



## **Delaware State University**

**University Area(s) Responsible:** Risk and Safety Management; Department of Human Resources; Office of International Affairs

**Policy Number & Name:** 7-13: Staff/Faculty International Travel Safety Policy

**Approval Date:** 7/28/11

**Revisions:** 8/14/2013

**Reviewed:** 8/14/2013

**Related Policies and Procedures:** 6-05: DSU Student conduct Standards and Policies, 6-08 Minors in University Sponsored Programs, 6-15 Study Abroad Student Disciplinary Process for International Programming

### **1. Purpose**

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure the safety of Delaware State University (DSU) employees while travelling abroad on University official business.

### **2. Policy**

Delaware University employees travelling abroad on University official business will do so in a safe and responsible manner. They will behave professionally at all times as they are representatives of the University and guardians of its good name and reputation. Employees travelling on behalf of the University will obtain full approval from their supervisor and other superiors prior to commencing preparation for departure. He or she must arrange for a pre-departure orientation on what the job assignment consists of, their itinerary, as well as the duties and responsibilities of their job assignment.

While travelling abroad University employees must continue to abide and comply with Human Resources guidelines and regulations applicable to their position. They will be responsible for any inappropriate behavior and actions and their consequences at the host country. University employees will receive the protection of the University as long as they are performing their duties as a University employee abroad. The University will not be responsible for any problems that may arise due to the employee's misconduct or decisions to engage in activities outside of their job duties during their own personal time.

Employees are to remain in constant communication with those travelling with them as well as with their supervisors at Delaware State University. Should an accident or an illness occur the employee must seek immediate help and contact their Supervisor, the Safety/ Risk Manager or the Office of Human Resources to inform them what has occurred and to be advised on what to do if necessary.

Delaware State University cares deeply about its employees' safety and will do everything within reason to ensure their safety at the University and while travelling on its behalf, but it cannot be there all the time. It is therefore the responsibility of its employees to behave and perform their duties in a way that limits the prospects of accidents, illness and other safety problems. The employee needs to be aware that they are not away on a personal vacation and that the laws of the host country will supersede any other law. They must therefore use their personal time wisely always thinking of safety first and informing others as to what their plans are. Inappropriate acts such as misbehavior, violations of the rules and regulations of the University and of the host country can lead to serious problems including but not limited to disciplinary action, termination of employment, legal action and even incarceration in the host country.

### **3. Scope**

This Policy applies to University employees on University official business abroad including, study abroad program assignment; research or teaching assignments, and any other business conducted on behalf of Delaware State University.

### **4. Responsibilities/ Procedure**

#### **4.1 Employee** will discuss with supervisor in detail:

- 4.1.1** The reason for the trip abroad and why they are being chosen or are requesting to travel.
- 4.1.2** The assignment's duration and its responsibilities and duties.
- 4.1.3** The steps needed to be taken in order to obtain approval for the trip and make the necessary travel arrangements.

- 4.1.4 Follow and complete all the travel steps such as obtaining a passport or visa on time.
- 4.1.5 Attend and complete pre-departure orientation.
- 4.1.6 How his or her responsibilities at the University will be handled during the time abroad.
- 4.1.7 Communication while on the trip abroad.
- 4.1.8 How to handle emergency situations.

**4.2 Supervisor** will discuss with travelling employee all the areas listed above and will:

- 4.2.1 Approve the trip and make all the arrangements for the employee to receive pre-departure orientation with the Office of International Affairs; the Safety/Risk Manager and the Office of Human Resources.
- 4.2.2 Maintain constant communication with the employee(s) abroad in case of changes, updates and emergencies.
- 4.2.3 Work with all departments involved to make the trip mission a success and ensure the safety of the employee and the University.
- 4.2.4 Conduct an evaluation and assessment of the trip and report any incidents to the respective University departments to maintain the safety of the University's students and employees upon the return of the employee(s) who have been abroad.

**4.3 Office of International Affairs:**

- 4.3.1 Provide employees with a pre-departure orientation that includes useful literature on survival tips for persons travelling abroad.
- 4.3.2 Provide a checklist for employees to complete the preparation to travel process.
- 4.3.3 Maintain communication with employees abroad in case of changes, updates and emergencies.
- 4.3.4 Advise and advocate for employees abroad to ensure their safety.

**4.4 Office of Human Resources:**

- 4.4.1 Remind employees that they are still bounded by the rules and regulations of the university.
- 4.4.2 Provide emergency contact information.
- 4.4.3 Maintain communication in case of changes, updates, accidents and other emergencies.
- 4.4.4 Inform employees about their medical insurance and worker's compensation rights coverage and limits and the way those procedures will be handled if necessary.

**4.5 Safety/Risk Manager:**

- 4.5.1 Assist the Office of International affairs with the pre-departure orientation.
- 4.5.2 Emphasize that safety comes first at the University as well as abroad.

**4.5.3** Go over medical insurance and worker's compensation procedures for employees travelling abroad.

**4.5.4** Maintain communication in case of changes, updates, accidents, illness and other emergencies.

**5. Attachments/Appendix:**

**5.1** Appendix A: Staff/Faculty International Travel-Assumption of Risk and Release Form

**5.2** Appendix B: Staff/Faculty Travel Abroad Safety Handbook

**APPENDIX –A**

**DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY  
STAFF/FACULTY  
INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL - ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE FORM**

*THIS IS A RELEASE OF LEGAL RIGHTS - READ AND UNDERSTAND BEFORE SIGNING.*

Name of Staff/Faculty: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

**Travel Destination & Reason:** \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby agree as follows:

1. Risks of Travel. I understand that participation in the University travel specified above involves risk. These risks include, but are not limited to, incidents related to ground, air or water transportation, war, quarantine, civil unrest, public health risks, criminal activity, terrorism, exposure to communicable diseases, ill effects of unfamiliar food and water, adverse weather conditions, accident, injuries or damage to property, and other physical, mental and emotional injuries to person. I have made my own investigation and am willing to accept these risks, including the risk of catastrophic injury or death.

2. University Arrangements. I understand that the University does not represent or act as an agent for, and cannot control the acts or omissions of, any host institution, host family, transportation carrier, hotel, tour organizer or other provider of goods or services involved on this trip. I understand that the University is not responsible for matters that are beyond its control. I hereby release the University from any injury, loss, damage, accident, delay, or expense arising out of any such matters.

3. Independent Activity. I understand that the University is not responsible for any injury or loss I may suffer when I am traveling independently or am otherwise separated or absent from any University-sponsored activities. I acknowledge and understand that my participation in a University sponsored Travel Program is entirely voluntary unless required by job description or I am travelling on approved official University business.

4. Health and Safety.

- a. I understand that foreign travel and living overseas can provide special challenges and stresses. Medical care, including mental health care, emergency medical care and medicine may not be as available and/or of a quality comparable to that available in the United States. Staff and faculty with previous or current medical and/or mental health conditions are strongly encouraged to consult with trained medical and/or mental health professionals and to prepare strategies that may be used abroad should they experience problems. I acknowledge that I have been strongly encouraged to assess my ability to travel on University business with my supervisor.
- b. I am aware of all applicable personal medical needs. There are no health related reasons or problems that preclude or restrict my participation in this University sponsored trip. I have arranged, through my University insurance to meet any and all needs of payment for medical costs while I remain abroad on University business. I recognize that the University is not obligated to attend to any issues or problems that may arise that are not directly related to my role as a University employee travelling on official business. If I require medical treatment or hospital care, in a foreign country or in the United States, during my official business trip, my University insurance will be responsible for the cost or quality of such treatment or care.
- c. The University may (but is not obligated to) take any actions it considers to be warranted under the circumstances regarding my health and safety. I agree to pay all expenses related thereto that are beyond the University's obligation to me as an employee travelling abroad on official University business and release the University from any liability for any of its actions or inactions.
- d. Staff and Faculty are strongly encouraged to consult the State Department Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings at <http://travel.state.gov/travel/> and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/with> regard to their destination country before signing this document.

5. Standards of Conduct.

- a. I understand that each foreign country has its own laws and standards of acceptable conduct, including, but not limited to, dress, manners, morals, politics, drug use and behavior. I recognize that behavior that violates those laws or standards could harm the University's relations with those countries and the institutions therein, as well as my own health, safety, security and welfare. I will become informed of, and will abide by, all such laws and standards for each country to or through which I will travel during my official travel abroad.
- b. I will also comply with the University's rules, standards and instructions for employee behavior. I waive and release all claims against the University that arise at a time when I am not under the direct supervision of the University or that are caused by my failure to remain under such supervision or to comply with such rules, standards or instructions.
- c. I agree that the University has the right to enforce the standards of conduct described above, in its sole discretion, and that it will impose sanctions, up to and including termination of employment, for violating these standards or for any behavior detrimental to or incompatible with the interest, harmony and welfare of the University.
- d. I am solely responsible for and will attend to any legal problems I encounter that are not directly related to my role as a University employee on official business travel with any foreign nationals or government of each country to or through which I will travel during my official business trip. The University is not responsible for providing any assistance under such circumstances.

6. Official University Business Trip changes.

The University has the right to make cancellations, substitutions or changes in case of emergency or changed conditions or in the interest of the staff or faculty member(s). I understand that the University's fees and charges are based on current airfares, lodging rates and travel costs, which are subject to change. If I leave for any reason that has not been approved by my superior at the University, there will be no refund of expenses already incurred. If I become detached from the official travel group, fail to meet a departure bus, airplane or train, or become sick or injured, I will at my own expense seek out, contact, and reach the official travel group at its next available destination.

7. Choice of Law. The interpretation, performance and enforcement of this document, and the acknowledgements and agreements contained therein, shall be construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Delaware without regard to its choice of law provisions, and any litigation arising hereunder shall be venued in the State of Delaware and shall be governed by the laws of the State of Delaware.

8. Assumption of Risk and Release of Claims. Knowing the risks described above, and in consideration of being asked to travel on behalf of the University, I agree, on behalf of myself, my family, heirs, spouse and personal representative(s), to assume all the risks and responsibilities for activities and actions that are outside of my role and responsibilities as a University employee travelling on official University business. To the maximum extent permitted by law, I release and indemnify the University, and its officers, trustees, employees and agents, against any present or future claim, loss or liability for injury to person or property which I may suffer, or for which I may be liable to another person, while not performing my duties and responsibilities as a University employee.

[Signatures to Follow]



EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

Name of Staff/Faculty Travelling : \_\_\_\_\_

Travel Destination and Reason: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates of Travel: \_ \_\_\_\_\_

In the event of health or safety emergency, please contact:

Name:

Relationship:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City

State

Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone: Daytime –

Evening -- \_\_\_\_\_

Other contact information (i.e., cell phone/pager number, email, etc.):

Attach photocopy of photograph page of Passport

Attach a copy of photo ID(s)

The original of this form should accompany University personnel during the Travel Program.

A copy of this form is also to be placed on file with the University Department of Public Safety and with the University office with administrative responsibility for the Travel Program.

APPENDIX-B  
DELAWARE STATE UNIVERSITY  
STAFF/FACULTY TRAVEL ABROAD HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to answer many of the common questions that arise before, during, and after your time abroad. This guide will help you explore issues such as safety overseas, international travel, and culture shock and encourage you to do more in-depth research on related issues.

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### **Staff/Faculty Conduct**

All staff/faculty are expected to conform to the Delaware State University Code of Conduct and the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities. These documents can be found at [www.desu.edu](http://www.desu.edu) or in your DSU handbook. Staff/faculty are expected to conduct themselves in a manner supportive of the educational mission of the institution. Integrity, respect for the person and property of others, and a commitment to intellectual and personal growth in a diverse population are values deemed fundamental to the DSU community.

Staff or faculty must understand and agree to abide by the laws of their host country and all academic and disciplinary regulations in effect on the program. If a staff or faculty member does not abide by the regulations as interpreted by the program or host institution, he or she will be subject to the appropriate disciplinary actions up to and including premature termination of participation in the program. In such cases, the staff or faculty member will return to the U.S. at his or her own cost.

### **Informed Consent**

Staff or faculty members are required to acknowledge the following regarding participation in any study abroad program:

1. There are inherent risks in travel and work in international settings, particularly in developing countries.
2. The political, environmental, and cultural situations in these countries differ from those in the United States.
3. These situations are unpredictable and may become volatile and dangerous, often within a very short time-frame.
4. In such circumstances, evacuation may prove difficult or impossible.

Furthermore, staff or faculty members must understand that as foreigners, they should avoid situations that could become volatile and understand there are health risks and other risks associated with international travel. “Finally, all staff or faculty members must confirm that they have considered the dangers associated in foreign travel, the risks presented to their own well being, and their personal desire to further their education by traveling in foreign countries, and have concluded that the risks are acceptable and are outweighed by the desire to participate in study abroad<sup>1</sup>.” Staff or faculty members concede that there may be additional factors that may not have been brought to their attention. They also acknowledge that they have had the opportunity to ask questions about the program and their participation is voluntary and not required as part of their education at Delaware State University.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

### **Passports**

All persons traveling outside the United States must have a passport. The passport is your official identification as a citizen of the United States. It is issued by the Department of State and is good for ten years. You must have a valid passport with you to show border and customs authorities when you enter or leave the U.S., when you enter other countries, and for identification purposes.

Passport applications can be printed on-line ([http://travel.state.gov/get\\_forms.html](http://travel.state.gov/get_forms.html)) or picked up at your local county clerk's office. Submit your passport application to the Dover Post Office at:

55 The Plaza

Dover, DE 19901-9998.

Your passport application must be accompanied with valid proof of citizenship (certified copy of your birth certificate or an expired passport), proof of identity (valid driver's license), and two passport size photos (2 x 2 inches) taken within six months of submitting your application. The cost to renew a passport is \$67 while the cost to obtain one for the first time is \$97. You can opt for expedited service or "two-week" delivery for an additional \$60.

Keep your passport in a very safe, but accessible place. Losing a passport while overseas is not the end of the world, but it may seem like it. The procedures for obtaining a new one are extremely complicated and time-consuming. Before leaving the U.S., make two copies of your passport. Keep one with you but separate from the actual document overseas and leave the other with your family.

### **Travel Visas**

Many countries require travelers to have a visa before allowing one to enter. Each country has its own regulations, so if you need information, check with the closest consulate (<http://embassy.org>) regarding visa requirements.

The application process can take up to several weeks to complete, so do not wait until the last minute. Delays in obtaining a visa may cause you to miss your flight and work assignment. Standard items

usually required in the application are as follows: visa application form, current valid passport, one or more passport size photos, and an application fee. Check with your host country for specific requirements.

## **International Driving Permit**

Many countries recognize U.S. driver's license. Yet, some require an International Driving Permit. If you plan to drive while overseas, it is a good idea to get this permit to avoid any legal problems. To do so, contact the American Automobile Association (AAA) office for an application. The permit is valid for one year from the date of issue and you **MUST** carry your U.S. license.

## **SAFETY, LEGAL CONCERNS AND CUSTOMS**

### **Legal Requirements**

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to the laws of that country. Remember to respect their laws, use common sense, and avoid areas of unrest or disturbance. Deal only with authorized brokers when you exchange money or buy airline tickets and travelers checks. Do not deliver packages for anyone unless you are certain they do not contain drugs or other contraband. Also, familiarize yourself with local laws before selling personal items such as clothing, cameras, etc. Follow the laws strictly. The penalties you risk may be severe.

### **Drugs**

Despite repeated warnings, drug arrests and convictions continue to rise. Many people have the impression that drug laws and their enforcement in foreign countries are more lenient than those of the United States. However, this is simply not true. **The penalties for both illegal drug use and trafficking are very real and severe.** Remember that you are subject to local laws and **not** U.S. laws. If you are arrested, contact the U.S. consulate at once. Be aware that the U.S. officials can only visit advise, and contact family or friends for you. They cannot intercede in the legal process, represent you at the trial, or pay legal fees.

### **United States Embassy or Consulate**

The U.S. has embassies or consulates in most foreign countries. Their purpose is to advise and help you, especially in times of trouble. U.S. officials can:

1. Help you wire money from home.
2. Visit you in jail, suggest legal counsel, and provide explanations of local laws.
3. Recommend and help you receive medical care.

#### 4. Replace lost or stolen passports.

The consulates work to be responsive to the needs of American travelers. Do not expect them to find work or lodging, act as travel agents, search for missing luggage, or settle disputes with hotel managers. They must first devote their time and attention to those Americans who are in serious legal, medical, or financial trouble.

### **Customs**

Customs declaration forms are distributed on all types of international public carriers and should be prepared in advance of arrival for presentation to the immigration and customs officials. Whether or not you have anything to declare, you must still complete the identification section of the form. Regulations and procedures vary from country to country. To be safe, you should check with the appropriate embassy before departure to find out exactly what items are prohibited from entry. For more information on U. S. and international Customs' regulations, please see [www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/leavigarrivinginUS/vacation/](http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/leavigarrivinginUS/vacation/)

### **Re-entering the U.S.**

“Declaring” is either an oral or a written declaration of all goods acquired abroad. Most students do not exceed the duty-free limitation and only need to fill out the identification portion of the declaration form. This is usually done on the plane prior to landing in the U.S. If you have any questions, the airline staff can assist you.

### **Traveling Safely**

You will probably travel more than you normally would do at home. This means that you will be using a variety of public transportation such as buses, trains, metros, taxis, and planes.

Traveling Tips: What to be aware of while you are on the road, on the train, or in the air:

- Do not display money, wallet, or other valuable items.
- Use a money belt to carry your passport and money.
- Note the location of emergency equipment.
- Never leave any luggage or bags unattended.
  
- Buy a lock for your backpack or luggage.
- If someone is bothering you, inform the driver or train operator.
- Avoid unwanted attention and confrontations.
- If traveling late at night, do not ride in a train or metro car alone. Move near the conductor or train operator’s compartment or to where there are other passengers.

## **Safety Abroad**

- Be aware of your surroundings.
- Know your destination.
- Keep a low profile.
- Do not spend a lot of time in American high-visibility places.
- Vary your personal travel schedule.
- If your instincts tell you a situation is uncomfortable, trust them and move on.
- Avoid anything that looks like a demonstration or rally.
- Watch out for surveillance (terrorist acts are usually well planned).
- Know you embassy number. You should “register” with them. This helps you keep in touch should an emergency arise.

## **HEALTH CARE ISSUES**

Adjusting to life in a new country means excitement, challenge, and the unexpected. No amount of preparation can guarantee a trouble-free experience. Since you are not a citizen of the host country, you are not entitled to the same medical care as its citizens. **ARRANGING AND PAYING FOR MEDICAL CARE IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY!!!** You should pay close attention to the international coverage of your insurance policy.

Before you travel overseas, you should to pay meticulous attention to the factors that contribute to your physical and emotional well-being. A trip abroad will certainly affect your health, “because so many factors of your daily health are related to your lifestyle and environment.” On the other hand, the state of your health will have a significant impact on the success and enjoyment of your trip.

### **Assess your Health and Health-Related Practices**

“Going abroad is not a ‘magic geographic cure’ for concerns and problems at home<sup>2</sup>.” Both physical and emotional health issues will follow you wherever you go. In particular, if you are concerned about your use of alcohol and other controlled substances, or if you have an emotional health concern, you should address it before making plans to travel. Contrary to many people’s expectations, travel does not

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<sup>2</sup> [www.jsu.edu](http://www.jsu.edu). “Center for International Education Study Abroad Handbook.” Jackson State University 2006.

minimize these problems; in fact, it often exacerbates them to a crisis level while you are away from home.

### **Identify your Health Needs**

Be clear about your health needs when applying for a program. Thoroughly describe allergies, disabilities, psychological treatments, dietary requirements, and medical needs so that adequate arrangements can be made. In addition, resources and services for people with disabilities vary widely by country and region.

### **See your Health Practitioners**

A visit to your family physician, gynecologist, and dentist will insure you are in good health prior to your departure and might prevent emergencies overseas. Update your health records, including eyeglass prescriptions and regular medications and take a copy of your prescriptions. **ALL STAFF/FACULTY PARTICIPATING IN A DSU APPROVED STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM MUST HAVE A PHYSICAL SIGNED BY THEIR PHYSICIAN.** The Office of International Affairs will provide the form to you.

### **Prescription and Non-Prescription Medication**

If you take prescription medication, carry a supply with you to last your entire time abroad. You will need a copy of your physician's prescription for any medication and/or medical supplies you carry with you to pass through Customs. **ALWAYS KEEP PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION IN ITS ORIGINAL CONTAINER, IN YOUR HAND LUGGAGE.** Carry extra prescriptions for contacts and eyeglasses. Do not attempt to have medications sent through the mail.

Here is a list of few over-the-counter items you may want to take:

1. Aspirin and Tylenol for headaches, fever, etc.
2. Vitamins in case you are not eating a regular diet.
3. Medications for diarrhea and constipation
4. Antacid, antihistamine, motion-sickness tablets
5. Decongestant
6. Hydrocortisone cream
7. Water-purification tablets
8. Contact lens supplies (cleaner, saline, etc.)
9. Triple antibiotic ointment
10. Bottle of hand sanitizer

**Keep all drugs in original containers, so as not to cause problems when going through customs, and have them in your carry-on bag to avoid losing important medications.**

## **Immunizations**

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has an International Traveler's Hotline (404-332-4559) where, by dialing the country code of your host country, you can get information on recommended vaccinations, food and water issues, and current health problems. The information can also be found at [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/).

Recommended vaccinations no matter where you are traveling include: tetanus, hepatitis, and polio. Immunizations are available at the Bayhealth Medical Center or Christiania Medical Center and of course through your personal physician. Be sure to contact your doctor six-eight weeks before departure, because some vaccinations may take you up to four weeks to complete and may cause side effects. One vaccination recommended to travelers is Hepatitis A, which is a series of two vaccinations needing a six-month period between them.

## **Water and Food**

Water and food may be safe in large cities and hotels frequented by international travelers, but if it is at all questionable, stick to bottle water, canned or bottled carbonated drinks, tea and coffee. Also, beware of ice cubes and dirty dishes. Changes in diet can cause stomach and other health problems. In areas with poor sanitation and hygiene, avoid street vendors, milk, milk products, raw fruits, raw vegetables, and raw fish and meat.

## **Other**

If you happen to pick up an infection while abroad, whether it is a virus, bacterium, or parasite, you may not get sick right away, but weeks after your return. Some diseases can take up to six months to show up. If you get sick, tell your physician what countries you have visited and when. This information might prove helpful in making a diagnosis. Persons traveling to developing countries should be especially careful. There is a greater risk of contracting diphtheria, malaria, and typhoid fever. All persons should be aware of sexually transmitted diseases and take the necessary contraceptives. Remember 911 is only available in the U.S. Become familiar with what types of help (emergency and non-emergency) are available.

## **Medical Record**

In the event of an accident or illness, it is wise to take a brief medical record with you in order to help a doctor give you the best possible care. A good medical record would include: all drugs you currently take (listed by generic name), instructions and dosage concerning the medication, any chronic ailments, allergies or hypersensitivity's, immunization history, blood type, eye glass prescription, name of your personal physician (with address and phone number), health insurance policy, and if pertinent, your religion. For purposes of recognition or translation by foreign medical personnel, all information should be listed in appropriate and accurate medical terminology rather than in the vernacular. Another excellent idea is to wear a bracelet or dog tag identifying any physical condition that may require emergency care.

### **Medical Insurance**

All DSU full-time employees are covered by University medical insurance while travelling abroad on official University business. However, you may purchase additional insurance if you deem it necessary. There are a number of options available with various degrees of coverage.

If you become ill or have an accident while away, you will more than likely have to cover the expenses and later file for reimbursement. You should take a couple of claim forms with you, in case the foreign doctors need to fill-in or sign anything. Also, be sure to save and bring back all hospital or doctor bills and reports to present to your insurance company. **Please contact the University Safety/Risk Manager and the Office of Human Resources as soon as possible to inform them of your accident or illness so that you can be properly advised and begin any paper work process for Workers' Compensation if the incident took place while tending to duties and responsibilities of your job assignment while abroad.**

### **Medical Care**

The International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) is a non-profit, worldwide organization that helps travelers find competent medical aid abroad. Members are given a pocket-size directory listing IAMAT center in 450 cities. For more information visit [www.iamat.org](http://www.iamat.org)

Medic Alert is an organization for those persons having a particular illness or life threatening allergy. Membership is life-long and costs \$25. Among other things, members receive an identification bracelet describing medical problem(s) and a 24 hr. phone number that can be called from anywhere in the world to obtain up-to-date information about your medical history. To contact Medic Alert in Turlock, CA, call toll free 1-800-344-3226 or visit [www.medicalert.org](http://www.medicalert.org).

To summarize, guard your health and practice preventive medicine. Without your health, you are not going to experience anything-except maybe the medical facilities abroad that we are sure you would be willing to pass up.

## **EMERGENCIES ABROAD**

The Office of International Affairs (OIA) hopes that you will not have to use this information, but it is extremely critical that you read this and consider it carefully.

### **In case, you are faced with a life-threatening situation abroad:**

Make sure you find out immediately upon arrival how you can contact emergency services. This may mean finding phone numbers (for police, fire, rescue), as well as learning how to use the telephone. The 911 emergency number is an American phenomenon, so you must learn the different means of contacting the police and rescue services where you are.

### **Other Help Abroad**

If you find yourself in a situation that threatens your sense of well-being: Use your common sense to determine if you should seek help! Situations that merit you seeking help are any that you find too challenging or frustrating to handle yourself. **Do not wait until it is too late to seek help!** Contact someone who can truly assist you! On every Delaware State University study abroad program, there is a contact person on-site to whom staff or faculty can go for help. Talk to these individuals. That is why they are there. You should also contact the Director about the problem so the Director can prevent similar situations from occurring.

## **MONEY AND BANKING**

Managing your finances is one of the most important and challenging aspects of a successful and pleasant academic experience abroad. Before you leave, pay attention to the exchange rate between the U.S. dollar and your host country's currency. Learn to think in that currency and do not forget "the value of a good pocket calculator."

### **Exchanging Money**

The best place to exchange money overseas is a bank. Airports and train stations are also

acceptable places to convert your American dollars into foreign currency. However, be leery of hotels, restaurants, stores, and travel agencies because their rates will probably be less favorable and have a tendency to charge a high commission. Try to anticipate how much money you will need for a particular country and keep currency conversions to a minimum. Each time you convert money you pay a service charge. To help budget your funds, be aware of the fluctuation of the U.S. dollar and learn to convert prices into terms of dollars. A pocket calculator will come in handy.

Obtain approximately \$50 worth of foreign currency before leaving, so you have some currency when you arrive abroad for a bus, taxi, phone calls, food, etc. Large local banks can exchange money for you. Do the rest of your exchanges abroad—you will get a much better exchange rate. Remember to budget your money. There is so much to see, experience, and do. You would hate to miss anything due to the mishandling of funds and overspending. Deal only with official agents to exchange money, buy travel tickets, or purchase souvenirs.

### **Ways to Carry Money**

It is wise to have some cash in the local currency before you enter your host country. You may purchase foreign currency in most banks in the U.S., although you may have to order it ahead of time. Upon arrival, you can often change money at the airport or nearby cash machine. Carrying cash is always risky, so you should avoid bringing cash bills to cover all your needs while overseas. If you do carry cash, particularly in a large city, do not put it all in one place and never leave your wallet in the outside pocket of your backpack or purse.

### **Debit Card/ATM Machines**

ATM machines are available in major cities across the globe and are a fast, commission free way to obtain foreign currency. An ATM, debit, or checking card is excellent for international travel because it allows you to withdraw money from your bank account in the United States in the currency of the host country. Debit cards with Visa, MasterCard, Cirrus, or Plus logos are the most widely accepted cards. The transaction will debit the money from your account in the United States at that day's exchange rate, with a small transaction fee charged. Check with your bank to configure your ATM card for the correct account. Also, be sure to call your bank and check on the fees charged for each transaction. It may be wise to carry travelers' checks as back-up cash in case your bankcard becomes demagnetized or damaged.

### **Traveler's Checks**

Traveler's checks are a convenient and safe way to carry money. However, while they are generally easy to cash, they may not be accepted for payment of goods and services at all establishments.

If the checks are lost or stolen, the company that issued them will replace their full value, as long as you have a record of the serial numbers. Keep the receipt of the check numbers separate from your checks. Traveler's checks can be purchased at any bank in the United States, "usually at the rate of one percent over the value of the checks you are buying." American Express offers the best service for traveler's checks and has offices in every major city around the globe. If you are a member of AAA, you can get American Express traveler's checks free. Traveler's checks in dollars can be exchanged at banks overseas, but remember to bring your passport as identification.

### **Credit Cards**

Credit cards are valuable for big purchases, emergencies, and cash advances, although credit card companies charge higher interest rates for cash advances. Most major credit cards are honored abroad (i.e. MasterCard, Visa, and less commonly American Express), but there are exceptions! Credit cards are especially useful for hotels, restaurants, shops, airline tickets, and car rental agencies. When you use a credit card, the company makes the exchange rate purchase for you, reflecting the exchange rate on the day your credit card transaction is processed. This amount may be more or less than what you thought you were paying at the time of your purchase. You will be billed in dollars on your statement. A word of caution: it is easy to buy something with a credit card even if you do not have money available to pay. However, the interest charged on an outstanding balance adds up quickly, and it is very easy to get into debt. You need to leave someone you trust in charge of paying your monthly credit card purchases since most credit card companies will not send bills to non-U.S. addresses. Furthermore, keep a photocopy of your actual credit card in a safe place when abroad in case it is lost or stolen.

### **Advances/Check Cashing**

With the use of credit cards and computers, it is much easier to transfer money from a home account. Any bank that honors your type of credit card will help you draw funds in foreign currency as a cash advance. These advances are often considered a loan!!! When requesting an advance, remember that banks always require proper identification. If you are cash advancing a large sum of money, you should consider a wire transfer instead. American Express offers check-cashing privileges to its clients. Any American Express office will cash personal checks from a U.S. account at no charge.

### **Wire Transfers/Drafts**

If you think you might need to use bank transfers or have your initial funds sent to you in the form of a bank draft, visit your bank before you leave and ask them for a list of the corresponding banks in your

host city. Let them know who is authorized to initiate cable transfers for you. Once abroad, you can contact your home bank by phone and receive the money, usually within 48 hours. Be advised that you will probably have to pay the cabling charges both ways, in addition to a commission charged by the host bank. Money can also be wired from the United States via American Express ([www.amex.com](http://www.amex.com)) and Western Union ([www.western.com](http://www.western.com)).

## **PACKING SUGGESTIONS**

The best advice is to travel light. For your emotional comfort, you may want to pack one or two items you feel are personal necessities, but you will find that large amounts of clothing, gadgets, and books can be an unnecessary burden. Among bulky clothing items, take only the essential coats and sweaters that are appropriate for the climate. You can acquire other inexpensive items in your host country. These will have the added advantage of fitting in with the local fashions, so that you stick out less as a foreigner.

Use the following basic list as a general guideline to select what is essential for you. You may wish to adapt these items to your own checklist. Be sure to consult the specific information provided for your program, as well as recommendations from former participants.

### **Clothing**

- 1 pair of rainproof walking shoes
- 1 pair of flip-flops (showers may be less than scrupulously clean)
- Socks
- Underwear
- Shorts (may not be appropriate in certain cultures or climates)
- Skirts/trousers
- Sweater/sweatshirt
- Pajamas and slippers
- Poncho/rain jacket
- 1 light jacket
- 1 bathing suit
- 1 hat
- 1-2 nice outfits
- Winter coat, gloves, scarf, and hat (depending on location and season)

### **Medicine and toiletries:**

- Prescription medicine (carry copy of prescription)
- Toothbrush and toothpaste

- Soap and shampoo
- Comb and brush
- Sunscreen, moisturizers, and cosmetics
- Deodorant
- First aid kit
- Contraceptives and condoms
- Aspirin
- Tissues
- Tampons/pads
- Razors/blades
- Extra eyeglasses and sunglasses
- Extra contact lenses and cleaning solutions
- Tweezers, nail files/polish, etc.
- Towel/washcloth

**Documents:**

- Passport and visa(s) and photocopies
- Tickets and rail passes
- Hostel membership card
- Money belt or neck wallet
- Cash, traveler's checks, credit cards, ATM cards, calling card, etc.
- Copies of the above for reporting lost or stolen cards and traveler's checks
- Extra passport sized photographs

**Miscellaneous:**

- Watch (cheap, reliable)
- Camera and film
- Flashlight
- Address book, light weight stationery and envelopes
- Umbrella
- Luggage lock and togs
- Battery operated alarm clock
- Moist towelettes
- Batteries
- Adapter and voltage converter/appropriate plugs
- Small locks for backpacks or locking luggage to overhead train racks

Do not take expensive jewelry, luxury items, etc. which would mark you as a target for theft or which you might lose.

If you are someone who simply cannot function without a computer or needs ready access to one for your use, you should consider taking your laptop computer. You should realize, however, that there are risks

in transporting and storing the computer. Theft of laptop computers is becoming increasingly common. When traveling, keep your laptop with you at all times; never put it on the seat in front of you or underneath your seat. Make sure the computer is insured.

### **Flight and Baggage**

You should consider purchasing flight and luggage insurance. For more details, contact your insurance broker or travel agent.

Another option is to purchase your airline ticket with a major credit card. A few offer some degree of flight insurance. For this, you will need to check with the company or bank where you are a card-carrying member. An ISIC card offers a minimal amount of insurance for your luggage as well. A great website to visit is [insuremytrip.com](http://insuremytrip.com). It offers comparisons of many types of insurance options.

## **INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS**

### **E-mail**

E-mail is the favorite and easiest way to communicate with friends and family in the United States. Internet cafes are everywhere overseas and charge minimal fees.

### **Postal mail**

Postal mail or “snail mail” can be quite slow. If you need to send and/or receive packages, make sure you know where the nearest post office is and how it operates. You may also want to inquire about carrier services such as FedEx, DHL, and UPS. They will be more expensive for small items, but competitive for larger packages.

### **Telephone**

Should you or your parents wish to make a call from the U.S., the usual procedure is:

1. Dial the International Access Code: 011

2. Dial the country code (normally a 2 or 3 digit number)
3. Dial the city code (normally a 1 to 5 digit number)
4. Dial the local number abroad

You can get the country and city codes you need from any overseas operator or from the following web site ([www.embassyworld.com/directories/global\\_telephone.html](http://www.embassyworld.com/directories/global_telephone.html).)

For an operator-assisted call (i.e. person to person, collect, credit card, or billed to a third number), follow the instructions listed above, but use “01” instead of “011” for the International Access Code. The operator will then come on the line to ask for the information needed. It is also possible to dial direct from many locations overseas to the U.S. Should you wish to make a direct dial call to America from your study abroad location, simply dial the access code for the country from which you are calling plus the U.S. country code (always “1”) followed by the appropriate U.S. Area Code and number.

The Office of International Affairs recommends purchasing an international telephone card, which is available through most long distance phone companies. The benefit of using an international telephone card is that charges are based on American rates, making calls more economical for your family.

Furthermore, you may want to consider purchasing a cell phone. There are a wide array of prices and plans, including prepaid phones.

In essence, keep open as many lines of communication as possible. You will enjoy your experience abroad more if you are in touch with your family and friends.

## **EXPLORING CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

### **Fitting In**

Social customs differ greatly from one country to the next. It is impossible to give guidelines that are applicable everywhere. Nonetheless, you should act naturally and remain friendly, courteous, and dignified. Keep in mind that you are a guest in “someone else’s country” and act accordingly. If your mishaps are well intentioned, you are likely to be given the benefit of the doubt as a foreigner who is doing his or her best to fit in.

## **Politeness**

In many countries, social encounters are governed by a code of conduct that requires greater formality than we are accustomed to in America. Be prepared to offer a formal greeting to whomever you meet in your day-to-day activities.

## **Humor**

While each country has its own particular brand of humor, very few cultures appreciate the kind of “kidding” to which Americans are accustomed. Kidding comments, even when well intentioned, can be interpreted as unfriendly and inappropriate.

## **Speaking the language**

Most people will be extremely flattered by your efforts to communicate in their native language. Do not be intimidated if your language ability is limited. A note of caution: do your best to avoid slang expressions, “the sense of which may be difficult for a foreigner to master<sup>3</sup>.”

## **Physical Contact**

Physical contact, may not be understood by someone unfamiliar with the American idea of friendship. All cultures have different notions about social space, how to shake hands or wave farewell. Restraint is advisable until you learn the local customs.

## **A Special Note to Women**

Despite our personal beliefs about what women should have the right to do around the world, we need to reach a balance of maintaining our identity and respecting the culture we are visiting. Women face unique challenges as we travel abroad. While we are excited to meet new people, we also have to think about our personal safety. Understanding cultural differences in the areas of sex roles, verbal and non-verbal communication and the reputation of foreign women can empower us as we go abroad<sup>4</sup>.

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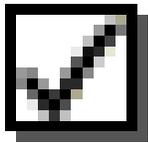
<sup>3</sup> IBID

<sup>4</sup> IBID

Some women have difficulty adjusting to attitudes they encounter overseas, in both public and private interactions between men and women. In some countries, it is not uncommon for women to be honked at, stared at, and aggressively addressed in other ways. American women are likely to receive this treatment, merely because they look differently and common misperceptions of them as loose. Simply follow the model of local women and ignore it. Avoid eye contact and friendly smiles with strangers. This may lead to unexpected invitations. You must learn the unwritten rules about what you can and cannot do overseas. Watch how the native women interact in their country.

### **Gay, Lesbian, or Bisexual Abroad**

It is important to be mindful of the laws and customs pertaining to homosexuality abroad. In some countries some individuals report feeling more accepted than in America; however, others report intense discrimination and harassment. To cope with this, you should talk with students who have previously traveled to the country you are planning to pursue your studies and consult the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission at [www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc](http://www.iglhrc.org/site/iglhrc).



### **PRE-DEPARTURE CHECK LIST**

#### **REQUIRED**

- Passport
  
- Visa, if one is required for your host country
  
- Money – Cash, traveler’s checks, credit and/or ATM cards
  
- Luggage – Check with airlines to determine size and weight limitations

- Insurance – Medical/Accident, trip cancellation, etc.
  
- Have you confirmed your travel arrangements?
  
- Provide the Office of International Affairs with the following documents:
  - Copy of your passport and visa, if one is required for your host country
  - Copy of your flight itinerary
  - Copy of your Travel Release form

## **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED**

- Guides & Maps – Just in case you want to travel within your host country.
  
- Language, Culture, & History – Study your host country.

## **A. RECOMMENDED**

- Passport Photo – Carry extras to obtain identity cards, bus passes, etc. while overseas.
  
- Copies of your passport – Make two copies (leave one with your family and take one with you) of your passport. This will help speed up the replacement time if your passport is lost or stolen.
  
- Foreign Currency – It is wise to have local currency with you upon arrival overseas for eating and catching taxis to your destination. Check with your bank about ordering your host country's currency prior to your departure.
  
- Safe Sack/Fannie Pack – Used to carry and conceal passport and money.

## **DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE GOING?**

The OIA created the following list to encourage its students and University employees to do in-depth research about the country they are visiting. Here are fifty basic questions about your host country and culture. They are not intended to be an inclusive list. Nevertheless, when you have the answers to the following fifty, you may consider yourself well beyond the beginning stage.

1. Who are the prominent people in the affairs (politics, athletics, religion, the arts, etc.) of your host country?
2. Who are the country's national heroes and heroines?
3. Can you recognize the national anthem?
4. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language?
5. What are the social and political implications of language usage?
6. What is the predominant religion? Is it a state religion? Have you read any of its sacred writings?
7. What are the most important religious observances and ceremonies? How regularly do people participate in them?
8. How do members of the predominant religion feel about other religions?
9. What are the most common forms of marriage ceremonies and celebrations?
10. What is the attitude toward divorce? Extra-marital relations? Plural marriage?
11. What is the attitude toward gambling?
12. What is the attitude toward drinking?
13. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or customers expected to bargain?
14. How the bargaining is conducted?
15. If, as a customer, you touch or handle merchandise for sale, will the storekeeper think you are knowledgeable, inconsiderate, within your rights, completely outside your rights, other?
16. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period? What is the customary time for visiting friends?
17. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared? What things are taboos in this society?
18. What is the usual dress for women? For men? Are slacks or shorts worn? If so, on what occasions? Do teenagers wear jeans?
19. Do hairdressers use techniques similar to those used by stylists in the United States? How much time do you need to allow for an appointment at the hairdresser?
20. What are the special privileges of age and/or gender?
21. If you are invited to dinner, should you arrive early? On time? Late? If late, how late?
22. What occasions would you present (or accept) gifts from people in the country?
23. What kind of gifts would you exchange?
24. What are the dating and/or courtship customs of the host culture?
25. How do people greet one another? Shake hands? Embrace or kiss? How do they leave one another? What does any variation from the usual greeting or leave taking signify?
26. If you were invited to a cocktail party, would you expect to find among the guests: foreign business people? Men only? Men and women? Local business people? Local politicians? National Politicians? Politicians' spouses? Teachers or professors? Bankers? Etc.
27. What are the important holidays and how are they observed?
28. What are the favorite leisure and recreational activities of adults? Teenagers? What sports are popular?
29. What kinds of television programs are shown? What social purposes do they serve?
30. What is the normal work schedule? How does it accommodate environmental or other conditions?

31. How will your financial position and living conditions compare with those of the majority of people living in this country?
32. What games do children play?
33. How are children disciplined at home? Are children usually present at social occasions or ceremonial occasions?
34. How does this society observe children's coming of age?
35. What kind of local public transportation is available? Do all classes of people use it?
36. Who has the right of way in traffic: vehicles, animals, pedestrians?
37. Is military training compulsory?
38. Are the largest circulation newspapers generally friendly in their attitude toward the United States?
39. What is the history of the relationships between this country and the United States?
40. How many people have emigrated from this country to the United States or other countries?
41. Are there many American expatriates living in this country?
42. What kinds of options do foreigners have in choosing a place to live?
43. What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?
44. What are the common home remedies for minor ailments? Where are medicines purchased?
45. Is education free? Is it compulsory?
46. In schools, are children segregated by race, caste, class, or gender? What kinds of schools are considered best: public, private, parochial?
47. In schools, how important is learning by rote?
48. How are children disciplined in school?
49. Where are the important universities of the country?
50. Are bathroom facilities different than in the U.S.?