

Student Resource Guide for Study Abroad

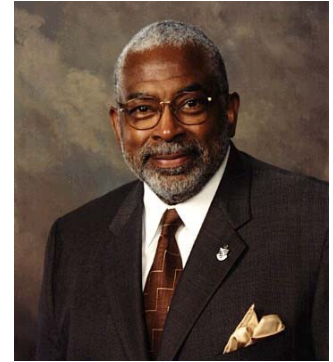


Table of Contents

Welcome from the Vice President for Academic Affairs	3
Welcome from the Assistant Vice President for International Affairs	4
Things you need to know:	
ASU Policies	
Drug and Alcohol Policies	5
Student Code of Conduct	9
Sexual Harassment Information	12
Testing and Disability Center	18
Study Abroad Behavior Policy	19
Cultural Adjustment Information	20
CDC Information	23
State Department Information for Students	27
State Department Information on Safety	20
Cell Phone Information	43
Resources for Travel	46



AUGUSTA STATE
UNIVERSITY



August 2008

Dear Prospective Study Abroad Student:

In a recent resolution to raise awareness and to help increase the number of U.S. students studying abroad, the U.S. Senate stated: **“Study abroad programs not only open doors to foreign language learning, but also empower students to better understand themselves and others through a comparison of cultural values and ways of life.”** The resolution also encouraged higher education institutions to promote and expand study abroad opportunities.

As Vice President for Academic Affairs, it is my honor to introduce you to Augusta State University’s study abroad programs for Fall Semester of 2008, and Spring and Summer Semesters of 2009. This year, ASU faculty members will lead study abroad programs to **Australia and New Zealand, Senegal, China, France, Salamanca, Peru, Ecuador, Scotland, South Africa, Costa Rica, and Sweden** and we expect more than 250 ASU students and students from other colleges and universities to join them. We would like to save a place for you.

Studying abroad will provide you extremely rich educational experiences and life-long benefits. Many students who have studied abroad share the opinion of Troy Peden, a co-founder of GoAbroad.com, that: “Studying abroad may be that defining moment in your education that will change your life. Nothing will be quite the same after you have studied abroad. Your perspectives will be global, your attitudes will be international and you will have memories that you will carry forever. Your résumé will be more attractive, in some cases your language proficiency will be advanced, and you will have developed lifelong friendships.”

The largest misconception that prevents students from participating in study abroad is its perceived inaccessibility. Students who have studied abroad were pleasantly surprised when they learned how easy it was to put everything together. Financial aid, sweat equity programs, and scholarships are available, most major fields of study can partake, and study abroad is an experience available for every student.

A recent study on the benefits of studying abroad by Mary M. Dwyer, Ph.D. and Courtney K. Peters in *Transitions Abroad Magazine* shows that students who go abroad become more “respectful of other cultures and political and economic systems” and have often “served as a catalyst for increased maturity.” These are qualities employers and graduate schools will certainly value. Many big name companies have locations all over the world and will be looking for people who can travel to foreign countries without offending or being offended by the difference in cultures.

Our world is constantly changing, and globalization of educational programs through study abroad is a vital part of our future. To study abroad is truly an experience that I hope every one of our students will enjoy. Augusta State University offers you the best educational experiences that we possibly can, and we are committed to continuing this tradition through our unique, challenging and exciting study abroad programs. We would be pleased to have you join us on a trip abroad this year. Give us a call, check our website, or stop by and see us as soon as you can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Samuel Sullivan".

Samuel Sullivan



Welcome to Study Abroad!

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter, because the fact that you are reading it means that you have taken the first step towards becoming a study abroad student. You are preparing for an adventure of a lifetime, a trip that will change the way you think about the world and your ideas about culture, life, and your education. I believe that study abroad students are some of our best and brightest, as well as being better prepared for the world ahead of graduation.

An important aspect of study abroad is health and safety. In order to make your trip the best it can be, the university works behind the scenes to ensure and all Board of Regent's rules are followed and that all national and state rules on travel are followed. There is a lot of information coming to us from many sources and we want to make sure that you have access to the most important information for yourselves.

Although many programs will run without a single incident, we must always be prepared for anything that may happen on a study abroad program. Your professors have been trained, the university has created a wonderful system for study abroad, and you will have read this information too. Together we can make sure that in the unlikely event of an emergency we are all safe.

Go and explore the world and have a wonderful and safe time abroad.

Dr. Holly Carter
Assistant Vice President for International Affairs

Things you need to know: ASU's Alcohol and Drug Policy, taken from the Student Handbook

ALCOHOL AND DRUG POLICY

Revised June 2006

The purpose of the Alcohol and Drug Policy is to uphold local, state and federal laws and to help create a safer campus. Augusta State University prohibits the unlawful possession, use, or distribution of illicit drugs and alcohol and distributes this document as a part of the University's compliance with the Drug Free Schools and Communities Act Amendments of 1989. Effective April 1, 1991, the serving or consumption of alcoholic beverages by all students, employees, alumni, and guests on all ASU campuses was prohibited at all events/functions that are university affiliated, and any activity sponsored by organizations associated with ASU except by prior approval of the President. Individuals and groups are accountable for their choices and behavior. Campus advertising of products and services related to alcohol is prohibited (vendor policy available in Vice President for Business Operations Office). ASU is considered a Drug Free Campus and Workplace.

STUDENT MISCONDUCT

The Drug-Free Post-Secondary Education Act of 1990 provides for mandatory suspension of individual students committing certain felony offenses involving marijuana, controlled substances, or dangerous drugs. It applies to students enrolled in courses for academic credit.

Violations and offenses of the laws regarding drugs and alcohol will be prosecuted on campus through the judicial process found in the **Student Code of Conduct** (published in the Jaguar Student Handbook). Additionally, students will face criminal prosecution through the Augusta State University Public Safety Department and local law enforcement authorities. This prosecution will proceed under Georgia and/or federal law according to the appropriate statutes and sanctions. Students and employees found to be in violation of this policy will be held accountable for their actions and will face disciplinary action and/or legal prosecution. Students and employees may also be held accountable for allowing or soliciting violations of the standards of conduct by their guests. University sanctions imposed on those found guilty may include probation, loss of privileges, restitution, suspension, dismissal or expulsion. Disciplinary sanctions for students convicted of a felony or misdemeanor offense involving the manufacture, distribution, sale, possession or use of marijuana, controlled substances, or other illegal or dangerous drugs, may include the forfeiture of academic credit and possible temporary or permanent suspension or expulsion from the institution. In addition, a student who has been convicted of any offense under any federal or state law involving the possession or sale of a controlled substance may not be eligible to receive any grant, loan or work study assistance. For more information, contact the **Financial Aid Office**.

Student organizations which knowingly permit illegal drug activity will be excluded from campus for a minimum of one year, and leases or agreements for use of University property will automatically terminate pursuant to Board of Regents Policy and Georgia law.

Students residing at University Village must abide by the University Housing Alcohol and Drug Policy as outlined in the Resident Handbook. To learn more about the policy and sanctions associated with violating the policy, obtain a copy of the Resident Handbook from the University Village leasing office or visit the **University Village Website**.

CRIMINAL SANCTIONS

Georgia law prohibits the purchase or possession of alcohol by a person under the age of 21, or the furnishing of alcohol to such a person. Driving under the influence of alcohol or other drugs or possession of an open container of alcohol while operating a motor vehicle is illegal. It is against Georgia law, under certain circumstances, to walk or be upon a roadway while under the influence of alcohol or other drugs. The punishment of these offenses may include imprisonment, payment of a fine, mandatory treatment and education programs, community service, forfeiture of motor vehicles and mandatory loss of one's driver's license.

Under Georgia and federal law, it is a crime to possess, manufacture, sell, or distribute illegal drugs. Federal sanctions for the illegal possession of drugs include imprisonment up to 1 year and/or minimum fine of \$1,000 for a first conviction, imprisonment for 15 days-2 years and a minimum fine of \$2,500 for a second drug conviction; and imprisonment for 90 days-3 years and a minimum fine of \$5,000 for a third or subsequent drug conviction. For possession of a mixture or substance which contains a cocaine base, federal sanctions include 5-20 years in prison and a minimum fine of \$1,000, for a first conviction if the mixture of substance exceeds 5 grams, for a second conviction if the mixture or substance exceeds 3 grams, and for a third or subsequent conviction if the mixture or substance exceeds 1 gram. Additional possible penalties for the illegal possession of drugs are forfeiture of real or personal property used to possess or to facilitate possession of a controlled substance if the offense is punishable by more than 1 year imprisonment; forfeiture of vehicles, boats, aircraft, or any other conveyance used, or intended for use, to transport or conceal drugs; civil fine up to \$10,000 per violation; denial of federal benefits, such as student loans, grants, contracts, and professional and commercial licenses for up to 1 year for a first and up to 5 years for a second or subsequent offense; successful completion of a drug treatment program; community service; and ineligibility to receive or purchase a firearm.

As required by Federal regulations, you may review the following pages detailing Federal penalties for drug trafficking and state sanctions for unlawful possession or distribution of illicit drugs.

- **Federal Trafficking Penalties – Marijuana**
- **Federal Trafficking Penalties**
- **Georgia State Drug Law Summary**

Violations occurring within a Drug Free Zone (on or within 1,000 feet of any ASU campus) may carry enhanced penalties. Specific information about these penalties is available from the **Public Safety Office** on the Walton Way campus.

HEALTH RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE

Misuse of alcohol and other drugs can result in, or make worse, a number of personal, relationship, physical or legal problems. Such use may result in: impaired judgment and coordination, making driving dangerous; damage to vital organs such as the heart, stomach, liver and brain; inability to learn and remember information; psychosis and severe anxiety; unwanted or unprotected sex resulting in pregnancy, sexually transmitted disease (including AIDS), or sexual assault; and serious injury or death. Women should be aware that they are more likely to become intoxicated faster and stay intoxicated longer than a man of the same weight, with the same drinking history, ingesting the same amount of alcohol. Intoxicated women are often perceived by men as more interested in sex than they really are and as easy targets for sexual aggression. Mothers who drink alcohol during pregnancy may give birth to infants with fetal alcohol syndrome. These infants have irreversible physical abnormalities and mental retardation. Research has also shown that children of alcoholic parents are at a greater risk than other youngsters of becoming alcoholics. Men should be aware that excessive alcohol consumption can cause problems with impotence. In addition, men who are intoxicated in sexual situations also run a risk of committing sexual assault. Every year thousands of people are treated in hospitals for drug-related accidents and mental and physical illness. Use of alcohol and other drugs is also common when suicides occur. Additionally, the long-term use of alcohol or other drugs may set up habitual patterns that can lead to psychological and physical addiction. Cocaine, crack and heroin, for example, are highly addictive and physically dangerous. Use of these may result in coma and/or death. Marijuana users may impair or reduce their short term memory/comprehension, reduce coordination/energy level and often have a lowered immune system and are at an increased risk for lung cancer.

To learn of additional health risks associated with the use of alcohol or other drugs, contact the **Counseling Center** or view the chart below.

- **Uses and Effects of Controlled Substances**

SMOKING POLICY AND HEALTH RISKS

Smoking is prohibited in all campus buildings and in any state automobiles, trucks or enclosed golf carts. Smoking is permitted only in officially designated smoking shelters or outside of all buildings, except within 25 feet of building entrances. The definition of a building entrance includes doorway, steps, fire escape, exterior chair lift & the immediate clear passage to the same.

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death for both men and women & is also the most preventable cancer. More than 87% of lung cancers are caused directly by smoking and some of the rest are caused by environmental exposure to tobacco smoke. Until tobacco use is sharply decreased, lung cancer will continue to be the number one cause of cancer death in the U.S., killing more than 160,000 Americans every year.

EDUCATION AND TREATMENT RESOURCES

ON-CAMPUS:

All undergraduate students of Augusta State University are required to complete Wellness 1000, which includes an education segment on alcohol and other drugs. In addition, faculty, staff and students are regularly exposed to **alcohol and other drug prevention and education programs** hosted by various Student Affairs offices & the Alcohol and other Drug Task Force. The Athletic Department also provides substance abuse education and a drug-screening program for student-athletes. Individual counseling for students and employees with problems of drug and alcohol abuse is available in the Counseling Center on the Augusta State University campus. Call 737-1471 to make an appointment. If additional services beyond the scope of the Counseling Center appear necessary, referrals will be made.

OFF-CAMPUS:

In addition to the ASU Counseling Center, there are other resources listed in the telephone directory for students or employees desiring help with alcohol and drug use/abuse problems. Refer to the “Alcoholism Information & Treatment Centers” and “Drug Abuse & Addiction Information & Treatment” sections in the yellow pages.

LOCAL RESOURCES:

Aiken Center for Alcohol & Drug Services	(803) 649-1900
Al Anon Information Center	(706) 738-7984
Alcoholics Anonymous - Augusta	(706) 860-8331
Alcoholics Anonymous - North Augusta	(803) 279-1060
Augusta Counseling Services	(706)737-5700
Bradford Health Services	(706) 854-1126
Celebrate Recovery at Mosaic United Methodist Church	(706) 650-9187
East Central Georgia Community Mental Health Center	(706) 432-4800
Narcotics Anonymous	(706) 855-2419
Steppingstones to Recovery	(706) 733-1935

HELP LINES:

Community Mental Health Crisis Line	(706) 560-2943
Drug Helpline	1-800-662-HELP
Georgia Drug Abuse Helpline	1-800-338-6745
Georgia Tobacco Quit Line	1-877-270-STOP

Concerns, suggestions or questions about this document should be submitted to the Alcohol and Drug Task Force via the Dean of Students Office, (706) 737-1411.

Things you need to know: ASU's Student Code of Conduct, taken from the Student Handbook

Student Code of Conduct

Code of Conduct

I. Definitions:

- A. "Institution" refers to Augusta State University and, collectively, to those responsible for its control and operation.
- B. "Students" includes all persons taking courses at the institution: full-time and part-time, undergraduate and graduate.
- C. "President" refers to the president of the institution unless otherwise stipulated.
- D. "Institutional Government": All constituents of the institution community are free, individually and collectively, to express their views on issues of institutional policy and on matters of interest to the student body. The role of student government and its responsibilities shall be made explicit in a constitution approved by the student body and faculty. Students are entitled to participate in all discussions of educational policy.

II. The following rules shall be known as the Augusta State University Student Code of Conduct:

- A. Bill of Rights: The following enumeration of rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage other rights retained by students as members of the student body or as citizens of the university community at large.
1. Free inquiry, expression, and assembly are guaranteed to all students.
 2. The right of students to be secure in their persons, papers, and effects against unreasonable searches and seizures is guaranteed.
 3. No administrative disciplinary sanctions may be imposed upon any student without notice to the accused of the nature and cause of the charges and without an opportunity for a fair hearing. This shall include the student's confrontation with witnesses and the assistance of a person of the student's choosing.

III. Classroom Expression & Course Related Behavior Discussion and expression of all views relevant to the subject matter are permitted in the classroom, subject only to the responsibility of the instructor to maintain order.

- A. Students are responsible for learning the content of any course for which they are enrolled.
- B. Requiring participation in classroom discussion and submission of written exercises is consistent with this Section.

- C. To maintain classroom order, the faculty member has the right and responsibility to take the steps he or she deems necessary and reasonable, including private or public requests that the student(s) refrain from disruptive behavior.
- D. If the faculty member determines that any improper behavior is of a recurring pattern or is of a serious nature, the faculty member may immediately expel a student from the actual classroom. For example, a student who becomes physically or verbally aggressive should be expelled from the classroom, and Public Safety may be called for any necessary assistance. After an expulsion from the classroom, the faculty may also officially withdraw the student from the course. However, any action to officially withdraw a student from the course must be reported in writing to the student, department chair, and Dean of Students. Without the written consent of the faculty member, the student may not be reinstated in the course from which s/he was withdrawn by the instructor for behavior reasons. The student, however, may seek other interim remedies from the appropriate department chair. If the faculty feels threatened or if the misconduct is of an abusive nature, the faculty may file charges against the student through the Dean of Students.
- E. If the faculty member feels threatened by the behavior of a student outside of the classroom, the faculty member may officially withdraw the student from the course. The procedures for notification and appeal would be the same as those in Section D above.

IV. Prohibited Conduct Generally, institutional discipline shall be limited to conduct which adversely affects the institutional community's pursuit of its educational objectives. The following misconduct is subject to disciplinary action:

- A. All forms of dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism (using the ideas or writings of another as one's own), knowingly furnishing false information to the institution, forgery, and alteration or use of institutional documents or instruments of identification with intent to defraud.
- B. Internal disruption or obstruction of teaching, research, administration, disciplinary proceedings, or other institutional activities. This includes threats, both verbal and written, and menacing gestures.
- C. Physical abuse, or threatened abuse, of any person on institutional premises or at institutional sponsored or supervised functions.
- D. Theft
 1. No student shall sell a textbook not his/her own without written permission of the owner.
 2. No student shall take, attempt to take, or keep in his/her possession, items of institutional property, or items belonging to students, faculty, staff, student groups, or visitors to the campus without proper authorization.
 3. Limited recreational game playing, that is not part of an authorized and assigned research or instructional activity, is tolerated. University computing and network services are not to be used for extensive or competitive recreational game playing. Recreational game players

occupying a seat in a public computing facility must give up that seat when others who need to use the facility for academic or research purposes are waiting.

- E. Violation of published institutional regulations including those relating to entry and use of institutional facilities.
- F. Weapons: Students are prohibited from possession of firearms on institutional property or at events sponsored or supervised by the institution or any recognized institutional organization. The possession of any other offensive weapon is prohibited.
- G. Gambling: The playing of cards or any games of skill or chance for money or other items of value is prohibited.
- H. Use of Explosives: No student shall possess, furnish, sell or use explosives of any kind on institutional property or at functions sponsored or supervised by the institution or any recognized university organization.
- I. Lost and Found Policy: Reference GA Code 16-8-6. All lost and found property should be reported and turned in to the Office of Public Safety. If property is not claimed in 60 days, it will be turned in to the party who found it.
- J. Drugs: The possession or use (without valid medical or dental prescription), manufacture, furnishing, or sale of any narcotic or dangerous drug controlled by federal or Georgia law is prohibited (see Section on Drugs and Alcohol).
- K. Disorderly Conduct
 1. Disorderly or obscene conduct or breach of the peace on institutional property or at any function sponsored or supervised by the institution or any recognized institutional organization is prohibited.
 2. No student shall push, strike or physically assault any member of the faculty, administration, staff, or student body or any visitor to the campus.
 3. Conduct on institutional property, or at functions sponsored or supervised by the institution or any recognized institutional organization, which materially interferes with the normal operation of the institution or the requirements of discipline, is prohibited.
 4. No student shall enter or attempt to enter any dance, social, athletic or any other event sponsored or supervised by the institution or any recognized institutional organization without credentials for admissions, i.e., ticket, identification card, invitation, etc., or in violation of any reasonable qualifications established for attendance. At such institutional functions a student must present proper credentials to properly identified institutional faculty and staff upon their request. Failure to provide proper credentials could result in expulsion from the event or institutional property.

Things you need to know: ASU's Sexual Harassment Policy, taken from the Student Handbook

Definition of Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination which is prohibited by law. Sexual harassment is unwelcome verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, which creates an unproductive or offensive, hostile, or intimidating working or learning environment and which has a harmful effect on an individual. Federal law provides that it shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer, because of the sex of any person, to discharge without cause, to refuse to hire, or otherwise discriminate against a person with respect to any matter directly or indirectly related to employment or academic standing. Harassment of an employee or student on the basis of sex violates federal law. Sexual harassment of employees or students in the University System of Georgia is prohibited (Section 802.18 of Board of Regents Policy) and shall subject the offender to dismissal or other penalties in compliance with procedural due process requirements.

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature are inappropriate in the university environment. Such conduct constitutes sexual harassment when the Sexual Harassment Committee confirms that the conduct constitutes sexual harassment and when the offended party perceives the conduct to have the same effect as described in #1, #2 or #3 below:

1. Submission to such conduct is made explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of a individual's employment or academic standing; or
2. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment or academic decisions affecting an individual; or
3. Such conduct unreasonably interferes with an individual's work or academic performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working or academic environment.

Examples of sexual harassment may include but are not limited to:

- inappropriate comments of a sexual nature including remarks about a person's clothing, body, sexual activity, experience, or orientation;
- inappropriate letters, notes, or other written materials;
- inappropriate sexually explicit statements, questions, jokes, or anecdotes;
- suggestive or insulting sounds;
- suggestive or obscene gestures;
- Inappropriately displaying sexually oriented materials such as photographs, videos, computer images, graphics, cartoons, or drawings. It should be noted that sexually explicit materials may at times be appropriately used in academic settings.
- inappropriate touching, patting, hugging, or brushing against a person's body;
- attempted or actual kissing or fondling;

- Inappropriate invitations or propositions for sexual activity.

This pattern of conduct creates a hostile environment when the conduct unreasonably interferes with a person's work or academic environment. A single remark is not likely to be considered sexual harassment.

Scope of Policy

It is important to note that, under this definition of sexual harassment, it is not necessary that physical harassment occur or be threatened or intended. It is also important to note that conduct of this type can result from a lack of awareness of the offended person's sensitivities or from an attitude of general indifference toward the sensitivities of others.

If lack of awareness or insensitivity is a factor, the most immediate solution to sexual harassment might well be that the offended party advises the other party that he/she finds the other party's conduct (touching, language, graphics, etc.) to be offensive (intimidating, hostile, etc.) and asks that the other party refrain from this conduct. Offensive conduct is a basis for complaint even where no conditions regarding employment or academic standing have been implied or expressed.

This policy is intended to cover sexual harassment by peers or by persons at different levels of authority in the work or study environment (for example, faculty-faculty, staff-staff, student-student, student-faculty, faculty-student harassment, etc.) This policy applies only to sexual harassment. Those who feel they have been harassed or discriminated against for other reasons, such as gender or race, should avail themselves of other grievance procedures (see appropriate grievance procedures). More severe behaviors, such as stalking or threats to physical safety, should be reported to Public Safety or the police.

Retaliation Policy

Retaliation against an individual for reporting sexual harassment or for participating in an investigation is prohibited. Retaliation is a serious violation which can subject the offender to sanctions independent of the merits of the sexual harassment allegation. Examples of retaliatory actions may include but are not limited to punitive uses of:

- grades;
- performance evaluations;
- employee action (e.g., termination, transfer, or demotion);
- scheduling;
- resource allocation;
- work assignments.

Consensual Relationships

Consensual romantic or sexual relationships between supervisor and employee or

between faculty and their students are strongly discouraged. No person involved in a consensual relationship should have direct responsibility for evaluating the employment or academic performance or for making decisions regarding the promotion, tenure, or compensation of the other party to the relationship. In the event of an allegation of sexual harassment, the University will be less sympathetic to a defense based upon consent when the facts establish that a professional power differential existed within the relationship.

False Allegations

It is a violation of this policy for anyone knowingly to make false accusations of sexual harassment. Failure to prove a claim of sexual harassment is not equivalent to a false allegation. Those who are falsely accused may avail themselves of other grievance procedures (see appropriate grievance procedures).

Processing of Complaints

Alleged incidents of sexual harassment should be promptly reported. The complainant may choose to file the initial complaint with any chair, administrator, or member of the Sexual Harassment Committee. All complaints consistent with the definitions of sexual harassment herein should be forwarded to and processed by the Sexual Harassment Committee. It should be noted that immediate supervisors, instructors, members of the Sexual Harassment Committee, etc., who are considered to be the offending party in a sexual harassment complaint may be bypassed in processing a complaint.

The names of the members of the Sexual Harassment Committee are listed on the annual Augusta State University Statement on Sexual Harassment, which is posted on central bulletin boards throughout the campus and on this University web site. Names and copies of the policy are also available through the following departments:

- Human Resources (Katherine and Pickens Street)
- Student Activities (Jaguar Student Activities Center)
- Vice President for Academic Affairs (Bellevue Hall)
- Vice President for Business and Student Services (Fanning Hall)
- Dean of Students (Bellevue Hall)

The complainant will be advised about both the informal and formal steps that can be taken to redress the situation. All allegations of sexual harassment will be investigated promptly and thoroughly by the Sexual Harassment Committee. NOTE: This Policy is consistent with Board of Regents Personnel Policy 802.18 and Section 703 of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended. Legal actions for claims of sexual harassment may also be taken under Title IX and Executive Order 11246.

The committee will use its best efforts to keep complaints and reviews of complaints confidential. Only proper authorities will be advised of the situation. Any complaint,

informal or formal, received by a member of the Sexual Harassment Committee will be reviewed by the entire committee and will be considered confidential.

Informal Grievance Procedure

It is advantageous to all members of the University community for allegations of sexual harassment to be resolved promptly and to the satisfaction of all involved parties. Individuals seeking resolution of a sexual harassment complaint may first seek to pursue informal procedures through the Sexual Harassment Committee. As part of the informal step, the Sexual Harassment Committee will undertake an independent informal investigation of the incident.

Informal procedures may include but are not limited to:

1. A discussion between the complainant and one or more authorized officials;
2. A discussion with the person against whom the complaint is made;
3. A discussion with the supervisor(s) of the person against whom the complaint is made; or
4. A discussion between the person against whom the complaint is made and an authorized official.

If the complaint can be resolved informally in a manner that is agreeable to both the complainant and the respondent, the Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee shall summarize the resolution of the complaint in a written report and provide a copy of the summary to the complainant and the respondent.

If it is the finding of the Committee during the informal grievance procedure that the respondent should be exonerated of any complaints, this finding shall be clearly stated in the summary. Within ten (10) working days of the agreement between complainant and respondent, the Chair will send the summary and any written documents submitted or developed during the proceedings to the President's Office for permanent filing. At the discretion of the Committee, copies of the summary may also be sent to any supervisor or other person who was involved in the informal resolution.

If the complaint cannot be resolved informally, the Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee will notify the complainant that he or she may file a formal grievance; the Chair will also inform the respondent that such notification has been given. Within ten (10) working days after notifying the complainant, the Chair shall send a written summary of the committee's efforts and any written documents submitted or developed during the proceedings to the President's Office for permanent filing. If it is the finding of the Committee during the informal grievance procedures that even in a case where a complaint cannot be resolved informally the respondent should be exonerated of any complaints, this finding shall be clearly stated in the summary. At the committee's discretion, copies of the summary may be sent to any person who was involved in efforts to reach an informal resolution.

Formal Grievance Procedure

If a complaint cannot be resolved informally or if the complainant wishes to bypass the informal procedure, the formal grievance procedure may be initiated.

1. The complainant will submit a statement of a grievance to the Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee which shall include a written statement of the alleged incident and the relief desired.
2. The Sexual Harassment Committee will provide a copy of the complaint and the requested relief to the respondent. The respondent shall respond in writing to the Sexual Harassment Committee within ten (10) working days following the receipt of the complaint. The respondent's reply will be provided to the complainant. If the matter is not resolved through the exchange of correspondence, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
3. The Sexual Harassment Committee will ordinarily arrange a meeting between the complainant and the respondent within ten (10) working days after receipt of the respondent's reply in Step 2 above. This meeting will be chaired by the Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee and attended by members of the Sexual Harassment Committee. The purpose of this meeting is to attempt to reach a mutually agreeable resolution of the complaint. Both the complainant and the respondent may be accompanied by a non-participating advisor. If the outcome of this meeting is not satisfactory, the complaint may proceed to the next step.
4. The Sexual Harassment Committee will undertake an independent investigation of the incident. The procedures for this investigation will include the following:
 - The complainant will be afforded the opportunity to file another statement, setting forth in detail the alleged incidents of sexual harassment, any supporting documentation, and the relief desired;
 - The Sexual Harassment Committee will invite statements from witnesses suggested by the complainant;
 - The respondent will be afforded the opportunity to file another statement after reviewing the written statement of the complainant; and

The Sexual Harassment Committee or other authorized individual will invite statements from witnesses suggested by the respondent.

1. Within ten (10) working days after concluding the proceedings, the chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee shall prepare a written report that summarizes the Committee's proceedings, findings, and any recommendations for action to be taken by the University. The findings may range from exoneration of the respondent to substantiation of all complaints. Copies of the summary shall be sent to the complainant and the respondent. At the committee's discretion, copies of the summary may be sent to any person(s) involved in formal grievance proceedings and to any university official(s) in the chain of supervision above the respondent. Within ten (10) working days after the conclusion of the Committee's

- work, the summary and any written documents submitted or developed during the proceedings will be sent to the President's Office for permanent filing.
2. If a complaint against an employee is substantiated, the Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee will communicate its proposed resolution or recommendations for action to the appropriate university official(s), ordinarily including the respondent's immediate supervisor or department chair and the chain of supervision above the immediate supervisor. If a complaint against a student is substantiated, the Chair of the Sexual Harassment Committee will communicate its proposed resolution or recommendations for action to the Dean of Students. In cases of a substantiated complaint against the President, the communication, along with the summary of the committee's work and any written documents submitted or developed during the proceedings, shall be sent to the Chancellor of the University System.
 3. If the proposed resolution or recommendation is not satisfactory to the complainant or the respondent, either party may, within ten (10) working days of the receipt of communication from the Committee, submit a written request for a review by the President. The request must explain and substantiate the grounds for a review. Denial of due process is an acceptable reason for review. Ordinarily within ten (10) working days after receiving a request for review, the President shall either accept or deny the request. If the request for review is accepted, the President may appoint an ad hoc committee to conduct the review and shall communicate the results of the review ordinarily within twenty (20) working days after granting the request for a review. Under ordinary circumstances, the results of the review shall constitute final institutional action in the case.

Sexual Harassment Committee Members

Dalton Brannen, College of Business Administration, 706-737-1560,
dbrannen@aug.edu

Betty House, Department of Languages, Literature, and Communications, 706-729-2167,
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Sabina Widner (Chair), Department of Psychology, 706-667-4618, swidner@aug.edu

Wes Zamzow, University Advancement, 706-667-4694, wzamzow@aug.edu

Consultants (non-voting)

Joyce Jones, Vice President for Student Services and Dean of Students, 706-737-1411,
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Things you need to know: ASU's Testing and Disability Center

Because Augusta State University believes academically qualified individuals with disabilities should have equal opportunity and access to a quality education, we have been actively involved in fostering an environment that encourages full participation by students with disabilities in every segment of the University. The Office of Disability Services was established to help ensure an accessible and positive college experience for the students with disabilities. Our Office provides a variety of services and accommodations to meet the needs of disability related concerns in accordance with the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

The Testing and Disability center is located in the Quadrangle of the ASU Campus. The phone number is 706-737-1496.

Things you need to know: ASU's Study Abroad Behavior Policy

- Please understand that you are subject to the ASU Code of Conduct while you are on Study Abroad. Any offenses will be reported to the Dean of Students and will be handled through her office.
- On site, the program director has the ability to issue warnings to students. The following actions will be taken by the program director.
- First Offense: After a first offense, students will meet with the director
- Second Offense: After a second offense, students will receive a written letter of reprimand and may be asked to report daily to one of the program director for a specified length of time. If no further offenses occur, the letter will be destroyed. If, however, there should be additional offenses, the letter will become part of a student's file.
- Third Offense: After a third offense, the program directors will telephone the students' parents, if appropriate, to obtain their assistance in correcting the students' behavior and to inform the parents that the students will be expelled from the program after a next offense.
- Fourth Offense: For a fourth offense, the student will be expelled from the program, with no refund.
- The following behaviors are considered serious enough to warrant immediate dismissal from the program. Students who commit such infractions will be expelled from the program and will receive **no** refund of any costs:
 - Theft, vandalism or any other criminal behavior
 - Abuse of alcohol and/or drugs
 - Lewd or promiscuous conduct
 - Sexual harassment

Things you need to know: University System of Georgia's Office of International Education information on Cultural Adjustment

Cultural Adjustment

During their study abroad program, students may experience physical and emotional discomfort from being in another country or in a place different from their place of origin. In order to effectively manage that change, the following suggestions are offered:

- Be flexible; tolerate ambiguity; expect things to be different.
- Be patient; don't try to understand everything immediately.
- Give yourself permission to fail; experiment with new customs.
- Develop a sense of humor; don't take things too seriously.
- Identify cultural informants who can help you learn.
- If problems arise, assume your share of the responsibility.

Cultural adjustment occurs in phases and students may experience the various phases with differing levels of intensity.

Students can also prepare for cultural adjustment before going abroad by reading books about the culture, travel guide books, local magazines or newspapers and by meeting people from the country you will be visiting. The web resource "What's Up With Culture?" is also a useful tool aimed at enhancing successful cultural adjustment for study abroad participants.

Cultural Adjustment Phases

Students may experience the following various phases with differing levels of intensity. These phases may not be experienced in the order listed, but the information provides a general idea of the personal challenges that may await students while studying abroad.

- **Honeymoon or Tourist Phase**

This phase begins when visitors first encounter the new culture. Like a tourist, students

may be fascinated by their experiences in a new and different culture. However, their enthusiasm for novelty may soon diminish, especially if favorite comforts are not available. During this phase, students tend to filter new experiences through the lens of their home culture and may rely on stereotypes to comprehend the host culture.

- **Hostility Phase**

After the initial excitement wears off, students may experience a variety of difficulties in adjusting to the host culture. These difficulties may range from trying to understand the language to difficulties with routine living. Coping mechanisms learned in the home culture fail to accomplish desired results in the new culture. A situation that may have invoked curiosity during the honeymoon phase may now produce feelings of puzzlement, surprise, frustration, embarrassment, or anger. Some individuals may become judgmental about the new culture and express derogatory generalities such as, "They don't like me," "I don't like them," "They can't get anything right over here." During this phase, students may need to temporarily retreat into experiences that are familiar or that remind them of the home culture. They may need to call home or connect with others from the home country to discuss their feelings and thoughts. All of these are healthy coping mechanisms and can give individuals renewed energy to confront cultural differences.

- **Humor or "Grin and Bear It" Phase**

Gradually, students develop skills to successfully navigate the new culture. They make new friends, begin to relax in their new surroundings, develop confidence, and their sense of humor returns. Experiences that may have produced feelings of embarrassment or anger during the hostility phase are now laughed away. Humor replaces criticism. There is less need to "fight" the host culture, and there is less need to filter the new experiences through the lens of the home culture. Individuals are acquiring new perspectives and cultural insights; they are developing new perceptual lenses.

- **Effective Adjustment Phase**

Over time, students must confront deeper cultural and personal issues. They must continue to study and interact with the host culture to refine their understanding of it. Ultimately, newcomers begin to accept and respect the new culture as just another way of living. The new culture makes sense. They come to feel a greater sense of belonging. Individuals enjoy the host country customs and may genuinely miss the new customs and people when they return to their home culture. Because of the changes that occur in this phase, students often re-cycle through similar adjustment phases upon returning home.

Things you need to know: CDC Travel Information, taken from the Center for Disease Control's Website

CDC Information

Study-abroad programs offer students an exciting opportunity for learning and cultural exchange. Study-abroad programs are increasing in availability and geographic diversity; thus, students can expect to deal with cultures and environments that are very different from their own.

Students may be at increased risk of illness or injury due to these cultural and environmental differences, such as climate extremes, the presence of certain insects, inadequate sanitation, and poorly lit roads. Travel to developing regions of the world, especially for a period of several weeks or months, can be particularly challenging.

Few events can negatively impact the travel experience more than becoming sick or being injured while far away from home. To reduce health risks while studying abroad, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the following general guidelines for students:

Before travel

- Be sure to check with a health-care provider to make sure you are up-to-date with all routine vaccinations (i.e., measles, mumps, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis, hepatitis A and B, meningitis, influenza, and polio). Diseases such as measles and mumps remain common in many parts of the world, including some developed countries.
- See a health-care provider or a travel medicine specialist, ideally 4-6 weeks before travel, to get any additional vaccinations, medications, or information you may need to stay healthy abroad. If it is less than 4 weeks before travel, you should still see a health-care provider since there may be some vaccinations, medications, or prevention information that could be beneficial to you. The section of the CDC Travelers' Health website entitled Travel Medicine Clinics has information about locating a travel medicine specialist or a travel clinic.
- It is especially important that you consult a health-care provider who specializes in travel medicine if you have a complicated travel itinerary (e.g., travel to rural areas of developing countries) or have a current medical condition that will need to be managed while abroad.
- Visit CDC's Travelers' Health website to educate yourself about any disease risks and preventive measures for the countries where you plan to study. If you are visiting a developing country, you are at greater risk for illness or injury than those who travel to developed countries (e.g., Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Western Europe), where the health risks are similar to those found in the United States.
- Prepare a travel health kit that includes

- an ample supply of your prescribed medications in their original, clearly labeled containers (copies of all prescriptions should be carried, including the generic names for medications, and a note from the prescribing physician on letterhead stationery for controlled substances and injectable medications);
- an antidiarrheal medication;
- alcohol-based hand gel (containing at least 60% alcohol);
- an antibiotic for self-treatment of most causes of acute bacterial illness;
- a thermometer;
- insect repellent containing at least 30% DEET if you plan to study in or visit a tropical or subtropical area;
- the name and telephone number of your primary health-care provider;
- a copy of your vaccination record.
- Familiarize yourself with basic first aid so you can self-treat minor injuries.
- Learn how to swim if you are inexperienced and plan to participate in recreational water activities while abroad.
- Consider a health insurance plan or additional insurance that covers medical evacuation in case you become sick or injured, if your plan does not already offer this service. Information about medical evacuation services is provided on the U.S. Department of State web page, [Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad](#).
- Identify in-country health-care resources in advance of your trip in case of a medical emergency. This is especially important if you have a pre-existing medical condition. The U.S. Department of State provides links to U.S. Embassy or Consulate websites for the country or countries you are visiting that can assist in locating [Doctors/Hospitals Abroad](#). Several private travel medicine organizations provide assistance in locating medical care abroad; see [Seeking Health Care Abroad](#) in *CDC Health Information for International Travel 2008*.
- Register with the U.S. Department of State's [Travel Registration website](#), so the U.S. Embassy or Consulate in your destination country knows of your whereabouts in the case of an emergency when it might be necessary for a consular officer to contact you. This registration is especially important if you plan to stay abroad for longer than one month, if you will be visiting a country that has an unstable political climate, or if there is a natural disaster, such as an earthquake or hurricane.

While residing abroad

To reduce your risk of illness

- In developing areas, boil your water or drink only bottled water or carbonated (bubbly) drinks from cans or bottles with intact seals. Do not drink tap water or fountain drinks or add ice to beverages. Avoid eating salads, fresh vegetables and fruits you cannot peel yourself, and unpasteurized dairy products.

- Eat only food that has been fully cooked and served hot, and avoid food from street vendors. If living with a host family, discuss any food allergies or dietary preferences in advance.
- Do not touch animals, including domestic pets, and especially do not touch monkeys, dogs, and cats, to avoid bites and serious diseases (such as rabies and plague). If you are bitten or scratched by any animal, get medical attention right away, and immediately clean the wound well with large amounts of soap and water and a povidone-iodine solution, such as Betadine®, if available.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially before meals and after going to the bathroom. If soap and water are not available and your hands are not visibly dirty, use an alcohol-based hand gel (containing at least 60% alcohol) to clean your hands. Cleaning your hands often with soap and water removes potentially infectious material from your skin and helps prevent disease transmission.
- If visiting an area where there is risk of malaria, use insect repellent and a mosquito net for sleeping, wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants outdoors between dusk and dawn, and make sure to take your malaria prevention medication before, during, and after your trip, as directed.
- If you are visiting a country that has experienced an avian flu (bird flu) outbreak, avoid poultry farms, bird markets, and other places where live poultry is raised or kept. For more information, see the Outbreak Notice: Guidelines and Recommendations, Interim Guidance about Avian Influenza A (H5N1) for U.S. Citizens Living Abroad.
- Be aware that sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS, are among the most common infections worldwide. The most reliable way to avoid transmission of sexually transmitted diseases is to abstain from sexual activity or to be in a long-term mutually monogamous relationship. For people whose sexual behaviors place them at risk for STDs, correct and consistent use of latex or polyurethane condoms when engaging in sexual activity can greatly reduce a person's risk of acquiring or transmitting STDs, including HIV infection. For more information see Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

For your safety

- Automobile accidents are the leading cause of preventable deaths in travelers. Wear your seat belt and follow the local customs and laws regarding pedestrian safety and vehicle speed. Remember to check on what side of the road people drive, because this may differ in the country or countries you will be visiting. Use helmets when riding bicycles and motorcycles.
- Remember not to drink alcoholic beverages and drive. The most important risk factor for road traffic injuries is the presence of alcohol in the blood of a driver or pedestrian who is injured.
- Be aware of the cultural impact of being involved in or causing an accident that includes injury to the local population. In unfamiliar or foreign environments, utilize a local driver. It is important to note the legal age for driving varies by country.

- Swim in well-maintained, chlorinated pools, and only if you are an experienced swimmer. Drowning is also a leading cause of death in travelers.
- If visiting an area which has risk of water-borne infections (i.e., schistosomiasis), do not swim in lakes or streams or other fresh bodies of water.
- When spending time outdoors, wear sunblock for protection from harmful effects of UV sun rays. This is especially important if you are visiting tropical areas or areas in high altitudes. See Sunburn and Skin Cancer Questions and Answers for more information.
- To prevent infections such as HIV and hepatitis B, avoid receiving tattoos, body piercings, or injections.

After your return

On return from study abroad, if you are not feeling well or have been injured, get medical attention, including psychological support and counseling, if necessary.

- It is especially important for you to get health care if you have a fever, rash, cough or difficulty breathing, or any other unusual symptoms.

If you are returning from malaria-risk areas and become sick with a fever or flu-like illness, for up to 1 year after your return, get **immediate** medical attention and be sure to tell the doctor or health-care provider your travel history.

Resources from CDC

For more information about CDC health recommendations for travel to specific destinations, select the country you are visiting from the Destinations page.

<http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentStudyAbroad.aspx>

Things you need to know: Travel Information for Students from the State Department

Studying Abroad

Studying abroad can be a fun and safe experience but it is important to realize that you are subject to the laws and customs of another country. Here are some tips prepared by the Office of Overseas Services to help keep you prepared and safe.

- Although most trips abroad are trouble free, being prepared will go a long way to avoiding the possibility of serious trouble.
- Become familiar with the basic laws and customs of the country you plan to visit before you travel.
- Remember: Reckless behavior while in another country can do more than ruin your vacation; it can land you in a foreign jail or worse! To have a safe trip, avoid risky behavior and plan ahead.

Preparing for Your Trip Abroad

Apply early for your passport and, if necessary, any visas: Passports are required to enter and/or depart most countries around the world. Apply for a passport as soon as possible. Some countries also require U.S. citizens to obtain visas before entering. Most countries require visitors who are planning to study or work abroad to obtain visas before entering. Check with the embassy of the foreign country that you are planning to visit for up-to-date visa and other entry requirements. (Passport and visa information is available on the Internet at <http://travel.state.gov> .)

Learn about the countries that you plan to visit. Before departing, take the time to do some research about the people and their culture, and any problems that the country is experiencing that may affect your travel plans. The Department of State publishes Background Notes on about 170 countries. These brief, factual pamphlets contain information on each country's culture, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation. Background Notes are available at www.state.gov .

Read the Country Specific Information. Country Specific Information provide up-to-date travel information on any country in the world that you plan to visit. They cover topics such as entry regulations, the crime and security situation, drug penalties, road conditions, and the location of the U.S. embassy, consulates, and consular agencies.

Check for Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts. Travel Warnings recommend U.S. citizens defer travel to a country because of dangerous conditions. Travel Alerts provide fast-breaking information about relatively short-term conditions that may pose risks to the security of travelers.

Register with the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. Register with the nearest U.S.

embassy or consulate through the State Department's [travel registration website](#) . Registration will make your presence and whereabouts known in case it is necessary to contact you in an emergency. In accordance with the Privacy Act, information on your welfare and whereabouts may not be released without your express authorization. Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States. (U.S. embassy and consulate locations can be found in the country's Country Specific Information.) If your family needs to reach you because of an emergency, they can pass a message to you through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services at 202-647-5225. This office will contact the embassy or consulate in the country where you are traveling and pass a message from your family to you. Remember consular officers cannot cash checks, lend money or serve as your attorney. They can, however, if the need arises, assist you in obtaining emergency funds from your family, help you find an attorney, help you find medical assistance, and replace your lost or stolen passport.

Find out what information your school offers. Find out whether your school offers additional information for students who are planning to study, travel, or work abroad. Many student advisors can provide you with information about studying or working abroad. They may also be able to provide you with information on any travel benefits for students (e.g. how to save money on transportation and accommodations, and other resources.)

Before committing yourself or your finances, find out about the organization and what it offers. The majority of private programs for vacation, study or work abroad are reputable and financially sound. However, some charge exorbitant fees, use deliberately false "educational" claims, and provide working conditions far different from those advertised. Even programs of legitimate organizations can be poorly administered.

Things you need to know: State Department Information on Safety while Traveling

A SAFE TRIP ABROAD

Foreword

When you travel abroad, the odds are in your favor that you will have a safe and incident-free trip. Travelers are, however, sometimes victimized by crime and violence, or experience unexpected difficulties. No one is better able to tell you this than the U.S. consular officers who work in more than 250 U.S. embassies and consulates around the globe. Every day of the year, U.S. embassies and consulates receive calls from American citizens in distress.

Happily, most problems can be solved over the telephone or by a visit to the Consular Section of the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate. There are other occasions, however, when U.S. consular officers are called upon to help U.S. citizens who are in foreign hospitals or prisons, or to assist the families of U.S. citizens who have passed away overseas.

We have prepared the following travel tips to help you avoid serious difficulties during your overseas travel. We wish you a safe and wonderful journey!

BEFORE YOU GO

What to Take

Safety begins when you pack. To help avoid becoming a target, do not dress so as to mark yourself as an affluent tourist. Expensive-looking jewelry, for instance, can draw the wrong attention.

Always try to travel light. You can move more quickly and will be more likely to have a free hand. You will also be less tired and less likely to set your luggage down, leaving it unattended.

Carry the minimum number of valuables, and plan places to conceal them. Your passport, cash and credit cards are most secure when locked in a hotel safe. When you have to carry them on your person, you may wish to put them in various places rather than all in one wallet or pouch. Avoid handbags, fanny packs and outside pockets that are easy targets for thieves. Inside pockets and a sturdy shoulder bag with the strap worn across your chest are somewhat safer. One of the safest places to carry valuables is in a pouch or money belt worn under your clothing.

If you wear glasses, pack an extra pair. Bring them and any medicines you need in your carry-on luggage.

To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.

Bring travelers checks and one or two major credit cards instead of cash.

Pack an extra set of passport photos along with a photocopy of your passport's information page to make replacement of your passport easier in the event it is lost or stolen.

Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.

Consider getting a telephone calling card. It is a convenient way of keeping in touch. If you have one, verify that you can use it from your overseas location(s). Access numbers to U.S. operators are published in many international newspapers. Find out your access number before you go.

What to Leave Behind

Don't bring anything you would hate to lose. Leave at home:

- valuable or expensive-looking jewelry
- irreplaceable family objects
- all unnecessary credit cards
- your Social Security card, library card, and similar items you may routinely carry in your wallet.

Leave a copy of your itinerary with family or friends at home in case they need to contact you in an emergency.

Make two photocopies of your passport identification page, airline tickets, driver's license and the credit cards that you plan to bring with you. Leave one photocopy of this data with family or friends at home; pack the other in a place separate from where you carry the originals.

Leave a copy of the serial numbers of your travelers' checks with a friend or relative at home. Carry your copy with you in a separate place and, as you cash the checks, cross them off the list.

What to Learn About Before You Go

Security

The Department of State's Country Specific Information are available for every country of the world. They describe entry requirements, currency regulations, unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political disturbances, areas of instability, and special information about driving and road conditions. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, Country Specific Information do not give advice. Instead, they describe conditions so travelers can make informed decisions about their trips.

For some countries, however, the Department of State issues a Travel Warning in addition to a Country Specific Information. The Travel Warning may recommend that Americans defer travel to that country because of a dangerous situation there.

Travel Alerts are a means to disseminate information about relatively short-term conditions posing significant risk to the security of American travelers. They are issued when there is a perceived threat, even if it does not involve Americans as a particular target group. In the past, Travel Alerts have been issued to deal with coups, pre-election disturbances, violence by terrorists and anniversary dates of specific terrorist events.

You can access Country Specific Information, Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts 24-hours a day in several ways.

Internet

The most convenient source of information about travel and consular services is the Consular Affairs home page. The web site address is <http://travel.state.gov>.

Telephone

Overseas Citizens Services at 1-888-407-4747 can answer general inquiries on safety and security overseas. This number is available from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Eastern Time, Monday through Friday (except U.S. federal holidays). Callers who are unable to use toll-free numbers, such as those calling from overseas, can obtain information and assistance from OCS during these hours by calling 1-202-501-4444.

In Person

Country Specific Information, Travel Warnings and Travel Alerts are available at any of the regional passport agencies and U.S. embassies and consulates abroad.

Local Laws and Customs

When you leave the United States, you are subject to the laws of the country you are visiting. Therefore, before you go, learn as much as you can about the local laws and customs of the places you plan to visit. Good resources are your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. In addition, keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries.

THINGS TO ARRANGE BEFORE YOU GO

Your Itinerary

As much as possible, plan to stay in larger hotels that have more elaborate security. Safety experts recommend booking a room from the second to seventh floors above ground level – high enough to deter easy entry from outside, but low enough for fire equipment to reach.

When there is a choice of airport or airline, ask your travel agent about comparative safety records.

Legal Documents

Have your affairs in order at home. If you leave a current will, insurance documents, and power of attorney with your family or a friend, you can feel secure about traveling and will be prepared for any emergency that may arise while you are away. If you have minor children, consider making guardianship arrangements for them.

Register your travel

It is a good idea to register your travel with the State Department so that you may be contacted if need be, whether because of a family emergency in the U.S. , or because of a crisis in the area in which you are traveling. Travel registration is a free service provided by the State Department, and is easily accomplished online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. (In accordance with the Privacy Act, the Department of State may not release information on your welfare or whereabouts to inquirers without your express written authorization.)

Credit

Make a note of the credit limit on each credit card that you bring, and avoid charging over that limit while traveling. Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their credit limit. Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. 1-800 numbers do not work from abroad, but your company should have a number that you can call while you are overseas.

Insurance

Find out if your personal property insurance covers you for loss or theft abroad. Also, check on whether your health insurance covers you abroad. Medicare and Medicaid do not provide payment for medical care outside the United States. Even if your health insurance will reimburse you for medical care that you pay for abroad, health insurance usually does not pay for medical evacuation from a remote area or from a country where medical facilities are inadequate. Consider purchasing a policy designed for travelers, and covering short-term health and emergency assistance, as well as medical evacuation in the event of an accident or serious illness.

PRECAUTIONS TO TAKE WHILE TRAVELING

Safety on the Street

Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially

cautious in (or avoid) areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys or poorly lit streets.

Try not to travel alone at night.

Avoid public demonstrations and other civil disturbances.

Keep a low profile and avoid loud conversations or arguments.

Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers.

Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide or sell you something at bargain prices.

Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will:

- jostle you,
- ask you for directions or the time,
- point to something spilled on your clothing,
- or distract you by creating a disturbance.

Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.

Wear the shoulder strap of your bag across your chest and walk with the bag away from the curb to avoid drive-by purse-snatchers.

Try to seem purposeful when you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know where you are going. Try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority.

Know how to use a pay telephone and have the proper change or token on hand.

Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them handy in written form so that you can signal your need for police or medical help.

Make a note of emergency telephone numbers you may need: police, fire, your hotel, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

If you are confronted, don't fight back -- give up your valuables.

Safety in Your Hotel

Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby.

Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out. Use the hotel safe.

If you are out late at night, let someone know when you expect to return.

If you are alone, do not get on an elevator if there is a suspicious-looking person inside.

Read the fire safety instructions in your hotel room. Know how to report a fire, and be sure you know where the nearest fire exits and alternate exits are located. (Count the doors between your room and the nearest exit; this could be a lifesaver if you have to crawl through a smoke-filled corridor.)

Safety on Public Transportation

If a country has a pattern of tourists being targeted by criminals on public transport, that information is mentioned in the Country Specific Information in the section about crime.

Taxis. Only take taxis clearly identified with official markings. Beware of unmarked cabs.

Trains. Well-organized, systematic robbery of passengers on trains along popular tourists routes is a problem. It is more common at night and especially on overnight trains.

If you see your way being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close to you from behind, move away. This can happen in the corridor of the train or on the platform or station.

Do not accept food or drink from strangers. Criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers. Criminals may also spray sleeping gas in train compartments. Where possible, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked securely, take turns sleeping in shifts with your traveling companions. If that is not possible, stay awake. If you must sleep unprotected, tie down your luggage and secure your valuables to the extent possible.

Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened in any way. Extra police are often assigned to ride trains on routes where crime is a serious problem.

Buses. The same type of criminal activity found on trains can be found on public buses on popular tourist routes. For example, tourists have been drugged and robbed while sleeping on buses or in bus stations. In some countries, whole busloads of passengers have been held up and robbed by gangs of bandits.

Safety When You Drive

When you rent a car, choose a type that is commonly available locally. Where possible, ask that markings that identify it as a rental car be removed. Make certain it is in good repair. If available, choose a car with universal door locks and power windows, features that give the driver better control of access. An air conditioner, when available, is also a safety feature, allowing you to drive with windows closed. Thieves can and do snatch purses through open windows of moving cars.

Keep car doors locked at all times. Wear seat belts.

As much as possible, avoid driving at night.

Don't leave valuables in the car. If you must carry things with you, keep them out of sight locked in the trunk, and then take them with you when you leave the car.

Don't park your car on the street overnight. If the hotel or municipality does not have a parking garage or other secure area, select a well-lit area.

Never pick up hitchhikers.

Don't get out of the car if there are suspicious looking individuals nearby. Drive away.

Patterns of Crime Against Motorists

In many places frequented by tourists, including areas of southern Europe, victimization of motorists has been refined to an art. Where it is a problem, U.S. embassies are aware of it and consular officers try to work with local authorities to warn the public about the dangers. In some locations, these efforts at public awareness have paid off, reducing the frequency of incidents. You may also wish to ask your rental car agency for advice on avoiding robbery while visiting tourist destinations

Carjackers and thieves operate at gas stations, parking lots, in city traffic and along the highway. Be suspicious of anyone who hails you or tries to get your attention when you are in or near your car.

Criminals use ingenious ploys. They may pose as good Samaritans, offering help for tires that they claim are flat or that they have made flat. Or they may flag down a motorist, ask for assistance, and then steal the rescuer's luggage or car. Usually they work in groups, one person carrying on the pretense while the others rob you.

Other criminals get your attention with abuse, either trying to drive you off the road, or causing an "accident" by rear-ending you.

In some urban areas, thieves don't waste time on ploys, they simply smash car windows at traffic lights, grab your valuables or your car and get away. In cities around the world, "defensive driving" has come to mean more than avoiding auto accidents; it means keeping an eye out for potentially criminal pedestrians, cyclists and scooter riders.

How to Handle Money Safely

To avoid carrying large amounts of cash, change your travelers checks only as you need currency. Countersign traveler's checks only in front of the person who will cash them. Do not flash large amounts of money when paying a bill. Make sure your credit card is returned to you after each transaction.

Deal only with authorized agents when you exchange money, buy airline tickets or purchase souvenirs. Do not change money on the black market.

If your possessions are lost or stolen, report the loss immediately to the local police. Keep a copy of the police report for insurance claims and as an explanation of your plight.

After reporting missing items to the police, report the loss or theft of:

- travelers' checks to the nearest agent of the issuing company
- credit cards to the issuing company
- airline tickets to the airline or travel agent
- passport to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate

How to Avoid Legal Difficulties

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws and are under its jurisdiction. You can be arrested overseas for actions that may be either legal or considered minor infractions in the United States. Familiarize yourself with legal expectations in the countries you will visit. Country Specific Information include information on unusual patterns of arrests in particular countries, as appropriate.

Some of the offenses for which U.S. citizens have been arrested abroad are

Drug Violations

More than 1/3 of U.S. citizens incarcerated abroad are held on drug charges. Some countries do not distinguish between possession and trafficking, and many have mandatory sentences - even for possession of a small amount of marijuana or cocaine. A number of Americans have been arrested for possessing prescription drugs, particularly tranquilizers and amphetamines, that they purchased legally elsewhere. Other U.S. citizens have been arrested for purchasing prescription drugs abroad in quantities that local authorities suspected were for commercial use. If in doubt about foreign drug laws, ask local authorities or the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Possession of Firearms

The places where U.S. citizens most often experience difficulties for illegal possession of firearms are nearby - Mexico, Canada and the Caribbean. Sentences for possession of firearms in Mexico can be up to 30 years. In general, firearms, even those legally registered in the U.S., cannot be brought into a country unless a permit is obtained in advance from the embassy or a consulate of that country and the firearm is registered with foreign authorities on arrival. (Note: There are also strict rules about bringing firearms or ammunition into the U.S; check with U.S. Customs at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/prohibited_restricted.xml before your trip.

Photography

In many countries you can be detained for photographing security-related institutions, such things as police and military installations, government buildings, border areas and transportation facilities. If you are in doubt, ask permission before taking photographs.

Purchasing Antiques

Americans have been arrested for purchasing souvenirs that were, or looked like, antiques and which local customs authorities believed were national treasures. This is especially true in Turkey, Egypt and Mexico. Familiarize yourself with any local regulations of antiques. In countries with strict control of antiques, document your purchases as reproductions if that is the case, or if they are authentic, secure the necessary export permit (often from the national museum). It is a good idea to inquire about exporting these items before you purchase them.

Terrorism

Terrorist acts occur unpredictably, making it impossible to protect yourself absolutely. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnappings.

Most terrorist attacks are the result of careful planning. Just as a car thief will first be attracted to an unlocked car with the key in the ignition, terrorists are looking for the most accessible targets. The chances that a tourist, traveling with an unpublished program or itinerary, would be the victim of terrorism are slight. In addition, many terrorist groups, seeking publicity for political causes within their own country or region, may not be looking for American targets. Nevertheless, the following pointers may help you avoid becoming a target of opportunity. They should be considered as adjuncts to the tips listed in the previous sections on how to protect yourself against the far greater likelihood of being a victim of crime. These precautions may provide some degree of protection, and can serve as practical and psychological deterrents to would-be terrorists.

Schedule direct flights if possible and avoid stops in high-risk airports or areas.

Be cautious about what you discuss with strangers or what others may overhear.

Try to minimize the time spent in the public area of an airport, which is a less protected area. Move quickly from the check-in counter to the secured areas. Upon arrival, leave the airport as soon as possible.

As much as possible, avoid luggage tags, dress and behavior that may identify you as an American.

Keep an eye out for abandoned packages or briefcases, or other suspicious items. Report them to airport authorities and leave the area promptly.

Avoid obvious terrorist targets such as places where Americans and Westerners are known to congregate.

Travel to High-Risk Areas

If you must travel in an area where there has been a history of terrorist attacks or kidnappings, make it a habit to:

Discuss with your family what they would do in the event of an emergency. Make sure your affairs are in order before leaving home.

As noted earlier, it's a good idea to register your travel with the Department of State. This may be accomplished online at <https://travelregistration.state.gov>. Registration will make it easier to contact you in case of an emergency.

Remember to leave a detailed itinerary and the numbers or copies of your passport or other citizenship documents with a friend or relative in the United States .

Remain friendly but be cautious about discussing personal matters or your itinerary.

Leave no personal or business papers in your hotel room.

Watch for people following you or "loiterers" observing your comings and goings.

Keep a mental note of safe havens, such as police stations, hotels, and hospitals. Formulate a plan of action for what you will do if a bomb explodes or there is gunfire nearby.

Let someone else know what your travel plans are. Keep them informed if you change your plans.

Report any suspicious activity to local police, and the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate.

Select your own taxicabs at random. Don't take a vehicle that is not clearly identified as a taxi. Compare the face of the driver with the one on his or her posted license.

If possible, travel with others.

Be sure of the identity of visitors before opening the door of your hotel room. Don't meet strangers at your hotel room, or at unknown or remote locations.

Refuse unexpected packages.

Check for loose wires or other suspicious activity around your car.

Be sure your vehicle is in good operating condition.

Drive with car windows closed in crowded streets. Bombs can be thrown through open windows.

If you are ever in a situation where somebody starts shooting, drop to the floor or get down as low as possible. Don't move until you are sure the danger has passed. Do not attempt to help rescuers and do not pick up a weapon. If possible, shield yourself behind a solid object. If you must move, crawl on your stomach.

Hijacking/Hostage Situations

While every hostage situation is different, there are some general considerations to keep in mind.

The U.S. Government's policy is firm: we do not make concessions to terrorists. When Americans are abducted overseas, we look to the host government to exercise its responsibility under international law to protect all persons within its territories and to bring about the safe release of hostages. We work closely with these governments from the outset of a hostage-taking incident to ensure that our citizens and other victims are released as quickly and safely as possible.

At the outset of a terrorist incident, the terrorists typically are tense, high-strung and may behave irrationally. It is extremely important that you remain calm and alert and manage your own behavior.

Avoid resistance and sudden or threatening movements. Do not struggle or try to escape unless you are certain of being successful. Don't try to be a hero, endangering yourself and others.

Consciously put yourself in a mode of passive cooperation. Talk normally. Do not complain, avoid belligerency, and comply with all orders and instructions.

If questioned, keep your answers short. Don't volunteer information or make unnecessary overtures.

Make a concerted effort to relax. Prepare yourself mentally, physically and emotionally for the possibility of a long ordeal.

Try to remain inconspicuous, avoid direct eye contact and the appearance of observing your captors' actions.

Avoid alcoholic beverages. Eat what they give you, even if it does not look or taste appetizing, but keep consumption of food and drink at a moderate level. A loss of appetite and weight is normal.

If you are involved in a lengthier, drawn-out situation, try to establish a rapport with your captors, avoiding political discussions or other confrontational subjects.

Establish a daily program of mental and physical activity.

Think positively. Avoid a sense of despair. Rely on your inner resources. Remember that you are a valuable commodity to your captors. It is important to them to keep you alive and well.

ASSISTANCE ABROAD

The Consular Section can provide updated information on the security situation in a country.

If you are ill or injured, contact the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate for a list of local physicians and medical facilities. If you request, consular officers will help you contact family or friends. If necessary, a consul can assist in the transfer of funds from family or friends in the United States. Payment of hospital and other medical expenses is your responsibility.

Should you find yourself in legal difficulty, contact a consular officer immediately. Consular officers cannot serve as attorneys, give legal advice, or get you out of jail. If you are arrested, consular officials will visit you, advise you of your rights under local laws, provide a list of local attorneys who speak English and who may have had experience in representing U.S. citizens, and ensure that you are held under humane conditions and are treated fairly under local law. A consular officer will contact your family or friends if you desire. When necessary, consuls can transfer money from home for you and will try to get relief for you, including food and clothing in countries where this is a problem. If you are detained, remember that under international treaties and customary international law, you have the right to talk to the U.S. consul. If you are denied this right, be politely persistent. Try to have someone get in touch for you.

Resources for U.S. Citizen Crime Victims

When a U.S. citizen becomes the victim of a crime overseas he or she may suffer physical, emotional, or financial injuries. The emotional impact of the crime may be intensified if the victim is in unfamiliar surroundings, far away from sources of comfort and support, and not fluent in the local language or knowledgeable about local laws and customs. Consuls and consular agents can provide assistance to U.S. citizen crime victims

If you become the victim of a crime overseas, contact the nearest U.S. embassy, consulate, or consular agency for assistance. Also contact local police to report the incident and obtain immediate help with safety concerns.

While consular officials cannot investigate a crime, provide legal advice, represent you in court, serve as official interpreters or translators, or pay legal, medical, or other fees for U.S. citizens, they can assist crime victims in many other ways. Consular personnel overseas are familiar with local government agencies and resources in the countries in which they are located, and they can help you::

- replace a stolen passport
- contact family, friends, or employers
- obtain appropriate medical care
- address emergency needs that arise as a result of the crime
- obtain general information about the local criminal justice process and information about your case
- obtain information about local resources to assist victims, including foreign crime victim compensation programs
- obtain information about crime victim assistance and compensation programs in the U.S.
- obtain a list of local attorneys who speak English

Victim Assistance: If you are the victim of a crime while overseas, you may benefit from specialized resources for crime victims available in the United States . Throughout the United States , thousands of local crime victim assistance programs offer help to victims of violent crime and most will help residents of their community who have been the victim of a crime in another country. These include rape crisis counseling programs, shelter and counseling programs for battered women, support groups and bereavement counseling for family members of homicide victims, diagnostic and treatment programs for child abuse victims, assistance for victims of drunk driving crashes, and others. Information about locating crime victim assistance programs is below.

Victim Compensation: All states operate crime victim compensation programs and nearly half of them offer benefits to their residents who are victims of violent crime overseas. (See contact information for state compensation programs below.) These state compensation programs provide financial assistance to eligible victims for reimbursement of expenses such as medical treatment, counseling, funeral costs, lost income or loss of support, and others. Generally victim compensation programs require the victim to report the crime to law enforcement and they usually request a copy of the police report.

Contact Information for Victim Compensation and Assistance Programs :

Information about each state’s crime victim compensation program and how to apply for compensation is available on the Internet at the web site of the National Association of Crime Victim Compensation Boards, <http://www.nacvcb.org/> .

The toll-free 24 hours a day/7 days a week hotline for sexual assault crisis counseling and referrals in the United States is 1-800-656-HOPE. It is operated by a non-profit organization, RAINN (Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network), which also has information on the Internet at <http://www.rainn.org/> .

Information about local sexual assault victim assistance programs in the U.S. is also available from each state’s sexual assault coalition. Contact information for these state coalitions are listed on the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/> .

The toll-free 24 hours a day /7 days a week National Domestic Violence Hotline, which provides crisis counseling and referrals in the U.S. is 1-800-799-SAFE.

Information about local domestic violence victim assistance programs in the U.S. is also available from each state’s domestic violence coalition. Contact information for these state coalitions is listed at the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Violence Against Women Office, <http://www.usdoj.gov/ovw/> .

The toll-free 24 hours a day/7 days a week crisis counseling and referral line for families and friends of those who have died by violence is 1-888-818-POMC. It is operated by a non-profit organization, POMC, Inc. (The National Organization of Parents of Murdered Children), which also has information on the Internet at <http://www.pomc.org/> .

Information about national and local resources for victims and family members of victims of drunk driving crashes is available at the web site of Mothers Against Drunk Driving, <http://www.madd.org/> .

Contact information for non-emergency victim assistance services in communities throughout the U.S. is available at the web site of the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime, <http://ovc.ncjrs.org/findvictimservices/> .

Information for crime victims on the impact of crime, safety planning, legal rights and civil legal remedies, and options for assistance and referrals to local programs is also available from the National Crime Victim Center (NCVC). Call toll free (8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST) 1-800-FYI-CALL or call TTY for hearing impaired (8:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST) 1-800-211-7996. Information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.ncvc.org/> .

Information and referral to victim assistance programs is available from the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). Call toll-free 24 hours a day / 7 days a week 1-800-TRY-NOVA. Information is also available on the Internet at <http://www.try-nova.org/> .

Information about victim assistance programs in approximately 20 countries is available at the web site of Victim Assistance Online, <http://www.vaonline.org/>.

Things you need to know: Phone Information from GoAbroad.com

International Cell Phones: The Good, The Bad and The Cheap by Ken Grunski

International Cell Phone Usage

If you have Cingular or T-Mobile cell phone service, then your cell phone will already work overseas, in most countries. Call your provider to make sure it works in the specific country to which your child is headed, and while you have them on the phone, make sure the phone is set up for international usage. You can either pay a slight fee (between \$1 and 2) per minute used, or upgrade your service to have a slightly higher monthly fee (\$5-10 more per month) that allows for free international roaming.

If you use Verizon, Sprint, Boost or some other service, you will need to rent a phone. When renting a phone, make sure it is GSM, which is the international signal, and be prepared for expensive fees: with weekly charges between \$29 and \$59 per week, and with per-minute charges of \$1.50 to \$5, depending on where the country is. A more cost-effective way to use a phone is to buy a GSM phone and a prepaid SIM card. SIM cards determine your cell phone number and other services like voicemail, and can be purchased in advance with a certain number of minutes.

GSM cell phone usage rates are usually around 25 cents per minute, and all incoming calls are free. You can add airtime to the phone by purchasing an airtime voucher. GSM cell phones with SIM cards are prepaid, so there are no bills or contract fees to pay.

Depending on the length of time you will be abroad, you might want to purchase or rent a phone from the destination country. You will certainly want to communicate with friends met while abroad, and a mobile phone for cost-effective local communication in addition to periodic calls home might be a worthwhile option.

International Phone Cards

An international phone card is beneficial because you do not have to be concerned with the bad reception or lack of signal inherent in many cell phones. The cards can be recharged and can be purchased in the United States or abroad. In some cases, they can actually cost less when bought abroad.

Many payphones these days do not accept cash. Instead, the phone cards can be swiped at the pay phone to make a call. And the cards can be used at regular landlines as well.

Additionally, your current long distance provider may be able to give you discounted rates for international calls. A monthly fee will apply, and your phone company can send you an international calling card with a special access number. However, you will be billed the usual United States long distance rates.

ISICConnect Cards

The ISICConnect card is a prepaid, rechargeable phone card offered by the International

Student Travel Confederation (ISTC). ISTC also provides the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) which is used by 4.5 million students each year. You can get a card and save up to 70 percent on calls in more than 150 countries. It can be recharged over the Internet or by phone, and the voicemail it provides costs family and friends nothing to leave a message.

The ISICConnect card features faxmail, auto-login, speed dial and 24/7 multilingual customer service. You can also listen to your e-mail and access your account history. Receipts for use are sent via e-mail.

The ISTC also offers a mobile phone option for international calls that allows you to use your local mobile carrier and cell phone. You can save 30 percent in 200 countries, but you would be wise to check out the roaming charges before choosing this option for communication.

Other features include text messaging, and you can control the mobile settings as well as receive free travel alerts.

Satellite Phones

Satellite phones are a more expensive option for studying abroad, but are vital if you will be in a less modern country, as they offer full service anywhere in the world, with no need for a cell phone tower. It can cost between \$350 and \$1,000 to buy a satellite phone, and you will be required to pay a \$50 activation fee as well as a potential monthly access charge of \$30 to \$40. Voicemail typically costs about \$35 per month, but can be free for rentals.

Outgoing calls on a satellite phone range from 99 cents to \$1.50 per minute of use. You may opt to buy a satellite phone, or you can rent one from a company such as Telestial, Inc. (<http://www.telestial.com>). Rental costs can range from \$200 to \$400 per month, depending upon the carrier and quality of the phone. When you rent a satellite phone, outgoing calls cost between \$1.39 and \$1.75 per minute, while incoming calls are free. Length of stay may play a huge factor in which option is more cost effective. Renting may be more appropriate for short study terms while those planning to stay longer may choose to buy.

Internet Usage Abroad

The most cost-effective way to communicate overseas is to use the Internet. While not as personal by far, Internet use can be a great supplement to you between phone calls. You can e-mail and share news as well as pictures, or can maintain a blog that is open to all friends and family, and allows you all to interact.

VoIP (Voice-over-Internet protocol)

Skype (<http://www.skype.com>) is another option. You can download a program that turns your computer into a phone. You simply speak into a microphone and your voice comes out via another computer's speakers. You will have to pay \$10 to download the

international version of the program, but once you have it, you can talk as much as you want, for free.

Call ordinary phones anywhere in the world from your computer for the price of a local call with SkypeOut. www.skype.com

Things you need to know: Resources for Travel

State Department website

<http://travel.state.gov>

CDC Website

www.cdc.gov

Travel Guides

The Rough Guide website

www.roughguides.com

Lonely Planet Website

www.lonelyplanet.com

Fodor's Website

www.fodors.com

Weather information

www.weather.com

Packing Information

www.onebag.com

Student Travel Resources

www.statravel.com

www.isiccard.com

www.studentuniverse.com

www.goabroad.com

www.cafeabroad.com