



DREXEL UNIVERSITY



**STUDY ABROAD**

FIND YOUR DESTINATION

# Drexel University Study Abroad Pre-Departure Handbook

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"There are no foreign  
lands. It is the traveler  
only who is foreign." –  
Robert Louis

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Dear Student,

Congratulations and welcome to Drexel University's Study Abroad Program! While you may not have begun packing, we hope this handbook will answer most of your questions on preparation and logistics. Be sure to take this with you as it contains pertinent information you may need to reference during your studies. In compiling this information, we have made every effort to make it as accurate as possible, however the world is a changing place so some information may not be the most up to date. This booklet is meant to be a guide and we suggest doing your own research for the most recent information.

*Getting Ready to Go*

This will be an exciting and rewarding time for you. While we can prepare you for your departure, once you arrive, the experience belongs to you. Make sure to cherish the good moments as well as the challenging ones as a main reason for studying abroad is to embrace all the differences in this world. Right now would be an opportune time to go back to your original study abroad application and review your objectives for your time overseas. Constantly keep in mind your academic, cultural, and personal goals during your experience and regularly reflect on whether you are achieving those goals. Understand that plans may change but you certainly do not want to leave your studies regretting all the things you did not do! Have a safe and memorable journey.

Best regards,

Daniela Ascarelli, Director

## **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

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 health and body when you arrive and first begin to adjust to your surroundings. Natives have natural immunities against the bacteria and viral infections common in those areas whereas many travelers do not. Try to give yourself time to settle into a routine before going out and over-exerting yourself.

Your health and safety during study abroad is of utmost importance to Drexel University. The Study Abroad Office regularly monitors the world for areas of concern for our program participants, but 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, it is recommended that you have a physical examination by your doctor and visit your dentist and optometrist. Inform your physician of your study abroad destinations as s/he can provide additional information to you on health issues or recommended vaccinations for your location. If you are taking any prescription medications, you should get 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 for the first time that you are sick abroad. Healthcare quality will vary from location to location so it is best to know that you are in good health before you leave. Information on in-country health care options will likely be covered in your on-site orientation, but if it is not, please inquire with the on-site coordinator. While we hope you will not need to see a doctor while abroad, chances are some of you will, and it will be helpful to know in advance where to go. In the event of an emergency, you can contact On Call 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: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel>. You should review carefully the recommended vaccinations and be sure that your immunizations are up to date.

- ***Food and Water***

It is also important to understand the food and water quality in your country. If you are on a restricted diet or are vegetarian or vegan, you may need to explore what your food options will be while you are abroad. 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. While vegetarianism has become more common in the United States, it may be difficult to find a variety of food options in some countries, and you may discover that the locals will flavor your vegetables with a meat or chicken broth. 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.

- ***Mental Health and Disability Services***

Students with mental health concerns or those who qualify for disability services should discuss their situation with a study abroad advisor before going abroad. The Study Abroad office can gather information about the possibilities of appropriate accommodation and support for you while abroad, but will need adequate time in order to do so. Students should keep in mind that support services and willingness to accommodate disabilities varies greatly across the globe so it is best to find out in advance what will be available and to assess if this will be adequate to meet your needs while you are abroad. If you require special accommodations for exams, you may also need a written letter from Disability Services at Drexel.

- ***Sexuality Abroad***

If you think you may be sexually active while you are abroad, it is recommended that you practice safe sex and bring your own supply of contraceptives. Students should be mindful that sexual norms and male-female dynamics can vary greatly by country so students should be especially careful in open, social situations. Gay and lesbian students should investigate in advance their host country's acceptance of their sexuality and plan accordingly for their time abroad. While the US is fairly accepting of gay and lesbian relationships, in some cultures this is taboo and may even be against the law. Information and resources for gay and lesbian students can be accessed at:

<http://www.indiana.edu/~overseas/lesbigay/student.htm>

- ***Alcohol Consumption***

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. While studying abroad, you remain a Drexel University student, subject to the University Code of Conduct for students, and sometimes things that seem funny after too many drinks may violate 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.

Any country in the world, including the United States, can be an unpredictable place, and students should take pro-active measures to ensure their safety while living abroad. Know in advance the safety concerns in your country by reviewing the Country Information sheets available on the Department of State website:

<http://travel.state.gov>. 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 students, 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 Insurance
- ✓ Drexel Study Abroad Director Daniela Ascarelli 215-470-9783

**US citizens should complete the STEP Smart Traveler Enrollment Program:**

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration\\_4789.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_4789.html)

Citizens of other countries should explore their Consulate webpage for similar registration programs. 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 Drexel Study Abroad office as soon as is reasonably possible. We will likely be trying to reach you to ensure that you are safe.

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## ACADEMICS

While we hope that you do travel and have a great time abroad, remember that this is still in every way an academic pursuit. Neglecting your studies and putting everything off until the last minute will indeed reflect on your Drexel transcript and more often than not employers and graduate programs will request to see your study abroad transcript. Make 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 has been properly approved by the appropriate department at Drexel. Failure to complete all pre-approvals will result in academic holds and delay in graduation.

### ***A. Course Approvals***

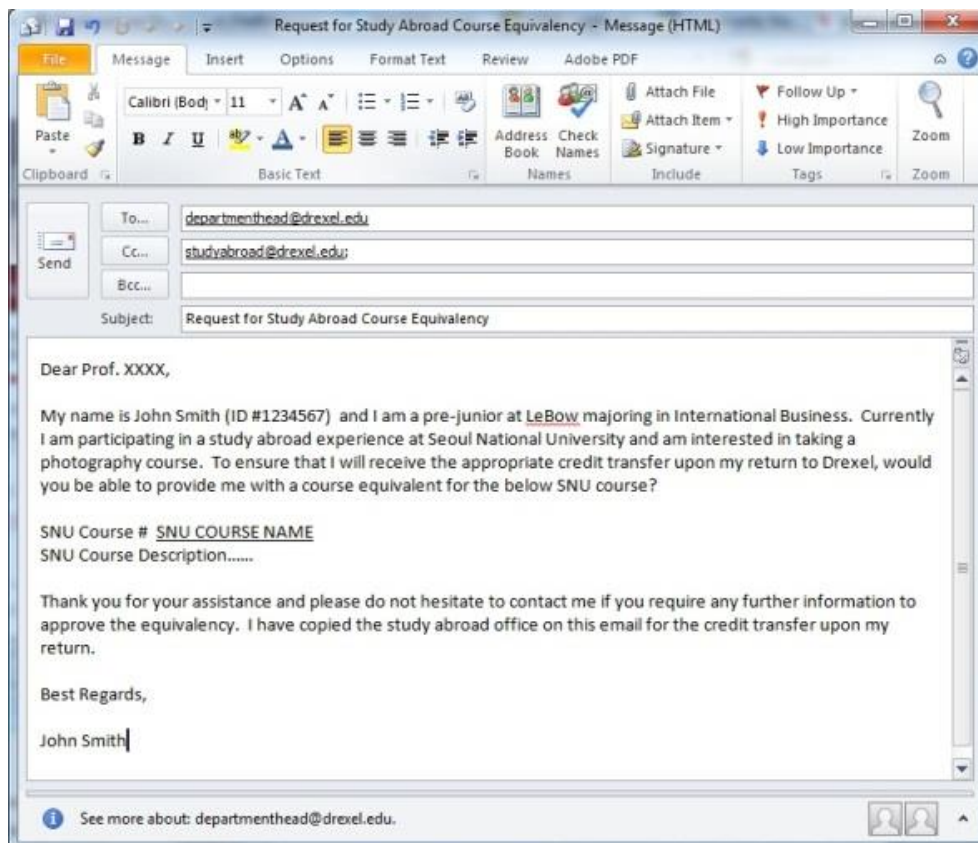
Prior to your departure your course pre-approval form will be uploaded to your study abroad account. Follow the below steps to ensure that you will get the appropriate credit for your courses taken abroad. **ALL THE COURSES YOU TAKE ABROAD WILL BE TRANSFERRED BACK TO YOUR DREXEL TRANSCRIPT.** This means that all “fun” or “elective” courses will still count and require an approved Drexel equivalent.

- ✓ Log on to your account at [www.drexel.edu/studyabroad](http://www.drexel.edu/studyabroad)
- ✓ Review your attached course approval sheet prior to departure
- ✓ If you have already confirmed your courses abroad, ensure that those courses are reflected on your pre-approval sheet WITH the appropriate departmental signature and equivalency
- ✓ If there are courses still needing approval, please make sure to reach out to the Drexel department prior to departure and submit the additional approvals to the Study Abroad Office
- ✓ Upon arrival and during your program's ADD/DROP period, make sure to simultaneously contact the appropriate Drexel faculty to get new courses approved for credit.

- ✓ By **WEEK 3** of your term, make sure ALL your courses have been approved for a Drexel equivalency and complete the Study Abroad Course Report (a sample is on the next page)
- ✓ Email the study abroad course report coversheet to [studyabroad@drexel.edu](mailto:studyabroad@drexel.edu) along with any new approvals not on your original pre-approval sheet

**ANY STUDENTS WHO ARE STILL MISSING COURSE APPROVALS BY WEEK 3 OF THEIR RETURN TERM WILL BE PUT ON ACADEMIC HOLD**

Please find a sample course equivalency request email and course report coversheet for your reference.  
**ALWAYS USE YOUR DREXEL EMAIL DOMAIN TO REQUEST COURSE APPROVALS.**





**DATE**

Dear Registrar,

Enclosed please find a copy of **NAME's (ID#)** official transcript from the student's 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 the 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 the **Fall 2012 i.e. 201215** term to reflect the courses taken overseas.

Thus the transcript will read:

**For Fall 2012 (201215):**

**Please remove the 12 credit place holder.**

**STUDY ABROAD COUNTRY COURSE CODE, CR**

**DREXEL EQUIVALENT (COURSE # & TITLE) 1 XX credits = STUDY ABROAD COURSE 1**

**DREXEL EQUIVALENT (COURSE # & TITLE) 2 XX credits = STUDY ABROAD COURSE 2**

**DREXEL EQUIVALENT (COURSE # & TITLE) 3 XX Credits = STUDY ABROAD COURSE 3**

**DREXEL EQUIVALENT (COURSE # & TITLE) 4 XX Credits = STUDY ABROAD COURSE 4**

**Total credits attempted: XX.0 credits**

Total credits passed:

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

CC: **ACADEMIC ADVISOR NAME**



## **B. Grading**

Depending on the program, students receive either direct transfer grades (A- = A-) or pass/fail denotation (B = CR).

### *Provider and American university programs*

- Students will receive a letter grade that transfers directly back on their Drexel transcript
- The grade you receive will be calculated in your Drexel GPA

### *Exchange programs/non-American universities*

- Students will receive a credit (CR) or no credit (NCR) marking on their Drexel transcript
- Any grade above a "C" will receive credit and any with "C-" and below will not receive credit
- Drexel utilizes the national standard WES Conversion System (<http://www.wes.org/gradeconversionguide/>) for international grade conversions
- The grades you receive will NOT calculate into your Drexel GPA

### *Independent Study Program*

- Credit will be transferred back as the approved electives as confirmed by your academic advisor
- Unlike Drexel sponsored programs, academic advisors input your credit on your transcript

## **C. Drexel Registration**

All students will receive a zero credit locator CRN denoting the country in which they are studying abroad. For programs where students are required to obtain pre-approvals for course equivalencies, you will also receive a 12-credit placeholder during your term(s) abroad. This will be removed once you are finished your program and your transcript transfers back.

For other programs such as Drexel in London, Bioko and various summer programs, the Drexel Study Abroad office will be the ones registering you for your courses. You will be prompted to go into DrexelOne once the registration occurs to review the courses and ensure they are correct.

## **D. Academic Progress**

All students should review the academic progress guidelines at <http://drexel.edu/src/financialaid/info/eligibility/> especially if you receive financial aid. The rules still apply if you are studying abroad. Seniors should be especially cognizant of their grades and transfer credits as any hiccups may delay your eligibility for graduation.

## **E. 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 is often dependent on only one or two large papers or exams. **This is not permission to slack on 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!

#### ***F. Transcript***

All transcripts while abroad should be sent to the following address. Please ensure that your host university knows and understands that only transcripts received at our office will be considered official.

Drexel University  
Study Abroad Office  
Intercultural Center  
30 S. 33<sup>rd</sup> Street, Suite 112  
Philadelphia, PA 19104  
U.S.A

Upon your return, transcripts from your host university can take anywhere between 3 weeks and 5 months to arrive at our office. Please check with your host university's international office to confirm how long yours will take. Once received, your transcript will be checked off in your study abroad account and your grades will be processed with the registrar in 4 – 6 weeks. The speediness of your courses being processed is contingent upon the completion of your course equivalency approvals.

#### ***G. Language Placement***

All students who were approved to receive language credit must complete a language placement test **within 2 weeks upon your return to Drexel**. The test is conducted by the Modern Language department who will then confirm the appropriate course equivalency you placed at. Please review the Modern Language Credit Policy you signed in your study abroad application for more details. **It is the student's responsibility to follow through and provide a copy of the results to the Study Abroad office. Failure to submit your language placement by the third week of your return term will result in receiving LANG 180 credit for your language courses.**

#### ***H. 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 Drexel study abroad office. This will ensure that any issues that arise are dealt with in a timely manner.

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## **WHAT TO PACK**

No matter how much this is stressed, some of you will overpack. This is understandable as many of you are prepping for a semester 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 70 lbs. Keep in mind that most household electronics will be better off purchased in your host country and that often times 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 particular 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.** Below are some tips on packing:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ✓ Bring a travel adapter and converter       | ✓ Bring stomach, flu and pain medication    |
| ✓ Keep all valuable items at home            | ✓ Photocopy all credit cards front and back |
| ✓ Pack clothes that are versatile            | ✓ Check the embassy site for illegal drugs  |
| ✓ Bring a smaller backpack for short trips   | ✓ Check the weather before departure        |
| ✓ Put a change of clothing in your carry-on  | ✓ Allow room for purchase of gifts          |
| ✓ Pack important docs in your carry-on       | ✓ Remember your chargers                    |
| ✓ Medications should be clearly labeled      | ✓ Don't wear anything too flashy            |
| ✓ Bring photos of friends and family         | ✓ Keep a copy of your arrival address       |
| ✓ Pack a few of your favorite U.S. snacks    | ✓ Research your country before packing      |
| ✓ Bring gifts from home for your new friends | ✓ PACK LIGHT!                               |
| ✓ Keep in mind dryers are seldom used        |   |

## 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 with you on your trip and leave a copy at home with your family.**

### **A. Passport**

Treat your passport as you would any valuable items. 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.

Report a lost or stolen passport immediately to the U.S. 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.

### **B. 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 <http://travel.state.gov/visa/> 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 or go to International Student and Scholar Services for more information.

Your visa will be placed in your passport so be sure to make photocopies of the visa as well. Confirm that all the information on it is 100% accurate to avoid any issues at customs.

### C. Student ID and ISIC card

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 at [www.myisic.com](http://www.myisic.com) and costs approximately \$22. 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.

### D. Insurance Information

**Drexel requires that all students participating in the study abroad program have adequate 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. **Please note that the procedure abroad is very different and hospitals will not accept your insurance card and may not accept a credit card. 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.**

By now you should have also already purchased the mandatory On Call Medical Evacuation and Repatriation Insurance. This policy should cover most emergency situations you may have in your host country. Make sure you have the 24 hour number and policy number handy and with you at all times while travelling. You can access information online at <http://www.oncallinternational.com/>. On Call covers a variety of circumstances including but not limited to:

#### Medical Assistance

- Emergency Medical Transport
- Medical Monitoring
- 24-hour Nurse Helpline
- Medical, Dental and Pharmacy referrals
- Dispatch of Medicine, Physician or Nurse
- Emergency Return Home
- Return of Personal Belongings

#### Security Services

- Political Evacuation
- Natural Disaster Evacuation
- Secure Transportation
- Online Portal, including Destination Information
- Security Alerts and Warnings
- Electronic Traveler Tracking
- Disaster/Crisis Management

#### Travel Assistance

- Worldwide Legal Assistance
- Lost Luggage Assistance
- Emergency Travel funds Assist.
- 24/7 Emergency Travel Arrangements
- Translation and Interpreter Assistance
- Embassy & Consular Relations
- Lost/Stolen Travel Documents Assistance

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

### ***E. Prescriptions and Immunizations***

Even if you have brought a supply of medication for the length of your stay, it is always a good idea to also keep a copy of the prescription on you just in case. If you wear contacts or glasses, also bring a copy of your eyeglass prescription so you can replace any items if needed.

**Your host university will most likely need a copy of your immunization record. If required, give a copy to your school and keep one on you in case you need to visit the doctor.**

### ***F. Itinerary***

Make 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. Make sure you have phone numbers of your university's contact person available. Keep your family, friends and the Drexel Study Abroad office informed about any side travel plans you have so we know where to reach you in case of an emergency.

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## **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 key items that will be harder to facilitate while overseas. Go through the list and make sure you have taken care of these items.

### ***A. 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/> and
- ✓ 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.**

### ***B. 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.
- ✓ Check to see if all financial aid documents and disbursements have been set up
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Call your credit and debit card companies and let them know of your travel plans. Your bank may lock your account and bar 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 foreign 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
- ✓ Confirm the currency conversion rate before you go and ensure you have enough funds in your account to support your spending abroad.

### **C. Academics**

Ensure that you are still able to check your Drexel email regularly 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 or if you are at risk of not passing a certain class.

**Make sure you have a copy of your pre-approval course sheet and to get any new approvals immediately.**

### **D. Other Items**

- ✓ If you have a phone that has a sim card, try to get it unlocked by your carrier to use overseas if possible. This way you can just purchase a sim card while abroad and use it in the same phone.
- ✓ Make 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
- ✓ 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 up on 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
- ✓ Register your travel with the state department at <https://step.state.gov/step/> in case a national emergency arises

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## **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 are.

**Do not bring a large amount of cash with you.**

- ***Where and when should I get the local currency?***

While you can exchange U.S. dollars for your host country currency while here at most banks and exchange bureaus, the easiest and most cost effective thing to do may be getting cash 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. **Remember again that the length of PIN numbers is different in other countries so verify and change your pin before you depart the U.S.**

- ***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. Make sure to always ask for student discounts and shop around online for the best airfares and packages.

- ***Should I bring other forms of payment?***

While cash, credit cards and a debit card should cover you in most situations, some students like to have a back up option. A Visa pre-paid check/travel card is preferred by Drexel Study Abroad alums over other methods like travelers checks. You can find out more information about these at [http://usa.visa.com/personal/cards/prepaid/visa\\_travel\\_money.html](http://usa.visa.com/personal/cards/prepaid/visa_travel_money.html).

- ***Can I open a bank account in my host country?***

Often times it is much easier to make payments for school or local charges with a local bank account. Check with your host institution to see if it will be possible. The documentation you may need to open an account will vary depending on the country. Bank hours abroad are often shorter in other countries and sometimes close between lunch hours.

- ***What types of cards do they use abroad?***

We often recommend students to bring at least two types of credit cards between Visa, Mastercard and American Express. Discover is not accepted overseas. If it's possible, have the cards be from different companies and not the same bank in the chance that your bank locks your account due to unfamiliar spending patterns. Also try to keep one card in your dorm 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 or traveler's checks via wire transfer through a bank or through Western Union ([www.westernunion.com](http://www.westernunion.com)). This option is fast but can be quite expensive.

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## TRAVEL AND ARRIVAL

### A. *Itinerary*

Please let the study abroad office know of your departure and arrival plans by completing the online "Flight Arrival Form" on your study abroad account. If you make changes to your travel after submitting the online form, please contact the Study Abroad office to update the information. **While you may not think it's necessary, always keep your parents informed of 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 your parents upon arrival.

### B. *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. If the Study Abroad office and/or your host institution has given you a letter of facilitation, make sure that you 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. Make sure to keep all your sales slips to facilitate this process. If you purchased over USD \$800 worth of goods you will 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.**

### C. *Flight Delay*

Please contact the Drexel Study Abroad office (+1.215.571.3558) and 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 Study Abroad Director at +1.215.470.9783.

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## 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 be sure to update your online study abroad**



**account under the address tab.** The Drexel Study Abroad Office must have a way to contact you in case of an emergency. In today's technology age 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. 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 convenient stores but make sure to ask around for the best international calling plan. You can also purchase a pre-pay phone abroad for cheap if your phone does not require a sim card.

- ***Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP)***

VoIP is the most economical way to make phone calls over the internet. Many free services such as Skype ([www.skype.com](http://www.skype.com)) and Google Voice allow you to call 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.

- ***Email, Blogging and Social Networking***

As always, email is a great way to keep in touch with family, friends and school contacts. Facebook, Twitter and creating a blog is also a nice way 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.

**Dialing home from your host country will require a different code.** Check with your host university to get instructions on how to dial to the U.S. Additionally, the leading 0 in your foreign phone number is only used when you are making a local call. When you provide your number to your parents, make sure they do not include the 0 when they dial. (e.x. your UK number is 098453216 but your parents will dial 011-44-98753126) For more specific dialing information visit [www.countrycallingcodes.com](http://www.countrycallingcodes.com).

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## **HOUSING**

- A. Housing in the rest of the world tends to be smaller and different from the United States. On the other hand in many European countries, dormitories are all single rooms, which can be an upgrade. As a general rule of thumb, you should be prepared for your housing to be smaller and have less storage space than you are accustomed to. Furthermore, the cost of electricity, heating and cooling are generally more expensive in other countries so please be mindful when consuming resources.
- B. If you have a fridge in your housing, this will 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.

- C. Many countries do not use dryers as part of their laundry routine. Clothes are usually 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. Get used to this.
  - D. Your roommates abroad may have very different habits and norms than you do. While some of you will have American roommates, the majority will 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 and that your roommate should be your best friend.** Typically those outside of the U.S. are more private and less willing to share everything upfront so don't take it as your roommate being cold toward you.
  - E. If you are living with a host family, remember to bring them a gift from home to show your gratitude. 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!
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## 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 situation. Below is a list of procedures to guide you in the chance that you are faced with one. You will also be given a separate form to fill out all the emergency numbers you may need. Keep this easily accesible during your time abroad. **IN ALL INSTANCES ON CALL and the DREXEL STUDY ABROAD OFFICE SHOULD BE ONE OF YOUR 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 Insurance
- ✓ Reach out to your family
- ✓ Call the Drexel Study Abroad office at +1-215-571-3558 and inform us of the situation. 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 On Call Insurance
- ✓ Contact your family and discuss if you will require legal representation
- ✓ Contact the American Embassy in your country to report the issue and request their assistance

- ✓ Let the Drexel Study Abroad office know so that we can help aid activities
- ✓ **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 it is in the States!**

- **Theft**

- ✓ Report the theft to the local police and get a copy of the police report
- ✓ Contact On Call Insurance
- ✓ 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

- **Psychological Emergencies**

- ✓ If you are feeling overwhelmingly 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  
([http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/support\\_health\\_services/support\\_health\\_services\\_cc\\_ucm\\_c/](http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/support_health_services/support_health_services_cc_ucm_c/)) 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're 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!

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

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## TRANSPORTATION

Most likely you will be taking many modes of transportation while you are overseas whether it's just getting to class or taking weekend trips. Always make sure to 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. 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 travelling on overnight trains and always have a close eye on your belongings. Students travelling or studying abroad for the first time often get a false sense of security as a symptom of their experience. Try to 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, Taca and Megabus. Also 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.

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## TRIPS AND EXCURSIONS

We hope that in your time abroad you do get the opportunity to discover the area both locally and in the region. 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 state department website to find the current list of countries to avoid.

Remember that travel in other countries can be very different 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!

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## KEEP IN MIND

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. For some being away from home may make you feel invincible and forget that the same precautions your practice back home apply in the rest of the world. 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. This may stem from large differences such as teaching styles or even something as small as the temperature of the showers. Culture shock is often one of the biggest personal challenges you will encounter while studying abroad. While it will take some time to adjust, go into the experience knowing that there will be situations that make you uneasy or question your own customs. Combat culture shock by understanding the local customs and reanalyzing your own personal notions of wrong or right; it's just different! The daily challenges are still a part of your education and always try to enjoy it as the time will fly by before you know it.

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

On the flip side 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 America and wish you were back there. In any case, you will slowly rebuild your connection with your networks at home – it just takes time.

## **GENDER AND DIVERSITY**

The dynamics between males and females can vary greatly from country to country. It is however generally safe to assume that females dress and act more modestly overseas than those in America. Upon arrival make sure to observe the cultural norms of the people around you and try to adapt their standards and blend in. Sticking with your own ways and acting like an American may attract unwanted attention and make you think poorly of the culture when in fact you are the one attracting it by being different. 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.

As in America, LGBT rights around the world have a long way to go. You may often feel uncomfortable abroad especially in Eastern cultures. To ease your transition, seek out LGBT groups at your host university or research online the local LGBT communities in your country. If you ever feel threatened or in danger, report the incident to your host university right away and also notify the Drexel Study Abroad office. Local students in certain countries may be more cautious in their interactions but just remember to be patient and be yourself. They may be learning as well!

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## **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 buy a beer legally. Alcohol consumption abroad is more common as a daily social activity with friends and not just for getting drunk. Drinking is often an integral part of many cultures and can be a good way to bond with your new friends if done in moderation.

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 strongly prohibited and punishable by suspension from the program.** 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. Drug use will only attract far more problems than it does fun so err on the side of caution.

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## 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 from what you are used to back home. Make sure to manage your expectations and always use common sense when approaching dating and sex. 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. Stay smart!

If you plan to be sexually active, bring condoms from the U.S. and always get in the habit of using them. Girls, do not rely on the men to always have a condom as the practice of carrying one may not be common where you are. Partners who refuse to use a condom are not trying to get on a more intimate level with you – they are just being selfish, reckless and lazy. Sexually Transmitted Illnesses can be detrimental and put a big damper on your experience. Don't let one night ruin your time abroad.

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## STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Drexel University seeks to provide all members of the University community with an environment conducive to learning. Our programs and services are designed to provide opportunities for students to reach their intellectual, social and spiritual potential. By enrolling in or attending a course or program of study sponsored by the University, all persons are deemed to have agreed to respect the rights of the University and its members, to abide by the policies set forth by the University onto its students, and to carry the same code of ethics with them abroad. Drexel University reserves the right to suspend or dismiss any student for failure to maintain a satisfactory academic record, acceptable personal behavior, or satisfactory standards of health.

The Drexel University student code of conduct can be found below at:

[http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/community\\_standards/studentHandbook/general\\_information/code\\_of\\_conduct/](http://www.drexel.edu/studentlife/community_standards/studentHandbook/general_information/code_of_conduct/).

Whether you like it or not, 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. Think about the impression you want to leave behind and make sure to carry yourself accordingly.

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## 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 upon your return to campus.

- ✓ If you are getting language credit for a course, be sure to take the placement test at the Modern Languages department right away
- ✓ 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 your courses 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 term**

- ✓ Look out for when your transcript arrives by keeping an eye on your study abroad account. Feel free to stop by if you would like to request a copy

## STAY CONNECTED

The Drexel Study Abroad office and student services 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 want out of it?

- **Attend the Study Abroad Welcome/ Welcome Back reception** - This is a great way to reconnect with other Drexel Study Abroad alums and also meet students who are doing their study abroad at Drexel
- **Become a Dragon Buddy** – Sign up to become a Dragon Buddy and befriend an exchange student just beginning their experience at Drexel! Your new buddy may even be someone from your host university
- **Attend the Delaware Valley Re-Entry Conference** – Each year around the middle of winter term schools from the area join up to host a full day event for recent study abroad alums. Besides meeting new people to share your experiences with, the event offers helpful sessions on international careers, volunteering and teaching opportunities, graduate school advice, information on fellowships and networking tips
- **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 are
- **Speak at Study Abroad Info Sessions** – The Study Abroad office is always interested in having alums talk a bit about their personal experiences at information sessions or events. Students interested in studying abroad will want to hear from you and learn 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 the International Visitor’s Center in Philadelphia to carry their experience to a professional organization. There is also a local chapter of the United Nations Association (<http://www.una-gp.org/>)
- **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 this journey will lead next.

**Safe Travels!**

よい旅行を

**Bon Voyage!**

**Gute Reise!**

一路順風

**¡Buen viaje!**

بالسلامة تيجي وتروح

**Buon viaggio!**

**잘다녀오십시오!**

**God rejse!**

טובה נסיעה

**Go dté tú slán**



## **Suggest Packing List**

### **The Essentials:**

- Your valid passport and visa, if needed
- Your Drexel student ID
- This handbook
- A laptop computer and charger
- ATM card and credit card (we recommend bringing 3 debit/credit cards to use to access money while abroad)
- Battery-operated alarm clock
- Camera, charger, and cable(s)
- Adapter and converter for your host country (and any countries you plan to visit)
- Daily use backpack for weekend trips

### **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 (for the girls)
- 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 needed

### **Toiletries:**

- A full supply of any prescription medications you will need during your complete time abroad—be sure to 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
- Deodorant/ antiperspirant
- Contraceptives
- 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, and is available for purchase via <http://www.istc.org>
- Unlocked cell phone and charger
- Bed linens and towels (check with your program to see if these will be provided)
- Refillable water bottle
- iPod or MP3 player
- Journal

## **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: