be safe to visit.
- Familiarize yourself with local laws.
- Research cultural norms or socially accepted behavior.
- What is the current political and security climate in your host country?
- Is your sexual orientation or identity a cause for concern in your host destination? Familiarize yourself with both the laws and attitudes in your host country.

Race and Ethnicity Abroad
Race, ethnicity, identity, and class are understood differently across cultures and the world. It is important to keep this in mind when entering a new cultural context in your hosting community, and country. It is most crucial that you remain respectful of those around you, and of other people’s beliefs surrounding these sensitive issues. Be aware that race and ethnicity might be categorized, labeled, or understood differently from how it is back at home. This could impact the way others understand you in their culture and in your new environment. This goes the same for class. In certain contexts, working class Americans may be considered rich, while in others, upper-middle class Americans may be considered poor.

- Consider where your program is located, especially in a city: is it in an affluent or middle-class neighborhood? Where you will be living?
- Once you arrive at your destination, take cues from your surroundings and, as you go about your everyday routines, determine what is appropriate and prudent.

Women and LGBTI Traveler Preparation
As gender-based treatment in a foreign culture may differ significantly from your native culture, be aware that it can affect your experience abroad. For women, concerns include sexual harassment, safety, and social expectations. It is important to understand the roles of the sexes in the culture in which you are living. Observe how the host country’s people dress and behave. Also remember at all times that what may be appropriate or friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted, even dangerous, attention in another culture.
Countries view gender identity, gender expression, and sexual orientation in many different ways. Some host cultures may be more welcoming and tolerant of LGBTI identities than in the US, but others may have laws that criminalize homosexuality. Gender norms vary from country to country as well, and it is important to do research on those prior to departure. Learn the laws of your host country regarding LGBTI issues, same-sex sexual behavior and expressions of LGBT identity and community. It is important to remember that you will no longer be protected by US laws once you leave to go abroad. If same-sex acts are illegal in your host country and you are reported for engaging in them, you could be arrested and imprisoned in that country. Regardless of the laws of your host country, it is always important to research whether an environment is affirming to those that identify with an LGBTI identity.

Things to Consider
- Are you only willing to go somewhere that is very tolerant and affirming of LGBTI identity?
- What if the perfect program for you is in a place that openly discriminates against LGBTI individuals?
- Some LGBTI students may find that their ideal program may be hosted in a place that is less than welcoming. While this could lead to a very eye-opening and valuable experience it may also present certain dangers. You should carefully research your destination and consider all aspects of your health, safety, and security before committing.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when choosing a study abroad program:
- What are the cultural and local attitudes towards Americans, tourists and sexual orientation and gender identity in the host country?
- What is the attitude of the police towards LGBTI visitors?
- What is the social perception of lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in my host country?
- How open will I be about my sexual orientation and gender identity with my teachers, peers, friends, host family and others?
- The LGBTI population is often misunderstood by others. To what degree am I comfortable with educating others and dispelling myths?
- Are there situations in which I would not disclose my sexual orientation?
- How important is it to me to find other students and friends who share my identity while abroad? How will I make connections with other sexual minority students, local residents, or community organizations?
- Are there LGBTI friendly establishments nearby? How can I find them?
- Will I need access to any medications, supplies, or services to properly care for my medical needs, including those related to physical transition, like hormones? Are they available in my host country? If not, will I need any additional documentation to travel with any medications or supplies? Will it be possible to travel legally with these supplies?

Country Specific Information
The U.S. Department of State provides information on every country in the world, including locations of U.S. embassies and consular offices; crime and security information; health and medical conditions; and penalties for certain offenses. This is a great place to start learning about where you are going.
VIII. PROGRAM LOGISTICS

Passport
A valid passport is required for international travel. Passports should be valid for at least 6 months after your return date. An electronic copy of your passport will be available on the International Portal, should you need it to expedite a replacement if your original is lost or stolen.

Visa / Immigration Documents
A visa is an endorsement on a passport indicating that the holder is allowed to enter, leave, or stay in a country for a specified period of time. It can be in the form of a sticker, a page insert, or stamp placed in your passport. Visas are not always issued according to the length of time you will be in the country, but by the purpose of your travel. For example, some countries require you to be on a specific student visa and not a 90-day tourist visa.

The visa process can be lengthy and time consuming, so it is important to apply as soon as possible. Some countries require in-person interviews at offices in large metropolitan U.S. cities such as Washington D.C. or New York City, some require FBI background checks, and some require medical documentation. Be sure to review the requirements carefully. Few countries allow you to get your visa online, or through a visa agency, a company that will process the visa on your behalf.

Note: Make sure that while traveling during your study abroad experience, you are also verifying the visa requirements of the countries that you wish to visit.

Power of Attorney
Assigning power of attorney (POA) is a legal process that involves the drafting of a document which assigns another person to act as your legal representative in specific situations. This enables the designated person to have access to your accounts, deposits, and withdrawals and they are able to sign on your behalf. Discuss with your family if this is something you want to pursue.

Electronics
Electronic currents are different from country to country. If you intend to bring any electronical appliances or devices (laptop, phone charger, etc.) you may need to take a voltage converter and/or a set of adapter plugs. These are easier to purchase online or at electronic stores in the U.S. before traveling. Converters that convert from the U.S. style to the host destination style may be difficult to find while abroad. Also, consider buying small electronics, like hairdryers, once you arrive in your host country.

- IPS encourages all international travelers to have a working cell phone while traveling, that is not dependent on WiFi. You may need emergency communication access.

Packing
Be sure to research current travel restrictions on the TSA website, for liquids and other items before packing, as these rules change frequently. Airlines restrict the amount and weight of luggage that passengers are allowed to bring with them and may charge extra fees to fly over the limits. Packing sensibly and lightly is important. In addition to the essential items it is important to remember the following:

- Important documents (passport/visa, emergency contact details, insurance information, housing information/directions/confirmation, program details, money, flight
International safety

You exchange may need some money on arrival. Things such as airport pickup, train fare, food, housing deposit, etc. will need to be paid in local cash in many locations. This means you may need access to local currency. See below for several options.

Exchange money in the airport. This method typically does not give you the best exchange rate unless you exchange a large amount of cash (IPS does not recommend carrying large amounts of cash for safety concerns). Another option is to use your US bank card at an airport ATM that supports international cards. This method will charge you for the ATM fee and the exchange rate, but may be

Flights and Travel

IPS can assist students with questions regarding arranging and navigating flights, however, IPS cannot purchase individual flights for students. Some Marauders Abroad Programs (MAPS) will have a group flight option made available to them by their Program Leaders.

Important Notes:

- Travelers will need to complete customs forms and check through customs when entering a foreign country and when returning to the U.S. Be sure to complete any declaration forms before you get to the customs gate area to avoid a long wait.
- Arrive early to the airport, but check the flight information screens frequently and listen to any announcement. Oftentimes the gate for the flight may change.
- Make sure to book enough time between connecting flights, especially if you need to go through customs and recheck your luggage in the connecting airport. A minimum of 1 hour is recommended between flights.
- While waiting for connecting flights, especially in a foreign country, be sure to check the time (noting the different time zone) and any announcements or notices posted in English.
- Drink plenty of water during your flight.
- Get up and walk around on a flight to stretch your muscles or sleep on the plane if you can.

Handling Money Abroad

How much money should I take? Your personal spending habits, the cost of living in your host country/city, and fluctuating exchange rates should all be taken into consideration when assessing your personal budget. A program’s cost worksheet will give an estimate for personal expenses, but this does not cover personal travel and activities while abroad. Students should make their own budget for personal travel, excursions, and activities.
the best option for small sums of cash. Be sure to research the best method for your location so that you can access local currency as soon as possible.

*How do I exchange money?* Familiarize yourself with the current exchange rate of your host country prior to departure. Current exchange rates can be found online. Cash can be exchanged abroad at a variety of locations: airports, banks, hotel lobbies, currency exchange centers, etc. Oftentimes program locations have a preferred method.

**ATM/Debit Cards/Credit Cards**
With an international ATM/Debit card, you should be able to withdraw cash (in the host country currency) from an ATM and have it debited (in U.S. dollars) to your U.S. account. MasterCard and Visa are the most widely accepted credit cards worldwide.

Be sure to contact your bank and credit card company to notify them of your travel dates and locations. This action is to prevent the banks from denying access to your card for suspicious transactions.

Your U.S. bank may impose a service fee for an international withdrawal, and impose a limit on the amount that can be withdrawn. TIP: Be sure to ask about ATM fees and withdrawal limits.

Although credit cards are widely used, not all merchants accept them, so you will still want to be prepared with some cash on hand prior to your departure. Also, there are certain countries where it is still a high cash society. Many rural locations may not accept cards of any kind.

**Wire Transferring Money**
In the event you need to pay certain program fees by wire transfer, consider the following options: Western Union, MoneyGram. These companies are used to transfer money worldwide. Both charge a fee for this service. If you open a foreign bank account, you can also wire money straight into that account. This can take up to 10 business days and there is typically a fee payable at the U.S. end of the transaction.

**International Bank Accounts**
If you are studying for a semester or longer, opening a bank account abroad may be a good option. Many host institutions offer an orientation session on this topic. Some programs will require you to open a bank account to refund housing deposits, give meal stipends, etc. If you have any questions or want to inquire about opening a bank account abroad, ask the international office at your host institution for assistance.
I. TO-DO LIST UPON ARRIVAL

Now that you have arrived at your destination there are several important items that you need to take care of on the International Travel Portal. Log in and access your program application to complete them. The following items are the safety related items included on the While Abroad paperwork:

**Arrival Confirmation**: This notifies our office that you have arrived. If you email your Peer Mentor to confirm you have arrived, then our staff will manually complete this item for you.

**Location Emergency Contact Information**: Regardless of your housing situation, complete this questionnaire so IPS has your apartment number, landline phone number, names and contact details of your host family or landlord, and other such information. If you secure a local cell phone, or a new sim card with a new number, include these additional notes.

**Return Flight Itinerary (if applicable)**: For those who purchased one-way tickets, IPS will need to know your return date to the U.S. Once your return flight has been secured, upload a copy on your Study Abroad Portal.

**Important Notes**
- Remember to check in with family and friends as well!
- Regularly check your Marauder email while abroad. This is how all, important information is communicated by MU and IPS.

**Travel Notification Form**: The itinerary IPS has on file for each traveler is based on their departure and return dates to the U.S. Any student planning on taking an overnight trip while abroad, away from the host location should complete a Travel Notification Form. This form collects information about your temporary location, dates of travel, travel companions, and transportation information. IPS will update your travel itinerary with this information so that we can get in touch with you in any emergency situations. If travelers take multiple trips throughout their term(s) abroad, they should complete a new form for each trip.
II. SAFETY TIPS & INFORMATION

Make yourself familiar with the laws and safety conditions of your host country, host city, and any other regions you plan to visit. Most large cities as well as remote areas, in the U.S. and abroad, suffer from common crimes. Students should use the same precautions abroad that they would in any large metropolitan area. The Travel Safety Information for Students Abroad resources prepared by the U.S. Department of State has information which you might find useful. The website can give you information on local laws, safety, security, and on other topics such as health and transportation.

Basic Safety Tips
- Inform IPS, friends, family, on-site staff know of any traveling that you plan to do. Remember to complete a Travel Notification Form for any overnight travel.
- Do not travel alone!
- Do not leave your belongings unattended at any time.
- Leave jewelry and other valuables at home.
- Avoid flaunting cash, wallets, purses, cell phones, and cameras.
- Avoid traveling in poorly maintained vehicles. When taking a taxi, sit in the back seat.
- Have sufficient funds or a credit card on hand for emergency purchases.

Assess Important Local Safety Needs
- Locate police station, closest U.S. consulate or embassy
- Follow expatriate or local traveler blogs or forums
- Regularly check local or regional news websites

Assess Campus and Housing Safety Information
Examine your accommodations for safety measures, even when staying in temporary travel housing such as a hostel, AirBnB, or hotel. Attend all safety presentations or workshops provided by the host university or provider.
- Fire escape plan: access to exits, emergency meeting locations
- Safety features: Fire extinguisher, fire alarms, smoke detectors, door and window locks, security guards, ID cards, keypad entry
- Locate the international office at the host university and/or your on-site emergency contacts.
- Attend host university or host provider orientations.

Precautions in Times of Unrest/Conflict
During times of political or social unrest in your host country or region, or when the U.S. becomes a party to a political conflict anywhere in the world, additional precautions are advisable:
- Keep informed about the current political situations.
- Remain in close contact with the on-site staff, IPS, and family so that we are aware.
- Avoid participating or being near demonstrations and other political activities.
- Keep away from areas known to have large concentrations of residents aligned with interests unfriendly to the U.S. and its allies. On-site staff will generally give advice for this.
- When in large cities, avoid popular tourist destinations and avoid U.S. consulates or embassies where demonstrations could be taking place.
- Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible so as not to draw attention to yourself.
• Do not agree to newspaper or other media interview regarding political conflicts, or reference your program or host university.

Travel Advisories

**U.S. State Department** Alerts are means to disseminate information about short-term conditions that pose a significant risk to the security of U.S. citizens, including: natural disasters, terrorist attacks, coups, election-related demonstrations or violence, and high-profile events such as international conferences or sporting events that might generate a Travel Alert. Warnings are issued for long-term conditions that make a country dangerous or unstable, in which the State Department recommends that Americans avoid or consider the risk of travel to that country.

Transportation Safety

Driving conditions, laws, customs, and etiquette vary from country to country. Traffic related accidents are the leading cause of student injuries and deaths while abroad. Be familiar with your country/countries driving rules and pedestrian rights. Heed the advice of the on-site staff and obey all local pedestrian laws. The **Association for Safe International Road Travel (ASIRT)** can be a good resource in your preparation.

Traffic laws in other countries can vary significantly from what you are used to, and ignorance of local traffic regulations in your host country could lead to accidents and/or fines. It is usually best to use public transportation while you are abroad. However, be sure to check with your on-site coordinator about the safety of different kinds of public transportation in your host city.

- Become familiar with the rules for all forms of transportation, such as trains, metro, taxis, buses, personal bikes/tut-tuts/carriages/rickshaws. Some countries like Japan, have strict bicycle laws and require registration for you to ride.
- Learn the "right of way" culture for your host location.
- Only use taxis that are clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked taxis and specialty taxis that charge premium prices.
- Do NOT sit in the front seat of a taxi when traveling by yourself.
- Do NOT hitchhike in any country even if your local peers suggest it is safe. Hitchhiking can put you in various dangerous or uncomfortable situations.

Fire Safety

Fire can pose a significant risk, especially in countries where there are no fire departments or fire response systems, where buildings are not constructed to minimize fire hazards and few people know about fire safety. Fire safety standards differ drastically around the world. Many overseas locations do not meet U.S. standards in terms of fire protection and regulations (e.g., fire sprinklers, smoke alarms, fire extinguishers, etc.), means of escape, and fire-fighting capability. Other significant hazards include:

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

Identify Fire Hazards: Identify potential fire hazards and take steps to minimize or eliminate hazards. Always consider fire precautions in any building you visit, particularly how to escape. Take the time to inspect your lodging for possible safety hazards, including lack of smoke detectors, exposed wires, and improperly operating heating and cooking equipment. Prevention steps include:
  • Ensure you have a working smoke alarm and test it weekly. Smoke alarms with a vibrating pad or flashing light are available for people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
  • If you smoke, never smoke in bed; when you finish a cigarette, put it out completely and make sure all cigarette ends are cold before emptying ashtrays into bins.
  • Be aware of where fire alarms are located, and fire equipment is kept.
  • Keep a flashlight on hand to help guide you through smoke.
  • Draw an escape route. Plan and practice it with your housemates. If you use a walker or wheelchair, check all exits to be sure you can get through the doorways easily.
  • Students with mobility or accessibility concerns are encouraged to have their bedroom on the ground floor and as close as possible to an exit.

Water & Swimming Safety
Accidents involving water are one of the most common causes of death among young travelers abroad. Even the strongest swimmers can be placed in jeopardy by rip tides, overexertion, prolonged sun exposure, and water hazards not visible at the surface.

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

Women and LGBTI Traveler Safety Abroad
Many students travel safely each year without incident. However, when it comes to safety and security, women and LGBTI travelers are more likely to experience marginalization and unwelcome behavior in the countries they visit. Women face greater obstacles, especially when travelling alone. While it is impossible to generalize about the experience of women and LGBTI students traveling in all places in the world, you may experience some specific challenges when you live or travel abroad.
Always be alert and use the same safety precautions as you would in Philadelphia or other major cities. Unfortunately, in many countries the issue of female harassment and identity discrimination may still be handled quite casually, and you may be treated accordingly by host nationals. However, IPS will take these concerns very seriously and will do whatever necessary to help you. For additional resources check out:

- **Diversity Abroad** - Resources for women, LGBTI students, and other groups.
- **Journey Women** - An online resource for women travelers. Optional weekly newsletter with tips on travel and safety for women.
- The **International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association** is a very useful resource for information and support.
- **U.S. State Department** LGBTI Travel Information

Think about the safety suggestions below:

- Avoid ‘sketchy’ areas. Pay attention to locals and their advice regarding areas to avoid.
- Do not leave your drink unattended or exchange drinks with anyone else.
- Don’t accept a drink from anyone, no matter how nice they seem.
- Avoid drinking from a large open container.
- Learn what is seen as flirtation in your host culture so that you are aware.
- Be aware of going to clubs or bars alone. Always travel with others!
- Be careful in asking strangers to dance in clubs.
- Do not respond to catcalls or harassment you may receive.
- Be firm and assertive when necessary. Be clear and direct to be certain that your intention and the words are understood. Consider learning a few phrases in the local language.
- Be aware that behavior which may appear normal to you, such as getting drunk or asking someone to walk you home, may be misinterpreted and place you in uncomfortable situations.

**Title IX Abroad**

Sexual assault is any sexual contact made without consent. Consent must be freely given with overt words or actions that clearly communicate an individual’s desire to engage in sexual activities. Consent is a clear yes, not the absence of a no. Consent cannot legally be obtained if an individual is incapacitated due to alcohol or other drugs, is unconscious or asleep, or has limited mental capacity. Though sexual assault can be perpetrated by a stranger, it is more commonly committed by someone the victim knows, such as a friend, boyfriend, girlfriend, partner, or acquaintance. Sexual assault is always the fault of the perpetrator and not the fault of the victim. Whether or not the victim has been drinking is irrelevant. The victim’s previous sexual activities, behaviors, actions, and/or dress is irrelevant. No one deserves to be the victim of sexual assault.

In the event you, or someone you care about, experience relationship of sexual harassment/violence while abroad, seek safety first. You are strongly encouraged to seek the support and resources available from your on-site staff. IPS staff are available to assist and support you. IPS are mandatory reporters.

**Resources for Sexual Assault While Abroad:**

- **Millersville Title IX**: Can assist with reporting to campus authorities and can provide resources and support measures.
- **RAINN**: The nation’s largest anti-sexual violence organization.
III. PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH TIPS & INFORMATION

Make yourself familiar with the health conditions of your host country and any other countries you plan to visit. Students should use the same precautions abroad that they would in any new location.

- Heed the advice that your Program Leader, local host university, provider, or host family may give you about what to eat and where. They are speaking directly from experience.
- Learn the local accessibility of hygiene products (ex. deodorant). In many countries, toilet paper is not be provided in public restrooms. You may want to keep a pack of tissues on your person.
- There are many different cultural views of mental health and not all host universities provide counseling services to their students. IPS is committed to helping students access support services during your study abroad program, whether in person or online.

Assess Important Local Health Needs
When you settle in, find out where health care facilities are located. Know where to get treatment or who to ask for more information. Check with your host university, provider, or host family for the name and location of the following:

- Locate pharmacy, doctor’s office, hospital, grocery stores, counseling office

Jet Lag
Your body, through long years of habit, has become acclimated to functioning with its own physiological clock based on a particular daily cycle. When you travel long distances into a different time zone, you can experience jet lag, or travel fatigue. It will take your body a few days or longer, to adjust. Expect to be tired, have disrupted sleep, and feel a little out of sorts for the first few days. Moderation is the key. Don't run yourself into the ground by trying to do too much all at once. Sickness occurs more frequently when you are tired and worn down. To help minimize the effects of jet lag, try to get on to the local schedule as soon as possible, even if it means staying awake until the local bed time.

Food & Water Conditions
New water sources as well as unclean food and water, can cause diarrhea and other diseases. People traveling to developing countries and rural locations are especially at risk. Water filtration and food regulations are different around the world and your body is not used to them. To reduce the risk of getting sick, try following these tips:

- Avoid “street food” for at least the first 72 hours you are in a developing country. Depending on their food tolerance, some travelers may not be able to adjust well to street food at all.
- If you are wary of the quality of the food and drink, make sure everything you eat is thoroughly cooked, peeled, or boiled to kill any bacteria.
- Avoid uncooked food from street vendors.
- Avoid dairy products that are not refrigerated or pasteurized.
- Locals are already accustomed to local water sources. Depending on the region/location, you may not be able to drink tap water at all. In others, you may need water purification tablets. Bottled/filtered water may be recommended.
- Wash your hands with soap and clean water before you eat.
- If you drink alcohol, consume in moderation. Intoxication can lead to unsafe and potentially deadly situations. Over 90% of the safety and security incidents on study abroad programs deal with are directly related to alcohol.
Usually Safe

- Bottled or canned drinks: Drinks from factory-sealed bottles or cans are safe; however, dishonest vendors in some countries may sell tap water in bottles that are “sealed” with a drop of glue to mimic the factory seal. Carbonated drinks, such as sodas or sparkling water, are safest since the bubbles indicate that the bottle was sealed at the factory. If drinking directly from a can, wipe off the lip of the can before your mouth comes into contact with it.
- Hot drinks: Hot coffee or tea should be safe if it is served steaming hot. It’s okay to let it cool before you drink it, but be wary of coffee or tea that is served only warm or at room temperature. Be careful about adding things that may be contaminated (cream, lemon) to your hot drinks (sugar should be fine; see “Dry food” above).
- Milk: Pasteurized milk from a sealed bottle should be okay, but watch out for milk in open containers (such as pitchers) that may have been sitting at room temperature. This includes the cream you put in your coffee or tea. People who are pregnant or have weakened immune systems should stay away from unpasteurized milk or other dairy products (cheese, yogurt).
- Alcohol: The alcohol content of most liquors is sufficient to kill germs. The alcohol content of beer and wine is probably not high enough to kill germs, but if it came from a sealed bottle or can, it should be okay.

Can Be Risky:

- Tap water: In most developing countries, tap water should probably not be drunk, even in cities. This includes swallowing water when showering or brushing your teeth. In some areas, it may be advisable to brush your teeth with bottled water. Tap water can be disinfected by boiling, filtering, or chemically treating it, for example with chlorine.
- Avoid using ice: Ice is generally made with tap water.
- Fountain drinks: Sodas from a fountain are made by carbonating water and mixing it with flavored syrup. Since the water most likely came from the tap, these sodas are best avoided. Similarly, juice from a fountain is most likely juice concentrate mixed with tap water and should be avoided.

Women’s Health Abroad

Not all types of feminine hygiene products will be available in your host country, though familiar products are available in most countries. You may want to pack your preferred products if you are unsure of the type available, or you may want to pack enough product to last one cycle, so that you have time to find what you need in local stores.

Engaging in Healthy Relationships

The “rules” of dating and what is considered flirting vary from culture to culture. It is important that you consider your perceived knowledge and behavior, and inform yourself as best as possible about how dating and relationships generally function in the host culture. As in the U.S., students traveling abroad should take appropriate precautions to avoid exposure to sexually transmitted diseases. Some places in the world have a higher rate of diseases, including HIV and hepatitis, than the U.S.
Mental Well-Being
For many students, arriving in a new country to study abroad is an exciting time full of new people and experiences. It can also be quite challenging and stressful to adjust to life in a new location where you don’t know anyone or speak the language well. While at home, students have friends, family, and professional support systems for coping with mental health obstacles. These support systems may be more limited while abroad.

Additionally, mental health conditions that are mild, dormant, or well-controlled in your usual environment may be exacerbated abroad and may require additional planning and attention. While abroad, you may experience varying degrees of the following throughout your program:

- Anxiety / Nervousness / Stress
- Frustration / Irritation
- Tiredness / Apathy
- Homesickness

Here are some tips to help manage your health and well-being:

- Get plenty of sleep and exercise and maintain a healthy diet
- Limit alcohol consumption
- Journaling, blogging, vlogging. Don’t bottle your feelings, express them! Sharing with your future self or your family and friends back home can help you think through a situation.
- Practice mindfulness. This is a type of meditation that involves focusing on the current moment, your feelings, and is used to reduce stress and relax.
- Engage in your community through volunteer work, sports, or local clubs. Schedule engaging activities like a local cooking lesson or street market shopping to get outside of your apartment or dorm.
- Don’t be afraid to talk to an IPS Peer Mentor or an Education Abroad Advisor! Reach out to IPS or host university staff when you need help

Resources:

- GoOverseas - How to Deal with Depression While Studying Abroad
- Calm.com - Mindfulness and meditation resources online
- Stages of Culture Shock: Everything You Need to Know
- How to Manage Stress and Stay Mentally Healthy During Study Abroad
- 5 Tips for Studying Abroad with a Mental Illness
- Peaks and Lows: How to Overcome Culture Shock

Contact the insurance company to search for local mental health providers. Additionally, there are many online / mobile app counseling services that you can use. These may not be covered under your insurance plan so you would likely be paying out-of-pocket. Examples are listed below:

- BetterHelp
- TalkSpace
IV. LEGAL TIPS & INFORMATION

If you experience difficulties with local authorities, remember that American officials are limited by foreign laws, U.S. regulations, and geography as to what they can do. If you are arrested and taken to jail for a crime you have knowingly committed, the U.S. embassy or consulate is not responsible for your release. Should you find yourself in need of legal counsel, contact the nearest consular office and they can provide you with a list of attorneys and other services. Consular offices will do whatever they can to protect your legitimate interests and ensure that you are not discriminated against under local law. The U.S. government also does not pay your legal fees or other related expenses.

You always have the right to contact the U.S. consulate. If you are unable to do this, try to have someone contact the embassy/consulate for you. The consulate should visit you, contact family and friends, and can assist in the transfer of money, clothing, and food. If you are arrested, realize that:

- Officials may not speak English
- Pre-trial detention can often last months, and most countries do not accept bail
- Inhumane conditions may exist in the prisons
- Few countries provide a jury trial
- Some countries employ the death penalty for conduct that may be legal in other countries

Alcohol and Drugs

Some countries do not have a legal drinking age, although frequently one must be 18 to purchase liquor. It is not uncommon for young adults to have beer or wine with a meal. There are some countries that have strict laws about drinking in public. For example, alcohol is strictly prohibited in most Muslim-majority countries and in some parts of India. U.S. citizens have been detained for possessing alcohol in their luggage upon arrival in some countries. Many countries’ laws are more severe than in the U.S. so be sure to research the local drinking culture.

Existing legislation in most foreign countries regarding the use or possession of marijuana, cocaine, and other drugs impose very severe penalties including jail terms, hard labor, and even the death penalty. Common prescription medication in the U.S. may also be considered a controlled substance in some countries abroad. Association with illegal drug users or possessors is considered the same as personal use or possession by authorities in some countries. If you are caught with illegal drugs overseas, you are subject to local and NOT U.S. laws.

Review the Participant Conduct Expectations in regards to alcohol and drug use abroad.

- Alcohol Misuse: If you are of legal drinking age in your host country, you are permitted to consume alcohol during non-program (study/work) hours. However, alcohol must be consumed responsibly and cannot be misused. Alcohol misuse is consumption of alcohol that is or has the potential to be harmful to the individual and/or is disruptive to the program. Participants that misuse alcohol face removal from the program and disciplinary action upon return to campus.
- Drug Use: MU prohibits the possession, use, manufacture, production, sale, distribution of illegal drugs by study abroad participants. Whether a drug is illegal is governed by U.S. federal drug laws, the laws of Pennsylvania, and host country laws. Participants that violate this policy face removal from the program and disciplinary action upon return to campus.
Important Notes

- Taking pictures of airports, policemen, military personnel, and inside certain museums or ancient buildings can be illegal in some countries.
- Cultural misunderstanding can lead to travelers breaking laws. Some hand guestures may be innapropriate or interpreted differently abroad.
- Some countries have laws regarding clothing/coverings while other countries may have culture-specific expectations.
- Public displays of affection such as hand-holding or kissing can get you into trouble abroad.
- Travelers can be fined or jailed for sitting or walking on historical landmarks, fountains, and natural parks.
- Common prescription and over-the-counter medication in the U.S. can lead to jail time abroad or permanent bans form he country.
- Not knowing local laws is not an excuse for breaking them! You are responsible to following all local laws during your travels.
I. IPS EMERGENCY PREPARATION

Health and safety are our priorities, and while we cannot guarantee the absolute safety of any individual traveler, IPS has implemented risk management processes to help minimize the risks to those participating in MU-related international travel.

Pro-active risk management involves:

- 24/7 emergency phone line access
- Emergency contact cards in hard copy and/or electronic formats that provide emergency service information for all travelers
- Vetting of third party providers and university partners to include reviewing on-site emergency protocols and availability of health services
- Vetting of international health insurance plans, provider insurance plans, and individual health insurance plans (if applicable)
- Mandatory Study Abroad Orientation Program that involves a health and safety overview, cultural readiness, as well as topical breakout sessions.
- Emergency response drills with Program Leaders and Millersville campus stakeholders
II. EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

To Call U.S. Numbers from Abroad
The U.S. country code is 1. Sometimes you may need to dial 001 or 01 to make a call to the U.S.

IPS Emergency Line
+1-717-871-5506
All international travelers, as well as family and friends, may call the emergency line and leave a message.

IPS Contacts For non-Emergencies
+1-717-871-7506
Education.Abroad@millersville.edu

Sexual Assault
RAINN Overseas Phone Number: +1-202-501-4444
Millersville University Title IX Coordinator, Elizabeth Swantek:
Phone Number: +1-717-871-4100
Email: elizabeth.swantek@millersville.edu

GeoBlue Insurance
Overseas number: +1-610-254-8771
globalhealth@geo-blue.com
- To access physical and mental health services
- Schedule an appointment
- Request political or natural disaster evacuation services

For questions about your insurance plan: +1-610-263-2847

U.S. State Department’s Office of Overseas Citizens services
Overseas number: +1-202-501-4444
Or contact the nearest embassy or consulate
III. EMERGENCY PROTOCOLS

In case of general emergencies abroad, you should follow these steps:

**STEP 1: Secure immediate safety.**
Focus on your immediate health and safety, including immediate needs for shelter, food, and water.

**STEP 2: Contact local emergency services.**
Call the local equivalent of “911” so that you can call for immediate emergency assistance for yourself or others. To find the local emergency phone numbers in the country you will be visiting, search for your country-specific information on websites like [travel.state.gov/destination](http://travel.state.gov/destination).

**STEP 3: Notify your on-site contacts.**
Contact your host institution, program provider, work placement supervisor, or host family. You should contact this person(s) as soon as you are able so that they may assist you quickly with local resources.

**STEP 4: Contact the Office of International Programs & Services.**
Call the Emergency Number +1-717-871-5506 at any time, to report an emergency situation or request assistance. Leave a message with the following details:
- Full name
- How to contact you (include all options such as phone, social media, email, zoom, etc.)
- Nature of the emergency and the urgency of the situation

IPS Education Abroad staff are immediately notified of the message and will respond appropriately. IPS may try to contact you via multiple methods such as phone, email, or social media, in situations where communication networks are down. Respond and reach out in any method you are able to.

**STEP 5: Contact your family, guardians, friends.**
If you are involved in any emergency, it is important for you to remain in contact with your family. They will be concerned about your well-being and will be anxious for regular updates from you or from IPS. There is a limit to the nature and amount of information IPS may disclose to your family members and/or designated emergency contacts, so it is best for those interested parties to communicate with you directly. IPS will only be permitted to communicate with individuals listed on your FERPA: Release of Information Form and/or your Emergency Contact Form.

**STEP 6: Contact your insurance provider.**
If the emergency is medical in nature then IPS may not be able to communicate directly with your insurer about your specific situation. The insurance company can help you locate medical care if you have not already been assisted, and organize evacuation services. The company will walk you through paying and/or making a claim, as needed.

**STEP 7: Contact the nearest U.S. Embassy/Consulate.**
Consular personnel at U.S. Embassies abroad are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to provide emergency assistance to U.S. citizens. Contact information for U.S. Embassies and Consulates appears on the [Travel.State.Gov](http://Travel.State.Gov) website.
IV. LOST / STOLEN WALLET AND MONEY

1. Freeze Your Credit Cards And Debit Cards. Contacting your bank and credit card companies should be done as soon as you realize that your wallet is gone. You may be able to avoid all liability by reporting the loss before anyone has a chance to use your cards.

2. File a Police Report / Report with Campus Security. It is also a good idea to file a police report if you discover that your wallet is missing while you're in a foreign country. This step is especially important if you believe that your wallet was taken while you were walking around or it was removed from your dorm room/apartment.

3. Contact Family or Guardian. You'll probably need someone from home to send you money if all your credit cards and debit cards are frozen while you're traveling. Due the prevalence of spam emails, try to video chat or call to verify your requests to your contacts. It’s hard to get a hold of cash without your wallet, which can leave you stuck or in a bind.
   • If you still have access to bank cards or credit cards (with cash withdrawal permissions) they can use a local international-friendly ATM to withdraw emergency cash.
   • Travelers may utilize services of a commercial money transfer services such as Western Union or MoneyGram to have family and/or friends send cash or transfer funds.

4. Notify Host University or Program. They may have a fund available to assist participants in case of emergencies.

5. Visit The Local Embassy Or Consulate. If your lost or stolen wallet contained your identification or passport, you may want to visit the embassy or consulate in the city you're visiting. These buildings are staffed with American citizens with the power to help you take care of the technical details of being able to return home. You'll also need to call the Social Security Administration when you return home if your Social Security card was lost. See notes in the following section on Lost / Stolen Passports. For dire financial circumstances (medical emergency, evacuation, etc.) the traveler may contact the nearest U.S. Embassy for emergency financial assistance.

If all options have been exhausted, student travelers may request emergency funds through IPS by completing an IPS Emergency Funding Request Form.
   • Assistance and no set amount of money is guaranteed
   • If approved, it may take several weeks for you to receive the funds
   • All funds are required to be repaid by stated deadlines. Any funds not repaid will cause a hold to be placed on the student's Millersville University account which will prevent the student from registering for courses and/or graduating.
V. LOST / STOLEN PASSPORTS AND IMMIGRATION DOCUMENTS

Note: Once you officially register your passport as lost or stolen it is no longer valid. If you later find it, it cannot be used for travel.

1. Make an official report for a lost passport. It is also a good idea to file a police report if you discover that your passport is missing. Also notify your campus security in case it has been found.

2. Find the nearest embassy or consulate. Notify the National Passport Information Center so that you can officially register it as lost. Locate your closest embassy or consulate as they will help you apply for a new passport.

3. Gather all the supporting documents. In order to replace your passport, you’ll need to submit some documents with the application when you arrive at the embassy. You’ll need the following information:
   - A passport photo (some embassies will provide this, but it’s always better to come prepared and bring your own)
   - Identification document (driver’s license, expired passport etc). You will submit a copy of your passport and/or visa to your study abroad portal prior to departure. IPS requests copies of these documents prior to departure so IPS can provide copies to you if necessary.
   - Evidence of US citizenship (birth certificate, or a photocopy of your passport if possible).
   - Travel itinerary (airline/train tickets).
   - A police report, (this isn’t mandatory, but will help confirm circumstances of loss or theft).
   - DS-11 Application for Passport (may be completed at the time of application).
   - DS-64 Statement Regarding a Lost or Stolen Passport (this is where you describe what happened).

4. Wait for the replacement for your lost passport. If you are in the US, replacing a lost passport can take between four and six weeks. However, if you are abroad and have immediate travel plans back to the US, you can be issued with an emergency passport within 72 hours. Be aware that this emergency passport will only last you for the journey back to the US — you’ll have to get a fully valid passport when you return home. Consulates and embassies can’t issue passports on weekends or public holidays.