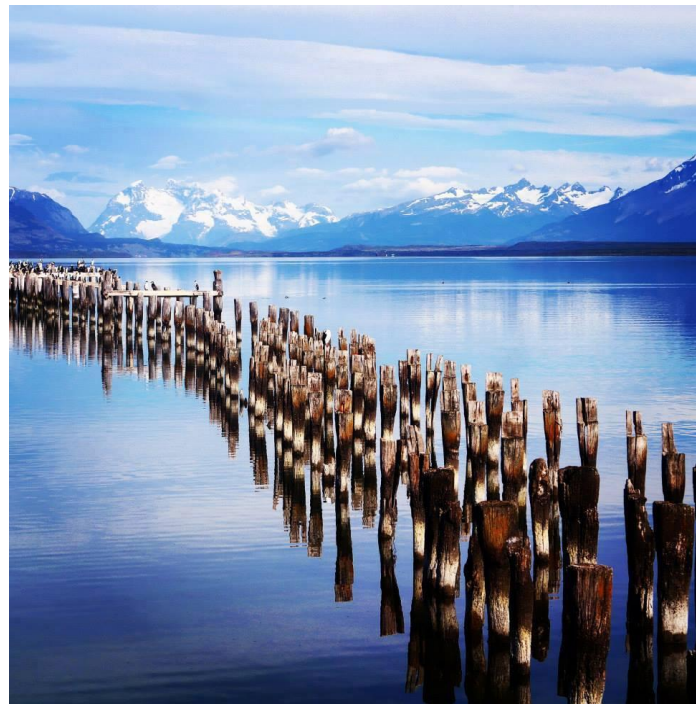


# STUDY ABROAD

# HANDBOOK



Drexel University



# A Letter from the Senior Director of Education Abroad

Dear future Dragons Abroad,

Congratulations on joining the small percentage of college students nationwide who turn their study abroad dreams into reality! We realize the effort you have put forth in the planning process thus far and applaud your dedication. While you may not have started packing yet, this handbook addresses important logistical and preparatory topics to help you prepare. We also suggest keeping it handy during your time abroad. While we have compiled accurate information, the world is a changing place, so we recommend doing your own research for the most recent information about your host location(s).

Countless Drexel Dragons have noted study abroad as their most impactful, transformative Drexel experience. We are confident that your international experience will offer many rewarding, enriching opportunities for academic, personal, and cultural growth. While we can prepare you for your departure, ultimately this experience belongs to you! We encourage you to cherish the exciting moments as well as the difficult ones – those beyond your comfort zone that challenge you to grow. This is a great time to revisit the goals you wrote about in your study abroad application and reflect on how you plan to maximize your time abroad.

I and the Education Abroad team wish you a safe and memorable time abroad and look forward to hearing about it when you return.

Let the countdown begin!

*Ahaji Schreffler*

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# Academics

While we hope that you travel and have a great time abroad, remember that this is in every way an academic pursuit. Neglecting your studies and putting assignments off until the last minute will indeed reflect on your Drexel transcript. It's possible employers and graduate programs will request to see your study abroad transcript. Be sure to manage your time wisely and keep up with the rigors of your courses. Also, ensure that all the courses you complete at your host university have been properly approved by the appropriate department at Drexel. Failure to complete all pre-approvals will result in academic holds and delay in graduation.

## *Course Approvals*

*\*This section applies to Exchange, CIEE, EPA, AUR, & AUC programs only*

Prior to your departure, your Academic Planning Form (APF) will be uploaded to your study abroad account. Follow the steps below to ensure that you receive appropriate credit for courses taken abroad.

**ALL COURSES YOU TAKE ABROAD WILL BE APPLIED TO YOUR DREXEL TRANSCRIPT.**

This means that "fun" or "elective" courses also require an approved Drexel equivalent and will be entered onto your Drexel transcript. While abroad, you must take between 12 and 20 Drexel equivalent credits.

- ❑ Log in to your [study abroad account](#)
- ❑ Review course approvals on your APF
- ❑ Ensure that all courses you plan to take abroad are approved
- ❑ If any courses still need approval, log into the Course Request App to submit courses for review (Exchange, CIEE, EPA, AUR, & AUC only).
- ❑ Upon your host institutions add/drop period, ensure all your courses have been approved
- ❑ If your course report is not turned in by the given deadline, a **hold** will be placed on your Drexel account

**STUDENTS WHO ARE STILL MISSING COURSE APPROVALS BY WEEK 3 OF THEIR RETURN TERM ARE SUBJECT TO BE PLACED ON ACADEMIC HOLD.**

Please find a sample course report for your reference at the end of this section.

**ALWAYS USE YOUR DREXEL EMAIL DOMAIN TO REQUEST COURSE APPROVALS.**

## *Grading*

Depending on the program, you will receive either Standard US letter grades (ex. A- = A-) or CR/NCR denotation (ex. A = CR, F = NCR).

## Free standing programs

- You will receive a letter grade that is noted on your Drexel transcript
- The grade you receive will be calculated in your Drexel GPA

## Exchange programs/non-American universities

- Recorded as credit (CR) or no credit (NCR) on your Drexel transcript
- Grades equivalent to a "C" or above will receive credit
- Grades equivalent to a "C-" or below will **not** receive credit
- For a list of the minimum grade needed to pass at your host university, consult our online [Grading Chart](#)
- Drexel references the national standard [WES Conversion System](#) for some international grade conversions
- The grades you receive will NOT factor into your Drexel GPA
- OGE follows Drexel's [CR/NCR policy](#)

## Independent Study Program

- Courses taken abroad will be recorded as transfer credit on your Drexel transcript
- Academic advisors pre-approve all courses and determine how transfer credit will be evaluated
- Transfer grades will not be reflected on your transcript and will NOT affect your Drexel GPA

## *Drexel Registration*

**All students** will be registered for a zero-credit ABRD location CRN denoting your host study abroad country/ies. Upon completion of your term abroad, this code will be recorded as "CR".

**For exchange programs, AUR, AUC, CIEE, and EPA:** You will register yourself for 12 placeholder credits. They will be removed once you have finished your program and the OGE receives your official transcript.

You will register yourself for four 3-credit ABRD placeholders, totaling 12 credits during your Drexel time ticket. Upon registration, you must reach out to your academic advisor to ensure that placeholders are assigned appropriately in Degreeworks. Degreeworks may need to be adjusted should you change courses at the host institution. The 12 placeholder credits do not determine how many credits you take at your host institution. Their temporary purpose is to maintain your full time Drexel status while abroad, until your host transcript is received.

For **many free-standing programs (such as FIE, LCF ICDS,& MSID) and most summer programs**, courses are all pre-approved for DU credit and OGE will register you for those you pre-selected. You will be asked to verify your registration in DrexelOne to ensure the courses are correct.

## *Academic Progress*

We advise you to review the academic progress guidelines at [Drexel Central](#), especially if you receive financial aid. These rules still apply while studying abroad. Seniors should be especially cognizant of your grades and transfer credits as any issues may delay your eligibility for graduation. If you are studying abroad your senior year, you are required to complete a Senior Form prior to leaving for your program.

## *Academics Abroad*

While abroad you will notice that teaching and grading styles can be very different from the American system. Class attendance may not be mandatory, and your final grade could be dependent on only one or two large papers or exams. **This is not permission to neglect your studies.** Often your visa status is contingent upon your full-time attendance at a university and missing lectures may heavily affect performance on a final exam. Local students will have already developed a routine to pace out their studies and have a better understanding of the difficulty of the class. Remember that part of your education abroad is learning to appreciate and understand a different approach to academics. Be sure to embrace classes as part of the entire experience as this is a once in a lifetime opportunity!

## *Transcript*

All final print transcripts from your host institution should be sent to the following address. We also accept electronic

transcripts sent directly to our office. Please ensure that your host university knows and understands that only transcripts received at our office will be considered official.

Drexel University  
Office of Global Engagement  
Academic Building  
101 N. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 201  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
U.S.A

Transcripts from your host university can take anywhere between 3 weeks to 5 months after completion of the term to arrive at our office. Please check with your host university's international office to confirm the processing time. Once received, your transcript will be marked received in your study abroad account and your grades will be processed with the registrar in 6 - 10 weeks. The speediness of your courses being processed is contingent upon the completion of your course equivalency approvals.



## Language Placement

If you opt to enroll in a modern language course for the first time at Drexel or abroad and have any previous academic or personal experience with your chosen language (took courses in middle or high school or speak it at home), you are required to take a placement exam. To maximize your language learning, you must be placed appropriately. Placement exams require no preparation and are assigned by your academic advisor. It is an ethical violation of Drexel's academic honor code to refuse the exam or to register below your placement level. For more details about language credit, consult the [Modern Language Credit Policy](#).

## Changes in Study Plan

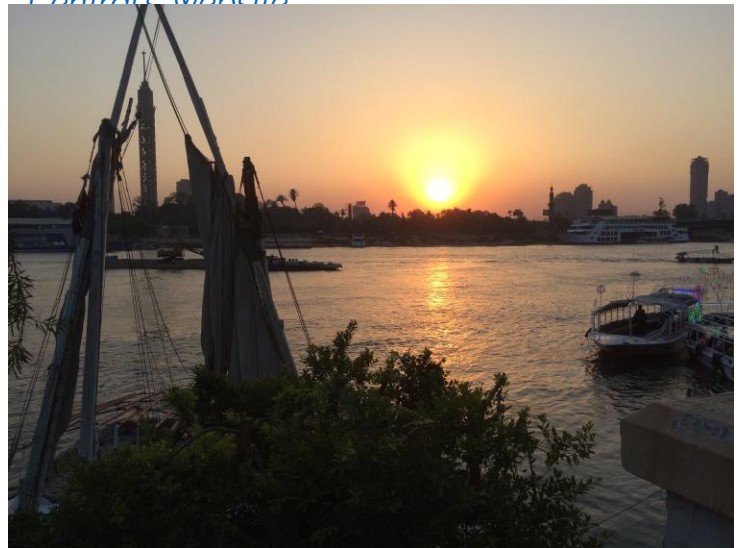
Any changes you make in your study plan including but not limited to leaving early, extending your stay, late course withdrawals, etc. must be relayed directly from you to the Office of Global Engagement. This will ensure that any issues that arise are dealt with in a timely manner. **If you intend to graduate a term earlier than originally planned, it's imperative that you inform your education abroad advisor.**

## Course Plan of Study (CPOS) and Study Abroad

The U.S. Department of Education requires that institutions only distribute federal and state financial aid funds for courses that apply to a student's specific degree

program. *Study Abroad is no exception. You will need to take at least 12 credits that will apply towards your degree. The 12 placeholder credits (where applicable) should reflect the degree requirements you are enrolled in while abroad. Work with your academic advisor to ensure your Degreeworks is accurate and inform them of any academic changes.*

For more CPOS details, please visit [Drexel Central's website](#)





## Course Report Template



October 15, 2023

Dear Registrar,

Enclosed please find a copy of the official transcript for **INSERT YOUR NAME (INSERT YOUR ID#)** from their study abroad experience.

I have enclosed the student's pre-approval documentation including any supporting emails or additional documents. The pre-approval form also gave permission for courses to be taught under the study abroad rubric, thus we should be able to make the catalog level change.

Please retroactively change the student's transcript for **Fall 2023 (202315)** term to reflect the courses taken overseas.

Thus the transcript will read:

**For Fall (202315):**

**Please remove the 12 credits of place holders.**

**STUDY ABROAD COUNTRY COURSE CODE, CR**

Drexel Course Equivalent Code	Drexel Course Equivalent Name	Amount of Drexel Credits	Equal To	Study Abroad Course Code	Study Abroad Course Name
			=		
			=		
			=		
			=		
			=		
			=		

Total credits attempted: **xx credits**

Total credits completed:

As always, thank you for your continued support of the Study Abroad programs. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Drexel Study Abroad

**Cc: INSERT THE NAME OF YOUR ACADEMIC ADVISOR HERE**  
**INSERT EMAIL ADDRESS OF YOUR ADVISOR HERE**



# Health And Safety

Drexel makes the health, safety, and security of its students the highest priority. As is true in Philadelphia, Drexel cannot guarantee your safety while you are abroad but rather, we aim to provide you with the resources and information that you may need to prepare for your time abroad and make smart, well-informed decisions to greatly lower your risks while overseas.

It will be hard to enjoy any experience without good health. Each person will react differently to their environment abroad. For this reason, pay very close attention to your physical and mental well-being when you arrive and begin to adjust to your surroundings. Locals have natural immunities against the bacteria and viral infections common in your host cities whereas many travelers do not. Try to give yourself time to settle into a routine before going out and over-exerting yourself.

While Drexel faculty and staff may not always be right there with you, Drexel is always thinking about issues of safety and security that could affect your experience. Drexel's Global Safety Director, and Security regularly monitors the world for areas of concern for our program participants and will share relevant information with you. But

as the person who will be living in another country, you also have a responsibility to inform yourself about health and safety issues in your region and prepare for your time abroad.

## *Health Preparations*

Before travelling abroad, we recommend visiting your doctor, dentist, and optometrist. Inform your physician of your study abroad destinations as they can provide additional information to you on health issues or recommended vaccinations for your location. Healthcare quality will vary from location to location, so it is best to know that you are in good health before you leave.



If you are taking any prescription medications, research carefully if your host country or countries that you intend to visit, have any restrictions on certain medications or ingredients. Be sure to obtain an adequate supply to cover the entire period of study abroad and take a copy of your prescriptions with you. It is also a good idea to take a small supply of your preferred cold medication and an anti-diarrhea medication to have on hand in case you get sick abroad. While we hope you will not need to see a doctor while abroad, it's best to know your options in advance of where to go. Typically, this information is shared with you in your on-site orientation, but in the event of an emergency, you can contact On Call Emergency Assistance (+1-603-952-2038) for a referral to local doctors and assistance with translation if needed.

To understand the particular health concerns of your study abroad location, a good place to start is the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website](#). You should review carefully the recommended vaccinations and be sure that your immunizations are up to date.

## *Self-Care and Wellness*

Attending to your self-care and wellness will positively contribute to your experience abroad and help you to adjust to the challenges that you may experience as you navigate a new environment. Even very simple things like being sure that you are eating well, hydrating, and getting enough sleep will

help you to feel more comfortable in your new environment. Just as you think carefully about what items you need to pack in your luggage, think through the self-care strategies that you will be able to utilize while abroad, especially because some of the ways you deal with stress in Philadelphia, like going to the gym or getting together with a close friend, might not be as accessible in your location abroad. There are many [resources](#) that are available to you, including a variety of virtual resources.

One great resource is 7 Cups, an online, on-demand emotional health service that you can access through your smartphone or computer. It is available 24/7 and has multilingual listeners across the globe. You can access it [here](#). When you first enter the site, you will need to create a username and password, but your personal information is confidential and will not be shared. Consider creating a username and password before going abroad. The Education Abroad team has also created an exercise, "[Developing Self-Care Strategies for your Time Abroad](#)" that will help you to discover some ways to include self-care and wellness in your experience abroad.



## On Call Emergency Assistance

All Drexel students who are participating in a university-affiliated international activity are covered for emergency assistance under the Drexel On Call International policy, but it is important to understand that **this is not international health insurance**. It is designed to help you get the appropriate care in the event of an emergency, but you are responsible for the costs of the medical care. You can access information using [On Call's website](#). On Call can assist you in a variety of circumstances including but not limited to:

If you have opted to purchase travel or property insurance on large items such as your laptop or trip cancellation protection, review how to handle a claim before you depart. Many homeowners' insurance policies contain a clause about the coverage extending worldwide.

## COVID-19 International Travel Guidance

Education Abroad works closely with partner organizations and university exchange partners to understand the impact of COVID-19 on your experience abroad. While great progress has been made in the United States, the pandemic continues to affect countries differently, and foreign governments may have mandatory quarantines, travel restrictions, closed borders and implement restrictions with little notice, even in destinations that were previously considered low risk. Drexel University strongly recommends that students be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before going abroad. Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to acquire and transmit COVID-19. However, international travel poses additional risks and even fully vaccinated travelers may be at increased risk for becoming infected with viral variants and possibly transmitting COVID-19.

Medical Assistance	Security Services	Travel Assistance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emergency Medical Transport</li> <li>• Medical Monitoring</li> <li>• 24-hour Nurse Helpline</li> <li>• Medical, Dental, and Pharmacy Referrals</li> <li>• Dispatch of Medicine, Physician or Nurse</li> <li>• Emergency Return Home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political Evacuation</li> <li>• Natural Disaster Evacuation</li> <li>• Secure Transportation</li> <li>• Online Portal, Including Destination Information</li> <li>• Security Alerts and Warnings</li> <li>• Electronic Traveler Tracking</li> <li>• Disaster/Crisis Management</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worldwide Legal Assistance</li> <li>• Lost Luggage Assistance</li> <li>• Emergency Travel Funds Assistance</li> <li>• 24/7 Emergency Travel Arrangements</li> <li>• Translation and Interpreter Assistance</li> <li>• Embassy and Consular Relations</li> <li>• Lost/Stolen Travel Documents Assistants</li> </ul>

**The Drexel-dedicated line for On Call International is +1-603-952-2038.**

Store this number in your phone immediately!

Vaccinated travelers should still take steps to protect themselves and others, as we all must work together to support the public health.

## Before you travel

As you prepare for your departure, review current requirements for entry and required self-isolation in your destination. While you may not be asked for it, it is a good idea for fully vaccinated travelers to have your COVID-19 vaccination card with you and to make a copy of this in case it is lost. Some locations may require documented proof of a negative SARS Co-V2 PCR test 72 hours or less before arrival.

Other destinations may require proof of vaccination. If you have connecting flights, make note of any country requirements for transit travel. Be prepared to comply with all requirements. Here are a few resources:

- [US Embassies COVID-19 information](#)
- [IATA TravelCentre](#)
- Check guidance from your airline carrier

## Drexel University strongly recommends that students do not travel if:

- **You are sick with fever, cough, or any of the symptoms of COVID-19.**
- **You have recently tested positive for COVID-19.**
- **You have had close contact with a person with COVID-19 in the past 7 days (Even if fully vaccinated you may want to self monitor for 7 days before traveling).**
- **You are waiting for the results of a COVID viral test.**

## During travel

Air travel requires spending time in security lines and airport terminals, which can bring you

in close contact with other people and frequently touched surfaces. Most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air circulates and is filtered on airplanes, but you should continue to take precautions during your journey.

- Consider wearing a mask at all times in the airport/on the plane and you may want to consider wiping down your seat and tray table with a disinfectant wipe.
- Try to select non-stop options if possible or limit the number of stops



Guidance for using public transportation such as buses, trolleys, subways or trains:

- Consider wearing a mask on public transit.
- Practice social distancing and avoid crowded areas as much as possible. Consider traveling at non-peak times, leaving seats/rows between you and other passengers if possible.
- Follow all posted guidance and instructions provided by transit authorities. Look for social distancing instructions or physical guides, such as signs indicating where to stand or sit to remain at least 6 feet apart from others.
- Wash your hands thoroughly or use hand sanitizer after using public transport.

## Upon arrival

Once you reach your study abroad destination, it is important for you to complete any self-isolation and testing requirements in place and to familiarize yourself with the local and program protocols that will need to be followed during your time abroad. During your on-site orientation, you will likely receive a lot of information from the local coordinators on COVID-19 regulations and restrictions including what to do if you have any symptoms. Drexel expects all of our students to adhere to all public health and host program requirements. Failure to do so could have serious repercussions for you in your location abroad and could also be considered a violation of Drexel's Code of Student Conduct. If vaccinated, your level of protection is high; however, it is

not 100% effective, and you should continue to wash your hands frequently and wear masks when you are indoors with others whose vaccination status is uncertain.



## Returning to the U.S./Your Home Country

As of April 2023, there are not U.S. government regulations for re-entry into the United States. We strongly recommend checking airline requirements as well as the U.S. Department of State and the Center for Disease Control websites to ensure you are in compliance. If you are returning to another country besides the U.S., investigate carefully the testing or entry requirements. Please know that Drexel University is not monitoring entry/exit regulations for home countries other than the United States. All students should consider getting tested 3 to 5 days after you arrive home and monitor yourself for symptoms.

As Dragons have done throughout the pandemic, we have worked together to protect each other and our communities, and we know that you will continue to be careful and thoughtful in your actions while you are abroad. For more guidance on COVID-19 and Travel, please visit the website for the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://www.cdc.gov).



## *Insurance Information*

**Drexel requires that all students participating in a study abroad program have adequate international health insurance coverage.** Have a copy of your personal health insurance policy with you along with your insurance card. Review in advance what you are covered for abroad so you are aware of the procedures in case of an emergency. If you have purchased the Drexel student health plan through Aetna, that plan includes international coverage. **It is your responsibility to make sure that your medical insurance will cover any injuries or illnesses sustained while you are overseas and to keep all medical documents and report it to your insurance company directly to file a claim.**

Please note that the procedure for obtaining health care abroad can be very different than in the United States, and hospitals will not accept your insurance card and may not accept a credit card. You will need to pay for the services and submit a claim to your insurance company for reimbursement. It is important to get detailed reports from your doctor, describing the diagnosis and care provided and receipts for this care. Cost of health care varies greatly depending on the country you are in, so be sure to know and understand your level of coverage before going abroad.

If your health insurance will not cover you while you are outside of the United States or you have concerns about the level of coverage, you will need to purchase a short-term study abroad policy. In choosing the best plan for your needs, you will need

to do some research on costs, level of coverage, deductibles and claim processing. Some providers of health insurance specifically for study abroad are: CISI, Compass Insurance, GeoBlue, and iNext. For more information, visit the [Office of Global Engagement Health and Safety website](#).

## *Allergies*

While abroad, there will be many differences to grow accustomed to in your new country, one of those being allergens. Prominent air allergens vary from region to region and depend on the local vegetation and weather. Various countries also differ in their regulation of air pollution. If in an area where there are lenient pollution policies, your allergies may be affected. If you are allergy prone or sensitive to environmental stimulants, be sure to research your host country. Before you arrive in your host country, make sure that you have the appropriate allergy medication and the contact information of a local doctor.





## *Food and Water*

Exploring new foods is a great way to experience a new culture but may also bring with it some new challenges. It is important to understand the food and water quality in your host country. If you are on a restricted diet or are vegetarian or vegan, you should explore your food options in your host country. In some countries, it will be fairly easy to maintain a particular diet, but in others, this may require some planning and research in advance. Student guidebooks such as the "Let's Go" or "Lonely Planet" series will typically provide some information on eating and drinking options while abroad. Plan ahead and be flexible in your approach. Remember that part of the experience is to learn about the culture and practices of another country which may be very different from your own.

## *Clean Drinking Water*

Here in the US, we frequently take clean drinking water for granted. We don't think twice before drinking water served at a restaurant or before grabbing a glass of water from the faucet. While abroad, however, you do need to be concerned about drinking water that might contain disease-causing microorganisms, especially in less developed countries. Typically, bottled-water is safe for consumption, so you may be buying and drinking this more than you are used to. Be sure to research your country before departure to determine whether the water is safe to drink. You can go to [the CDC website](#) for information specific to your host country.

## *Mental Health and Disability Services*

The Office of Global Engagement is committed to supporting our students as they prepare for study abroad, and we encourage you to be as open as possible with your advisors about your needs or concerns. Our office works closely with the [Office of Disability Resources \(ODR\)](#) to facilitate equal access for students when it can be reasonably arranged. Since the benefits of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may not follow students abroad, any student who may need accommodation should speak with ODR and their education abroad advisor early. Should you qualify for disability services through ODR, you are encouraged to discuss support or accommodation needs with your education abroad advisor in advance of your departure. Mental health conditions that are successfully managed here at Drexel may flare up unexpectedly in a new environment. Because of this, we encourage you to be as proactive as possible about your potential support needs for an experience abroad.

Just as cultures differ, so does the degree of access and readily available disability services in the many countries and communities a student might consider for their study abroad experience. The key for any study abroad participant is *flexibility* and a *proactive approach*. After speaking with your education abroad advisor, students are strongly encouraged to reference [Mobility International](#) for assistance in finding overseas support services.

For a list of questions to consider regarding curriculum, transportation, housing, medical care and auxiliary aides, service animals, and attitudes about disabilities, please visit our [Accessibility Abroad website](#).

## *Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*

Studying abroad is for all students regardless of their sexual orientation and gender identity. Though studying abroad is primarily about your academic growth, it's important to choose a program that will support you personally as well. Note: we will be using the term LGBTQIA+ to denote sexual or gender identities, though the acronym may not include your personal identity. Please contact us if you have any questions or concerns.

When choosing a study abroad program as an LGBTQIA+ student, environmental factors may play an important role in where you go. While LGBTQIA+ life exists everywhere, different countries or institutions have different laws, policies, and cultural attitudes toward diverse sexual and gender identities. Making sure you are prepared for the different attitudes and laws in your new environment is an important part of having a positive, satisfying and safe experience.

Sexual norms and male-female dynamics can vary greatly by country, so you should be especially careful in open, social situations. Please investigate in advance your host country's acceptance of your sexuality and plan accordingly for your time abroad. While the US is fairly accepting of LGBTQIA+ relationships, in some cultures

this is taboo and may even be against the law. Information and resources for students can be accessed on our [Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity page](#).

Should you need additional support in gathering information and resources, you should contact your education abroad advisor or the [Student Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#).

## *Drugs and Alcohol*

Alcohol consumption norms abroad can be quite different from the US, and in many countries, students will be of legal drinking age. While enjoying a glass of wine with your cheese, or having a pint with the locals can be part of the cultural experience, please keep in mind that excessive drinking is considered very bad form in many countries and often leads to poor decision-making that can have serious repercussions, including deportation. While studying abroad, you remain a Drexel University student, subject to the University Code of Conduct for students, and are expected to always represent Drexel well. Sometimes things that seem funny after too many drinks may violate local cultural norms and reflect poorly on you, the University, and the United States.



Drugs are illegal in most countries of the world, and penalties for use and possession can be quite severe, including incarceration. In some countries, a person can be detained for several weeks just waiting for a hearing on suspected drug possession charges. In addition to potential issues with local law enforcement, problems with drug or alcohol use abroad will be reported to the Drexel Conduct Board, and students could be subject to probation, suspension, or expulsion. In short, it's not worth it. Don't do it.

## *Student Conduct*

As a representative of the University, you are expected to conduct yourself in a responsible manner both in Philadelphia and abroad. Any conduct issues that are reported from an international partner to the Office of Global Engagement will have to be reported to Drexel Student Conduct. This includes academic and behavioral issues. As a result of an issue abroad, you could be subject to probation, suspension, or expulsion.

## *Department of State*

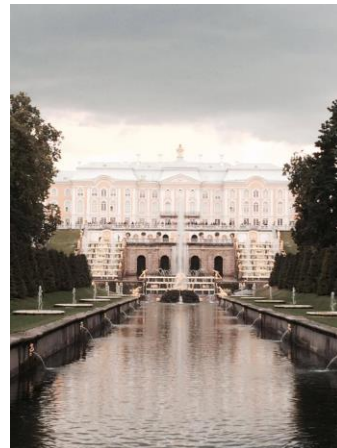
Any country in the world, including the United States, can be an unpredictable place, and you should take pro-active measures to ensure your safety while living abroad. Know in advance the safety concerns in your country by reviewing the Country Information sheets and Travel Advisories available on the [Department of State website](#). The most common safety issue for many travelers is petty crime. Just as you would in Philadelphia, be aware of your surroundings, cautious about venturing

into unknown areas and take action to safeguard your personal belongings. Women, especially, should be careful about travelling by themselves into unknown areas or heading home solo late at night.

Prior to departure, you should program emergency numbers into your cell phone for:

- ✓ US or Your Country's Consulate on location
- ✓ On site director/contact
- ✓ On Call Travel Emergency Assistance: 603-952-2038
- ✓ Drexel Public Safety: 215-895-2222
- ✓ Local equivalent to 911

**US citizens should complete the [STEP Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#).** This program pushes out country or region-specific information to travelers that may be helpful in times of unexpected events or developing situations. International students studying at Drexel may also register their travel in STEP and are encouraged to do so in order to receive notifications about events that may affect them while abroad. Citizens of other countries should also explore their Consulate webpage for similar registration programs.





# Emergencies

Issues that you can normally handle at home can seem much more daunting when in another country. Staying calm and rational will always help in an emergency. During your on-site orientation, find out how you should proceed in the event of an emergency. Understanding where to go or how to get in contact with program staff could make all the difference in a critical situation. In the event of a large-scale emergency abroad, please check in with the Office of Global Engagement as soon as is reasonably possible. We will likely be trying to reach you to ensure that you are safe.

Below is a list of procedures to guide you in the chance that you are faced with an emergency abroad. You will also be given an emergency card for your wallet at pre-departure orientation. Keep this easily accessible during your time abroad. **In all instances, On Call Emergency Assistance or the Office of Global Engagement should be one of the first calls you make!**

## Medical Emergency

- ✓ If it is a dire medical emergency, call the emergency number of the country you are in. **Confirm the country's emergency number prior to arrival, as 911 is specific to the U.S.**
- ✓ Contact your host university or their international office. Someone local will be able to assist you much faster than

- family back home.
- ✓ Contact On Call Emergency Assistance at +1-603-952-2038
- ✓ Reach out to your family
- ✓ Call Drexel Public Safety at +1-215-895-2222 and ask to be connected to a member of the OGE Team. We can be a great resource and help ease the process.
- ✓ Once stable, contact your health insurance provider to file a claim and follow up on any paperwork needed.

## Legal Emergency

- ✓ If you have gotten in trouble with the law, contact your host university right away to see if the issue can be resolved internally.
- ✓ Contact the American Embassy in your country to report the issue and request their assistance; if you are not a US Citizen, you may consider contacting your country's embassy for support, but should be cautious in doing so if your alleged crime would put you in further jeopardy in your home country.
- ✓ Contact your family and discuss if you will require legal representation

- ✓ Call Drexel Public Safety at +1-215-895-2222 and ask to be connected to a member of the OGE Team. We can be a great resource and help ease the process.
- ✓ Contact On Call Emergency Assistance at +1-603-952-2038 for legal referrals and translators
- ✓ **Remember that you are a guest in another country and subject to all the laws of that nation. Legal repercussions of drug use are typically much more severe overseas than in the States!**

## *Theft*

- ✓ Report the theft to the local police and get a copy of the police report
- ✓ Report the incident to your local program or university coordinator
- ✓ Contact On Call Emergency Assistance at +1-603-952-2038
- ✓ Call your credit card companies and the U.S. embassy if your passport was stolen
- ✓ Contact your insurance if you have coverage protection on your items

## *Sexual Assault*

- ✓ If you are the victim of sexual assault or attempted sexual assault, contact On Call Emergency Assistance at +1-603-952-2038 for guidance on how to proceed. They can provide a referral for a doctor examination and preventative care, guidance on local laws and support resources.
- ✓ Contact American Citizen Services in the US Embassy for additional guidance and

support.

- ✓ With guidance from the US Embassy, consider filing a police report. Please note that in some countries, protocols for sexual assault can be vastly different from what one would experience in the US so it is critical to seek guidance from the Embassy or On Call first.
- ✓ Call Drexel Public Safety at +1-215-895-2222 and ask to be connected to a member of the OGE Team. We can be a great resource and help ease the process. Study Abroad will report the incident to Drexel's Title IX team that can provide additional support.
- ✓ The [Drexel Counseling Center](#) is still available to you abroad

## *Mental Health Emergencies*

- ✓ If you are feeling depressed or upset always know that there is someone you can talk to. The international office at your host institution will be a great resource as they have dealt with and understand students in your position.
- ✓ The [Drexel Counseling Center](#) is still available to you abroad
- ✓ Your study abroad advisor may also be a good confidant as they may be able to pinpoint what you are going through, whether it be anxiety about living in a new country, culture shock or fear of the unknown. We have all studied abroad ourselves and may know how you feel!
- ✓ On Call Emergency Assistance (+1-603-952-2038) can help guide you to local mental health care professionals.

## *Natural Disaster/Political Events/Terrorism*

- ✓ If event is ongoing or evolving, shelter in place and/or follow instructions from local authorities. If you are far from your residency or a program building, hotels, stores or restaurants may be good shelter in place locations.
- ✓ Follow instructions from local authorities or program coordinators on next steps or when you can resume regular movements or activities.
- ✓ Check in with program coordinators, family and Office of Global Engagement (+1-215-571-3558) as soon as possible. In

the event of a large-scale incident, Study Abroad will try to reach out to you for a wellness check and to offer additional guidance.

- ✓ The [Drexel Counseling Center](#) is still available to you abroad

**Update your contact information in your Study Abroad account so that we have a way of contacting you in case of an emergency.**





# Preparation For Departure

## Packing

No matter how much this is stressed, some of you will overpack. This is understandable as many of you are preparing for a several months abroad, however it is not feasible to take with you all the things you would normally have at Drexel. Most airlines have luggage limitations and international carriers often will not accept luggage exceeding 50 lbs. Frequently, only one checked bag is allowed per person; however, some airlines allow 2 free checked bags. Be sure to research the luggage limitations of your airline and weigh your luggage before you go. Keep in mind that most household electronics will be better off purchased in your host country and often regular toiletries such as shampoo and soap will also be available abroad. You will also inevitably be carrying back a lot more than you began with, so make sure to begin light!

In terms of clothing, it is also highly recommended that you research the cultural norms of your host country. In other parts of the world spaghetti straps can be seen as overly revealing and basketball shorts are considered inappropriate daily wear. **Wearing clothing that reflects the local culture not only shows respect but also makes you less conspicuous as a tourist.**

- ✓ Bring travel adapter, converter, chargers
- ✓ Keep all valuable items at home
- ✓ Pack clothes that are versatile
- ✓ Bring a smaller backpack for short trips
- ✓ Bring gifts from home for new friends
- ✓ Put a change of clothes in your carry-on
- ✓ Pack important docs in your carry-on
- ✓ Clothes dryers are often not used outside of the US
- ✓ Medications should be clearly labeled
- ✓ Prescription medicine should be in your carry-on
- ✓ Pack a few of your favorite US snacks
- ✓ Pack clothes without large US brand logos
- ✓ Avoid packing blow-dryer, straightening/ curling iron, etc. – they often break due to voltage
- ✓ Bring stomach, flu and pain meds
- ✓ Photocopy credits cards front and back
- ✓ Photocopy passport, keep separate from original
- ✓ Check the weather before departing
- ✓ Check embassy site for prescription drug regulations
- ✓ Allow room for purchase of gifts
- ✓ Don't wear anything too flashy
- ✓ Keep \$20-\$50 cash on you separate from your wallet
- ✓ Keep a copy of your arrival address in your carry-on and checked luggage
- ✓ Research your country before packing
- ✓ PACK LIGHT!

# Preparation for Departure

## *PERSONAL DOCUMENTS*

**In case of emergencies, you should always have photocopies of all pertinent documents. Make copies of the front and back so that all the information is readily available. Keep one copy with you on your trip and leave a copy at home with your family.**

### Passport

Treat your passport as you would your most valuable item. Always know where it is and keep it in a safe hiding place in your room while abroad. Store your photocopy of your passport in a separate place. Your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your planned return so make sure to verify before departure. In many locations, for your day-to-day activities, it is recommended that you leave your passport in your residency and just take a photocopy with you. Local coordinators can advise on if this is an appropriate practice in your host country.

Report a lost or stolen passport immediately to On Call Emergency Assistance and your home country Consulate or Embassy nearest you. You can find a list of locations at <http://www.usembassy.gov/>. Theft of a passport should also be reported to local police.

If you do not yet have a passport, now is the time to apply! Visit the U.S. Department of State Passport and International Travel website, or a local post office. Processing time typically takes 8-12 weeks or longer.

### Visa

A visa is a formal document granted by the

government of the country you are entering that gives you permission to stay in the country for a given amount of time. Each country has its own regulations so be sure to check the [US Department of State](#) if you are U.S. citizen to see if a visa is mandatory. For international students, please check with your own government to find the proper visa procedures and inform International Student and Scholar Services of your intent to leave the US to avoid visa issues.

If your visa is placed in your passport, make photocopies of the visa as well. Confirm that all the information on it is 100% accurate to avoid any issues at customs. It is also advisable that you have access to all of the documents that you needed for the original visa application available to you while you are abroad.

### Student ID and ISIC

It is wise to have multiple forms of ID with you. Aside from your driver's license, you should also bring your Drexel student card for additional photo identification and carry your host university's student ID wherever you go.

The **International Student Identity Card** (ISIC) while not mandatory, is a great item to purchase before you leave the U.S. This card can be purchased online [here](#) and costs approximately \$25. It is widely recognized and accepted throughout the world as a valid student ID and can grant you numerous discounts on flights, museums, attractions and even shopping. The card can also provide you with limited repatriation insurance if purchased in the U.S.



# Preparation for Departure

## Itinerary

Be sure to pack a copy of all contacts at your host country in your carry-on luggage. If applicable, have any names and addresses written in the local language, or multiple languages if you are going to a multilingual location. Have phone numbers of your university's contact person available. Keep your family, friends, and the Drexel Education Abroad office informed about any side travel plans you have so we know where to reach you in case of an emergency.

## **LOGISTICS BEFORE LEAVING**

Below are points to follow up on prior to your departure. As many of you may not have lived abroad before, there are certain aspects that will be difficult to facilitate while overseas. Go through the list that follows and make sure you have taken care of these items.

## U.S. Taxes, FAFSA, and Absentee Voting

Some of you may be abroad during the income tax, FAFSA, and voting deadlines. Remember that you will still need to file all necessary documents by the designated dates. Bring along any documents you may need to complete these tasks or do as much of it in advance as possible to reduce your stress while abroad.

- ✓ You can access IRS filing information on <http://www.irs.gov/>,
- ✓ FAFSA instructions on <http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
- ✓ Absentee voting information at <http://www.fvap.gov/>. **If you intend to vote while you are away, make sure that you have registered for an absentee ballot in advance. You may**

**need to contact your state and local authorities if you want to vote in those elections.**

## Financial

Bills still need to get paid whether you are home or overseas. Make sure you have an easy way to do so or have set up automatic billing to not fall behind.

- ✓ Pay all fees on your DrexelOne account before you leave. Check to see if you have any outstanding balance that may rack up late fees or place you on a financial hold.
- ✓ If you have a hold on your account, the Office of Global Engagement will not be able to register you for necessary study abroad academic coding.
- ✓ Check to see if all financial aid documents and disbursements have been arranged.
- ✓ Check the dates on your credit and debit cards to ensure that they will not expire while you are abroad.
- ✓ Pin numbers outside of the U.S. may have a set number of digits. Typically, Europe uses 4 digits and Asia uses 6. Verify with your bank to see if you have to change your debit card pin to reflect your host country's pin numbers.
- ✓ Consider granting power of attorney to your parents or a trusted family member in case you need assistance with managing bank account or other issues while you are abroad.
- ✓ Confirm the currency conversion rate before you go and ensure you have enough funds in your account to support your spending abroad.

# Preparation for Departure

- ✓ Contact your credit and debit card companies and let them know of your travel plans. Your bank may lock your account and ban you from making withdrawals and purchases if they detect what seems like fraudulent activity. Save yourself the headache and let them know what countries you will be visiting in advance. Also confirm with them how much international transaction fees are when you withdraw money or make purchases on your card. Some banks have partnerships around the world that will help you save on withdrawal fees.
- ✓ We suggest setting up auto-pay for any bills you normally are in charge of at home and also giving a trusted family member your account details so they can add funds or make payments for you if needed.

## Drexel E-mail

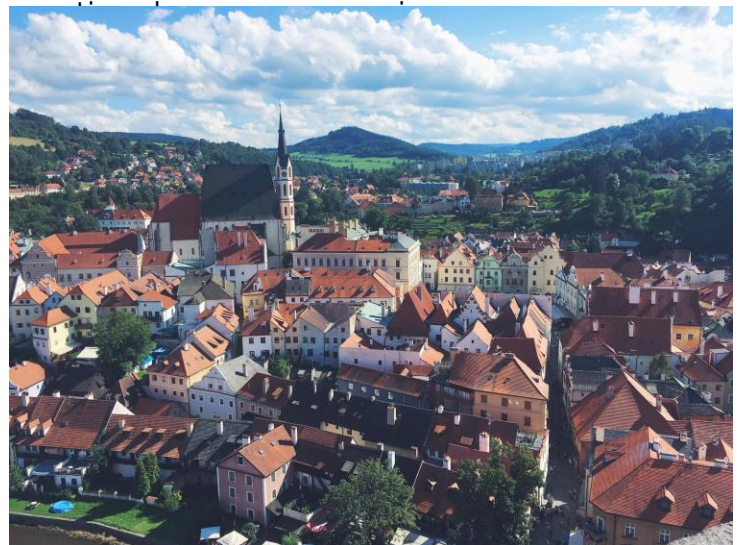
Check your Drexel email regularly while abroad, as any information from us or your academic advisor will still be sent to this account. Update both your academic advisor and study abroad advisor on any changes you make in courses to avoid problems upon receipt of your transcript.

## Other Items

- ✓ If you have a phone that has a sim card, try to get it unlocked by your carrier to use overseas. This way you can just purchase a sim card while abroad and use it in the same phone.
- ✓ Be sure you have your Drexel housing squared away, whether you're signing an on-campus housing release form for

the term or subletting your room for the term(s) you are abroad.

- ✓ For your safety and protection, read and learn the laws of your host country prior to arrival. You may be surprised to find that some things allowed in the states are illegal overseas. Country Information Sheets provided by the US Department of State often highlight local laws that may be different from US norms.
- ✓ Call your insurance provider(s) and check to see if there are any claim forms you should bring with you if you need to file a claim abroad.
- ✓ Read about news, events, and the politics of your host country. Americans generally are less attuned to issues abroad and it is always best to be informed. Imagine how you would feel if someone didn't know who the President of the United States is? Be sure you show the same respect for local news and politics.
- ✓ Register your travel with the state department at <https://step.state.gov/step/> in case a



# Preparation for Departure

## **MONEY MATTERS**

We suggest you start familiarizing yourself with the currency of your host country before you depart. For the most up to date exchange rates, check [www.oanda.com/currency/converter](http://www.oanda.com/currency/converter). Travel guides as well as information provided by your host institution can also help you understand the cost of living where you will be living. It is important to contact your bank to let them know when and where you are traveling abroad. **Do not carry a large amount of cash – you should not bring more than \$200 with you at one time.**

### Where and when should I get the local currency?

You can exchange U.S. dollars for your host country currency in the US at most banks and exchange bureaus. However, typically the easiest and most cost-effective way to get the local currency is at an ATM upon arrival at the airport. The rates are usually much more favorable than the Bureau de Change and you will not have to carry large amounts of cash with you.

### How much money should I bring?

One piece of advice we hear most from study abroad alums is the importance of budgeting. Create an estimated budget before you depart and try to stick with it. Your personal budget will vary depending on your location and your personal spending habits. If you plan on travelling around, you will need more. You can contact your host institution to get an estimate of living costs in your country. Be sure to always ask for student discounts and shop around online for the best airfares and packages.

### What types of cards do they use abroad?

We often recommend students to bring at

least two types of credit cards between Visa and Mastercard, as it's important to have more than one way to pay for expenses in case you lose a card. American Express and Discover are not as widely accepted overseas. If it is possible, the cards should be from different companies and not the same bank at the chance that your bank locks your account due to unfamiliar spending patterns. Also, try to keep one card in your room just for emergencies. Your debit card will be extremely useful so make sure you have enough in your checking account for your trip!

### What do I do if my wallet gets stolen?

This is where your photocopies of documents will come in handy. When copying debit and credit cards, make sure you photocopy the front and back of each card and note down the 24-hour toll-free service number on the back. Immediately contact your bank and issuing companies to cancel all your cards and order new ones.

### How will I have access to money in case of an emergency?

The fastest way to get cash will be at an ATM with your debit card. If your cards are all gone, your family can wire you money via wire transfer through a bank or through [Western Union](#). This option is fast but can be quite expensive. Drexel's On Call International service can also assist with wire transfers in an emergency.



# Travel and Arrival

## *Itinerary*

Please let the Office of Global Engagement know of your departure and arrival plans by completing the online "Flight Itinerary" on your study abroad account. If you make changes to your travel after submitting the online form, please contact the Office of Global Engagement to update the information. **While you may not think it's necessary, always let someone know about any trips you are taking outside of your host country.** They may need the information in case of an emergency. Also, remember to send a quick text message or email to a trusted contact upon arrival.

## *Customs*

After your plane lands in your host country, you will proceed through the immigration and customs area before collecting your luggage. You will be asked to show your passport and, if applicable, your student visa and any supporting documents. If the Office of Global Engagement and/or your host institution has given you a letter of facilitation, present all the documents to the customs official. As with all law enforcement, be courteous and respectful

when you pass through.

Upon return to the U.S., you will have to go through U.S. customs and declare all your purchases on the Customs Declarations Form. Be sure to keep all your receipts to facilitate this process. If you purchased over USD \$800 worth of goods you may have to pay duty on them. **Remember that if you are bringing alcohol back into the U.S., you must be 21 years of age or it will be confiscated.**

## *Flight Delay*

Please contact your host institution if you are running late. Keep the phone number for your on-site director in your carry-on luggage for quick access. Remember many people will be waiting to see that you have arrived safely. In the chance that you arrive on a weekend and you are unable to reach a local contact, you may reach the Drexel Education Abroad through Drexel Public Safety at +1-215-895-2222.





# While Abroad

## COMMUNICATIONS

It's important to communicate with Drexel and your family and friends so they know that you're safe and doing well. **As soon as you get your local contact information, update your online study abroad account under the address tab.** The Drexel Office of Global Engagement must have a way to contact you in case of an emergency. We will first contact you via email, then by phone. There are multiple cost-efficient ways to contact home.

### Cell Phones

If you are bringing your U.S. cell phone, check with your carrier to see if it will work abroad. If you have a phone that has a SIM card, try to get it unlocked by your carrier to use overseas, if possible. Many smartphones these days come unlocked, but check with your carrier to be sure. Then, you can simply purchase a SIM card while abroad and use it in the same phone. It is recommended to purchase a new SIM card once you arrive in your host country instead of using your home network abroad. The roaming rates can be incredibly expensive and often the plans abroad are even cheaper than the U.S. Also, see if you can suspend your U.S. plan for the duration of your study abroad. Depending on your

country, SIM cards can be purchased at network stores and convenience stores. You can also purchase an inexpensive pre-paid phone abroad, if your phone does not require a SIM card.

For more specific international dialing information, visit [www.countrycallingcodes.com](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com).

### Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)

VoIP is the most economical way to make phone calls over the internet. Many free services such as Skype, Zoom, Google Voice, FaceTime, iMessage, and Whatsapp allow you to call or message others who also have the program or call phones via online credit. Making international calls on Skype can be as little as \$0.02/minute. Ensure that your laptop has a speaker and mic for this service to work.

While you may primarily use VoIP and WiFi for communication while abroad, it is important that you also have a plan that will allow you to make calls in an emergency if WiFi is not available. Please ensure that you have this capability once you arrive abroad.

## Email, Blogging and Social Networking

As always, email is a great way to keep in touch with family, friends, and school contacts. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, and creating a blog are also nice ways to keep everyone back home up to date on your travels and experiences. A blog will also be a great way for you to remember all your experiences when you return and provide a great tool for reflection.

## Drexel Study Abroad Social Media

We love to keep in touch while you are abroad! Follow us on social media:

- ✓ [facebook.com/DrexelStudyAbroad](https://www.facebook.com/DrexelStudyAbroad)
- ✓ Instagram: [@drexelstudyabroad](https://www.instagram.com/drexelstudyabroad)
- ✓ Snapchat: [@dragonsabroad](https://www.snapchat.com/add/dragonsabroad)
- ✓ TikTok: [@dragons\\_abroad](https://www.tiktok.com/@dragons_abroad)
- ✓ YouTube: [@drexelstudyabroad](https://www.youtube.com/drexelstudyabroad)

The Office of Global Engagement hosts Snapchat takeovers so you can introduce the community to a day in the life of your study abroad experience.

Follow/tag us on Instagram. Use our hashtags #drexelstudyabroad and #dragonsabroad so we can see (and maybe re-gram) your photos.

In the winter, we will host a study abroad photo contest, so begin to collect your favorite photos! Prizes are typically Amazon gift cards.

## **HOUSING**

Housing in the rest of the world may be different than you are accustomed to in the

United States. As a general rule of thumb, you should be prepared for your housing to be smaller and have less storage space than your Drexel housing. Furthermore, the cost of electricity, heating, and cooling are generally more expensive in other countries so please be mindful when consuming resources.

If you have a refrigerator in your housing, this could also be smaller as people outside of the United States tend to grocery shop more frequently to have the freshest ingredients and produce. This is a great opportunity to learn about a different lifestyle and a fun way to break away from the American habit of food shopping once per week.

Many countries do not use dryers as part of their laundry routine. Clothes are often hung out to dry and can take some time before they are ready to wear. Try to bring fabrics that dry fast. People overseas also tend to wear their clothing multiple times before washing.

Your roommates abroad may have very different habits and norms than you do. While you may have American roommates, you could also be living with either international students or local students. Remember that you are studying abroad to learn about that country's culture so try to adapt their rules. Do not assume that you can have visitors any time or that your roommate should be your best friend. Be sure to check with your roommate before you invite visitors.

If you are living with a host family, remember to bring them a gift from home to show your gratitude. It is also a good idea to show your host family photos of your family and home to give them an idea of what your life is like. Try to pitch in with household chores whenever possible and remember that it is not a hotel. Communication will go a long way in avoiding misunderstandings about your living space so keep an open dialogue with your host family. They open their homes to international students because they believe in the power of the experience so don't make them second guess their decision!

## TRANSPORTATION

You will most likely be taking many modes of transportation while abroad, whether it is just getting to class or taking weekend trips. Always use common sense when choosing your mode of transportation and not just go with the cheapest option. **Drexel strongly discourages students to drive a vehicle in another country.** The number one cause of injury and death to Americans abroad is vehicle accidents whether by automobile, motorcycle, or bike. Wear seatbelts if they are available, even if it is not the local norm. Being in a country where you are unfamiliar with the driving rules can cause disorientation and put you at jeopardy.

Also, be cognizant of when and how you travel. Do not take unlicensed taxis, sit in empty train cars or cabins alone, or walk alone late at night. When booking travel try to find an arrival time that is not in the middle of the night. Women should be extremely cautious when traveling. Always

have a close eye on your belongings. Students traveling or studying abroad for the first time often get a false sense of security as a symptom of their experience. Travel with a buddy when possible and always be alert.

There are a number of great resources for finding the best modes of transportation in any country. A guidebook of your country will be a good point of reference. Doing a Google search may also bring up some of the more popular ones. If you are planning to travel on a budget, check out budget airlines like EasyJet, Ryan Air, Air Asia, and Taca. Megabus, Uber, and Lyft are also options for affordable transportation. In addition, the local Groupon can help get you deals on travel packages. Rail travel also often has a student ticket price so make sure to always have your student ID with you.

## TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

We hope that in your time abroad you do get the opportunity to explore both the local area and surrounding region(s). If you are going out of town, always keep the lines of communication open. Make sure someone at home has your itinerary and knows where you are at all times, especially arrival and departure dates.

Be sure to take your insurance card with you when you travel and to check on procedures for filing a claim before you go abroad. Save emergency numbers in your phone and think about how you can be reached in an emergency. **Do not plan trips within or near a war zone or conflict areas.** Check the US State Department website to review advisories for countries where you may travel, including region specific information that may highlight parts of the country that can be dangerous for travelers and that the US government recommends to avoid:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages.html>

Remember that the travel experience can vary greatly from country to country, so try to be as flexible and open-minded as possible. Getting upset over delays or unexpected problems is only going to hurt your experience of the country. Learn to be resourceful and take it all in as part of the education you're receiving while abroad!

Finally, do not allow travel to get in the way of your academics and coursework. Just as it would be in Philadelphia, traveling is not a valid excuse to miss any classes or turn in assignments late. Also, be sure to book transportation that will get you to class on time, considering the possibility of a delay.







# Intercultural Interactions

This section will outline key points to remember and internalize for your time abroad. Undoubtedly, the difference in cultures will affect each of you in a different way. Reviewing the key points in this section can help you feel more prepared to handle situations as they arise.

## **CULTURE SHOCK AND REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK**

“Culture shock” is a term used to describe the feeling of disorientation experienced by someone who is suddenly subjected to an unfamiliar culture, way of life, or set of attitudes, and could be one of the biggest personal challenges you will encounter while studying abroad. This may result from a variety of cultural or lifestyle differences, or a language barrier. Food habits, daily routine, social norms, and teaching styles are just some of the factors that could contribute to culture shock. Knowledge of these differences is a good way to combat culture shock and minimize discomfort. Therefore, we recommend that all students do research about the customs of the country they are going to *before departure*. Chances are, other people have had similar experiences before, and have published their experiences on blogs, forums etc. (Lonely Planet is a good one). Asking past participants about what surprised them or was difficult about their own experience can be very helpful! Leverage the resources to

be as mentally prepared as you can, so you can enjoy your experience to the fullest extent possible. Furthermore, accept that the challenges are all part of the experience, and that you can learn from them, contributing even more to your educational journey while abroad.

Some common symptoms of culture shock are:

- Homesickness
- Irritability
- Withdrawal
- Restlessness
- Anxiety
- Physical ailments
- Unexpected feelings of sadness
- Stereotyping
- Tension with friends/family
- Poor academic performance
- Hostility
- Depression

Additionally, it is also very common for students to experience reverse culture shock when they return home from their time abroad. You may feel disconnected from your friends and family and be frustrated that they will never understand the experience you had nor feel as passionately about it as you do. You may even feel that some ways-of-life abroad are even better than in the US and wish you were back there. In any case, you will slowly rebuild your connection with your networks at home – it just takes time.

# Intercultural Interactions

## *GENDER AND DIVERSITY*

After arriving in your host country, try your best to observe the cultural norms of the local people and try to understand, if not adapt to, their standards of behavior. Sticking with your own ways, which can be very different from those of your host country, could attract attention and result in undesired situations, especially during parties and social occasions. Keep in mind that you are not giving up your sense of self by adapting to your environment but rather you are showing respect for the culture of your host country and learning about a different way of life. Doing so is also a great way to make local friends and improve social and language skills.

Around the world, LGBTQ+ rights are not always as widely accepted as one might appreciate at home, and animosity toward one orientation or another might be present. In certain countries, such as those in the Middle East or parts of Africa, equality laws are not as advanced as they are in the US, leading to less tolerance among the general public. That being said, in many major cities, there are LGBTQ+ communities. Wherever you go, it is encouraged that you do prior research about LGBTQ+ rights, as well as seek out relevant LGBTQ+ groups at your host university or in the local communities.

While you should be proud of your sexual orientation and gender identity, your safety is always top priority. Adapting to a new culture often means modifying your behavior, while also attempting to stay true to your values. You are there to experience the local culture, not to change it to match your own. If you ever feel threatened or in

danger, report the incident to your host university/program right away, and also notify the Drexel Office of Global Engagement.

## *ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE*

For those of you under 21, one of the most exciting points of living abroad may be that you can go into a bar and purchase a beer or other alcoholic drink legally. Depending on where you go, cultural views on drinking will vary greatly. In Europe, for example, alcohol consumption is common as a social activity with friends or even family, and is not only limited to parties. In Asia, on the other hand, drinking is often done in a professional context over company dinners, etc. Wherever you go, be sure to do prior research and understand the customs, as to avoid standing out like a sore thumb by maintaining your social standards. While alcohol consumption can be a good way to bond with old friends and make new ones alike, please remember to do so responsibly and appropriately according to your location.

All guidelines for drinking alcohol which exist at Drexel also apply while abroad. Never accept drinks from strangers unless you have had your watch on the glass from the time it was poured. Alcohol poisoning may also seem much more terrifying when you're in an unfamiliar country around people you don't know well. Learn your limits and always remain alert.

**The use of drugs on a Drexel-sponsored program is prohibited and punishable by suspension from the program.**

# Intercultural Interactions

While you will be subject to the Drexel University standards of conduct, also keep in mind that the local laws also apply and may be far more severe than in America. If you are arrested for a crime overseas, there is little Drexel University or the local U.S. Consular authorities can do to intercede on your behalf.

## *DATING AND SEX*

A large part of your experience will be the people you meet and the relationships you build. Relationships are often defined differently overseas than what you are used to in the US, and that includes sex. Based upon what they have seen on American television or in the news, people may make assumptions about your interest in particular activities. There is no need to be paranoid or obsessive, but be wary of strangers who are overly friendly or want to get close to you right away. Meet up in public places and have a friend close by. Do not freely give out your phone number and address or reveal too many personal details up front. Furthermore, always abide by campus rules involving guests and overnight stays.

In some countries, females in particular may be subjected to catcalling or other forms of sexual harassment that violates US norms and may make you feel uncomfortable, but is fairly common in the local environment. If something like this happens and you find it upsetting, please reach out to your local coordinator for guidance and advice on these kinds of situations. Please also keep in mind that while recent events about sexual harassment in the US have raised this issue to the forefront, attitudes about this in many other places in the world will be quite different and can be downright frustrating at

times from your perspective. If you have good friends from the host culture, hearing their perspectives on this issue could be very helpful to you.

It's always a good idea to bring condoms from the US. Women should not rely on the men to always have a condom as the practice of carrying one may not be common. Sexually transmitted diseases are prevalent everywhere and can put a big damper on your experience.

Unfortunately, in some countries of the world, victims of sexual assault can also be treated quite differently, blaming the victim or even charging the victim with a crime. It is therefore important for victims of sexual assault to consult with the US Embassy, On Call International, or local coordinators about the best course of action in a particular situation. It may be helpful to research information about your host country's local law enforcement approach towards sexual assault. American Citizen Services in any US Embassy can provide this kind of information to travelers. More detailed guidance on recommended actions for sexual assault are included earlier in this handbook on page 20 of the Health and Safety section.

## *FINAL NOTE*

You are representing the University, your city, and your nation when you live abroad. Your conduct and behavior will be scrutinized by your new acquaintances. This is an excellent opportunity for you to positively shape the way others see American college students. Think about the impression you want to leave behind and make sure to carry yourself accordingly.



# When You Return

Returning back home doesn't necessarily have to be the end of your study abroad experience. There are many ways to keep the momentum alive and build upon your newfound ideologies and independence. Some ideas to further your education are outlined below along with the logistics to address upon your return to campus.

- ✓ If you are taking a language course abroad, be sure to take the placement test at the Modern Languages department upon return.
- ✓ Meet with your academic advisor to ensure that you are still on track in your studies.
- ✓ Double check that you have the necessary approvals for all of your courses that you took abroad, even the free electives. **You will be placed on academic hold if all approvals are not in by the third week of the following term**
- ✓ Your grades will be processed upon receipt of your transcript, which will take longer than typical Drexel grades.

## STAY CONNECTED

The Drexel Office of Global Engagement and Student Life both offer ways for you to stay engaged after your return. A lot of people can learn from your experience and

it will help you reflect on all that you saw and felt. Review your initial goals and see how close you were to meeting them. Did you get what you wanted out of the experience? What can you do to continue your global experience in Philadelphia?

- **Attend the Study Abroad Welcome/Welcome Back reception** - This is a great way to reconnect with other Drexel Study Abroad alums, and also meet exchange students who are studying abroad at Drexel.
- **Become a Dragon Buddy** - Sign up to become a Dragon Buddy and you will be invited to all of our international events throughout the year!
- **Become a Student Ambassador** - Apply to become a Study Abroad Student Ambassador! This is a paid position working for the Office of Global Engagement to aid in event hosting, office work, and advertising. The position spans either Spring/Summer or Fall/Winter and applications come out shortly before each position period.
- **Become Globally-Involved in On-Campus Academics** - Join [Global Engagement Scholars](#), register for a [Global Classroom](#), participate in an [International Co-op](#), or join [Dornsife Global Development Scholars](#).

# When You Return

- **Join Student Groups**– look into joining a club or society that relates to your study abroad experience, from a new sport/hobby you've picked up, a cultural group, or build on your sense of adventure and try something new! You'd be surprised to see all the people on campus interested in the same things you enjoy.
- **Speak at Study Abroad Info Sessions** – The Office of Global Engagement is always interested in having alums talk a bit about their personal experiences at information sessions or events. Students interested in studying abroad benefit greatly hearing from you and learning first-hand from another student.
- **Find a Language Buddy** – Find someone, whether it be an exchange student at Drexel or someone in your language class, to continue developing your language skills. It's easy to forget if you don't practice!
- **Join Organizations in Philadelphia** – Students in the past have enjoyed being

part of [Citizen Diplomacy International](#) or [Global Philadelphia](#) to carry their experience to a professional organization. There is also a local chapter of the [United Nations Association](#).

- **Start looking into your next adventure abroad** – study, co-op, volunteer, or vacation overseas again

We hope you have an incredible time studying abroad. Make the most of your experience as the time will fly by. Keep this handbook with you as you prepare for your journey and once you are overseas. Be open-minded and get out to take advantage of all the new opportunities. This is a once in a lifetime experience so make sure to enjoy it and expand your knowledge about other cultures, the world, and most importantly, yourself! A lot of people have contributed to get you this far so it is up to you where your journey will lead next.



# Suggested Packing List

## *The Essentials:*

- Your valid passport and visa/supporting documents, if needed
- Your Drexel student ID
- This handbook
- Laptop computer and charger
- Cell phone and charger, and an extra battery pack
- ATM card and credit card (we recommend bringing 2 debit/credit cards to use to access money while abroad)
- Camera, charger, and cable(s)
- Adapter and converter for your host country (and any countries you plan to visit)
- Smaller bag for weekend trips
- Luggage locks
- Copy of documents
- Flexibility and sense of adventure

## *Clothing:*

In general, you should pack modest, seasonal, and temperature-appropriate clothing for your host country. We recommend bringing clothing that can be easily layered and color-coordinated so that you can re-use items for many outfits. Some suggestions are:

- Footwear: comfortable walking shoes, sandals, and dress shoes
- Rain gear (umbrella and/or rain jacket/rain boots)
- Cold weather gear, if needed (coat, hat, gloves, etc.)
- 2-3 pairs of jeans/ casual pants
- 2-3 skirts/ dresses
- T-shirts/ tops
- Hoodies/ sweaters
- Long sleeve shirts
- 1-2 nice outfits (for formal occasions)

- 1-2 weeks worth of underwear and socks
- Sleepwear
- Bathing suit
- Workout clothes, if preferred
- NO valuable jewelry or accessories

## *Toiletries:*

- A full supply of any prescription medications you will need during your complete time abroad—keep them in their original container along with the original prescription or doctor's note, and pack them in your carry-on luggage
- Diarrhea/ stomach/pain medication and any preferred over-the-counter medications
- Sunglasses/ glasses/ contacts/ contact solution
- Feminine products (tampons/pads are not easily available in all countries)
- Deodorant/antiperspirant
- Contraceptives/condoms
- Toothbrush/toothpaste
- Brush/comb
- Disposable razor/ shaving supplies
- Any favorite products you may not be able to find overseas (shampoo/ conditioner, soap, makeup, etc.)
- Sunscreen

## *Extras/ Optional Items:*

- [Your International Student Identity Card \(ISIC\)](#)-- this card can be used for discounts while abroad
- Bed linens and towels (check with your program to see if these will be provided)
- Refillable water bottle with filter
- Journal

## Research Checklist

- Laws
- Major cultural differences
- Appropriate dress
- Anticipated weather
- Religion
- Political structure and leaders
- History
- Neighborhoods
- Transportation options

To research, visit [travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov) as an excellent starting point.

## Health and Safety Checklist

Please review this checklist to ensure that you have taken care of many of the important details to prepare yourself for a successful and safe experience abroad.

### MEDICAL/INSURANCE

- Visit your doctor, optometrist, and dentist for a complete examination before you leave.
- Check with your insurance provider to ensure that your coverage is valid while you are abroad and to understand how to make a claim should you need medical care while you are away. The Drexel student health insurance does provide international coverage.
- If your insurance is not valid abroad, purchase student international travel insurance.
- Put the On Call International number in your phone: 603-952-2038. ([Learn more about On Call International](#))
- Obtain all recommended immunizations for your destination

country. (see <http://www.CDC.gov> for more information).

- If you will be taking any medications abroad, pack an adequate supply in your carry-on luggage with a copy of the prescription, and check to be sure that the medications are legal in your destination country.

### DOCUMENTS

- Make a photocopy of your passport, visa (if needed), and other important items (insurance card, driver's license, etc.) that you should take with you when you travel.
- Contact your bank and credit card company to notify them of your location and dates of travel. Make a photocopy of the front and back of those cards that you can take with you when you travel.
- Complete all required documents in your online study abroad application.
- Register in [STEP, the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#). If you are not a US citizen, check your country's foreign affairs department to see if it has an equivalent system for registering the international travel of citizens, but you may also register in STEP as a non-US citizen which will enable you to receive information, alerts, and warnings sent by the US Department of State.



## CONTACT INFO

Be sure you have contact information in your phone for:

- your local contact in your destination country
- On Call International +1-603-952-2038
- Drexel Public Safety +1-215-895-2222
- local emergency number to call, the [equivalent of the US 911](#).
- emergency contact information for your home country's Embassy in your destination country in your phone. ([US State Department's Embassy list](#))

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Food and water:** Research the food and water safety of your host country and be aware of the necessary precautions needed. Discuss any serious food restrictions or allergies that you have with the Office of Global Engagement and your host program.
- Disability Resources:** (if applicable) Discuss your disability needs with Drexel's [Disability Resources](#) and the Office of Global Engagement. Please be aware that disability resources abroad may be limited, or in some locations unavailable.
- Sexuality and sexual identification:** Sexuality and sexual identification may be perceived differently in other countries based on cultural norms, and that some may be more restrictive than others. Discuss any concerns with the Office of Global Engagement and recognize the importance of taking

precaution to avoid safety risks.

**If you have any questions or concerns about your preparations for Study Abroad, please contact your Education Abroad Advisor.**





# Study abroad Emergency Contact Sheet

Name of Student:  
Student ID:  
Program/Country:  
Term:

## Student Contact Information

Phone:  
Email:  
Skype:  
Address Abroad:

## Family Contact Information in the U.S.

Name:  
Relation to Student:  
Phone:  
Email:  
Address:

## Drexel Study Abroad Contact Information

Coordinator Name:  
Office Phone:  
Email:

## On-Site Program Contact Information:

Coordinator Name:  
Office Phone:  
Mobile Phone:  
Email:

## Embassy/Consulate Contact Information for Study Abroad Site:

Phone:  
Email:  
Address:

## Emergency Phone Numbers at Study Abroad Site:

Police:  
Fire:  
Hospital:  
Taxi:

Other Information:

**Safe Travels!**

**よい旅行を**

**Bon Voyage!**

**Gute Reise!**

**一路順風**

**¡Buen viaje!**

**تروح و تيجي بالسلامة**

**Buon viaggio!**

**잘다녀오십시오!**

**God rejse!**

**נסיעה טובה**

**Go dté tú slán**