

# Study Abroad Pre-Departure Checklist

## Acceptance to 6 months prior:

- Obtain/renew your **Passport**. Make sure it is signed and valid for at least 6 months after your return.
- Pay your **Study Abroad Deposit** to UBO. Remember this deposit goes towards the overall cost of the program and is non-refundable, should you choose not to go. Please see the cancellation policy on our website for more details.

## Materials to Complete in Terra-Dotta:

- Intent to Participate Form**
- Health and Emergency Treatment Authorization**
- Copy of Passport Identification Page**

## Semester in Florence Program only:

- Submit Official Passport Photos to CGE office:**
  - Fall/Spring in Florence: 5 photos
  - Summer in Florence: 4 photos

## 6 to 3 months prior:

- Verify that your financial aid** is in place and you have filled out all the paperwork.
- Sign your FAFSA** for the next academic year, if necessary (spring students especially). This application must be signed by the student and not a power of attorney or parent.
- Research** the country and city in which you will be living. Know the local weather for the timeframe you'll be living abroad. Read books on the culture/general area. Purchase an app or guidebook to use abroad. Buy or download a map of the area, transportation system, etc. Invest in a phrase book to brush up on some basic vocabulary.
- Schedule a doctor's appointment** or physical prior to departure. The University Health Center provides an international travel clinic. A consultation costs \$10 and can be scheduled online at [jmu.edu/myjmuhealth](http://jmu.edu/myjmuhealth). The Health Center staff can provide information on the required and recommended vaccinations, vaccinations at a low cost, prescriptions for travel medications, and information on safe travel.
- Consult Program Director regarding courses** offered for your chosen semester. Discuss study abroad courses with your academic or faculty advisor.

## 3 months prior:

- Apply for your visa** (*if necessary*). This may be done in conjunction with the CGE, your program director, or you may require materials we provide to obtain this document. All programs and country requirements vary.
- Purchase the local currency** prior to departure. It's a good idea to start with 100-200 dollars in smaller bills. You may need that for taxis or food upon arrival.
- Contact your bank and credit card** to make sure your cards and PIN will work abroad. If you don't have a 4-digit PIN, ask how to use your cards abroad. Be sure to learn about their international transaction fee (0-5% for each purchase).
- Book your flight, after verifying specifics with your Program Director**. Make sure you are arriving at the designated airport on the correct date and time. Also, consider signing up for any frequent flier miles now.
- Submit a copy of your flight itinerary on Terra-Dotta**. Input your flight information into your application portal in Terra-Dotta. Make sure your itinerary includes all flight numbers and layover information if you change planes.
- Obtain a copy of the Study Abroad Handbook** by visiting the *For Admitted Students* section of our website.
- Talk to your doctor about prescription medications** that can be found in the country you will be studying in. Consider options for generics. Have sufficient quantities of prescriptions to last through your time abroad. Again, consider using the University Health Center's Travel Clinic.
- Check MyMadison for any holds**, financial or academic.
- Enroll in a full-time schedule**. Be sure you are registering for classes specific to your study abroad program. This will NOT happen automatically. You must register during your scheduled appointment time. Do not wait until onsite to register.
- Share a copy of your study abroad and/or program handbook** with your family.

## 1 month prior:

- Register with the Department of State** – (CGE does that for you - you're welcome!).
  - If you travel beyond your host country, be sure to register your travel.
  
- Develop a communication plan** with your family and friends. Consider setting up a Skype account and practicing with your family prior to your departure.
  
- Determine whether your cell phone will work**, if you plan on using it while abroad.
  
- Make sure family and friends **understand international dialing instructions**.
  
- Start a packing list**. Check your airline for any baggage restrictions.
  
- Purchase voltage **converters or adapters**, if needed.
  
- Obtain traveler's insurance** for any electronics or valuables you will bring, consider trip cancelation insurance to safeguard you in personal or medical emergencies.
  
- Print your CISI insurance card** (sent via email).
  
- Verify payment for tuition and fees for Study Abroad**. Full payment for the program is due by the on-campus tuition dates or prior to departure, whichever comes first.
  
- Put together a budget for your time abroad** of estimated and fixed expenses.

## 2 weeks prior:

- Inform your credit card company and bank** that you will be out of the country and making transactions from abroad. What is your plan if you lose your wallet? Think about alternative options.
  
- Make photo copies of important items** to save at home (passport, visa, credit cards, insurance, and itineraries).
  
- Check holds and confirm payment – AGAIN!** You will not be able to make any schedule changes if you have a hold on your account or have not paid tuition and fees in full.

- Gather phone numbers and email addresses** for all necessary onsite staff. We'll get you started:

Center for Global Engagement  
1.540.568.5209 | [studyabroad@jmu.edu](mailto:studyabroad@jmu.edu).

- Buy a journal** or establish an online journal or blog.
  
- Begin writing** in your journal or start blogging prior to departure to capture the entire experience.
  
- Pack and Pack Efficiently**. Be sure to bring clothes that layer well, wash well, and are season appropriate. Consider stepping up your wardrobe, as you won't want to look like an American college student abroad, trust us! Ladies, sacrifice a pair of sweats and flip flops for a nice dress and shoes. Gents, trade in one of your hoodies for a polo/dress shirt and blazer. Overall, with the amount of stuff, follow this rule - When it doubt, leave it out!

## Other items to consider:

- Refer to <http://studentsabroad.state.gov/> for information about absentee voting, *if applicable*.
  
- Get information about filing taxes while you are abroad, if applicable.

## Add your own:

- \_\_\_\_\_
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
  
- \_\_\_\_\_
  
- \_\_\_\_\_

