

STUDY ABROAD PRE-DEPARTURE HANDBOOK

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Congratulations! You are about to embark on an adventure guaranteed to change your life. By choosing to go abroad, you have shown your desire to experience a culture completely different from your own. You are to be commended. In this upcoming semester, you'll have the opportunity to see many new places and meet a variety of new people. Take advantage of this opportunity and have a great time.

We, at the St. Norbert College Study Abroad Office, have put together this handbook to provide you with helpful information in planning and spending your time abroad. The material has been compiled from numerous sources.

There are excellent tips in this handbook, and we urge you to read all the material very carefully. One caution we would like to issue is that this is not the **ULTIMATE** guide. Along with reading the handbook, we suggest you talk with student returnees and natives of your respective host country. Acquaint yourself with current issues; then pool all of this together to make your decisions as to how to spend your time abroad.

We encourage you to keep notes of items you find particularly interesting or useful, as well as information you wish you had known before you left and practical suggestions you might pass along to future participants. Then, share that information with our office so that we might update this publication and make it as relevant as possible for future participants.

Each year a large number of St. Norbert students study abroad and we continue to be excited for each one. There is not a book that could attempt to teach you all that you would learn in your semester or year abroad. Experience all you can! Remember to keep in touch. We look forward to hearing from you and seeing you upon your return to the States.

Remember accept, don't expect. Don't compare the country you are visiting to the United States, because it is not good or bad, better or worse, just different.
HAVE A GREAT TRIP!!!!

The St. Norbert College Study Abroad Office



PRE-DEPARTURE CHECK LIST

REQUIRED

- ____ PASSPORT Documentation of your identity and citizenship.
- ____ VISAS Permission from foreign governments to enter; check to see if a visa is required for your country.
- ____ MONEY ATM Card, credit cards, cash, travelers checks.
- ____ LUGGAGE Size and weight of luggage allowed on airplanes vary; check with your airline provider for details.
- ____ INSURANCE Health/accident, trip cancellation/interruption, baggage or any combination thereof.
- ____ IMMUNIZATIONS Check to see what requirements pertain to your country.

STRONGLY RECOMMENDED

- ____ INT'L STUDENT ID Proves eligibility for discounts and benefits, as well as some insurance coverage.
(<http://www.statravel.com> - Under Deals-N-Discounts)
- ____ GUIDEBOOKS & MAPS Find out about the countries you plan to visit and the people you will meet. "Let's Go Guides" are an excellent resource.
(<http://www.snc.edu/studyabroad/links.html>)
- ____ TRANSPORTATION See Website link
(<http://www.snc.edu/studyabroad/links.html>)
- ____ LANGUAGE Learn or brush up on a language.

RECOMMENDED

- ____ PASSPORT PHOTOS Extras for use when obtaining visas, bus passes, identity cards while abroad, etc.; also speeds up replacement process if your passport is lost or stolen
- ____ DOCUMENT COPIES Copies of the title page of your passport with your picture and signature; helps speed up the replacement if your passport is lost or stolen. The same is true of ID cards, airline tickets, etc. Leave one copy with your family in the U.S.; bring a second copy with you.
- ____ MONEY BELT Used to carry and conceal passports and traveler's checks
- ____ LIST OF PRE-APPROVED COURSES FOR YOUR SEMESTER ABROAD
- ____ RECEIVING MAIL Check with your program of study on the best way to receive mail while abroad.

MONEY



The importance of planning and budgeting your funds is something that cannot be stressed enough. While there, it's easy to think of foreign currency as play money, so watch yourself carefully. Carry a pocket calculator so you can easily do conversions when making purchases. Make sure to keep updated on the status of the dollar compared the currency that you are using.

ATM

These machines can be found almost all over the world, are usually a much better means of getting money in a pinch, and the interest rate is often better than with traveler's checks. It's a good idea to carry a duplicate card with you in case one gets "eaten" by a machine or lost. You can locate ATMs online by searching for "ATM Locators." Be sure to notify your bank of your travel dates.

TRAVELERS CHECKS

Some students find it useful to bring a small amount (\$100.00) in travelers checks to use in case of an emergency. Contact your bank for details on obtaining travelers checks.

CREDIT CARD

Notify your credit card company of your plans. Tell them approximate dates of your trips and the names of the countries you plan to visit. This will prevent them from freezing your account due to suspicious charges outside the United States.

KEEP TRACK OF DAILY EXPENSES

Keeping track of daily expenses is a great way to help you budget your money while you are abroad.

PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

It is very important that all personal documents be guarded and in a safe place at all times. Make photocopies of everything before leaving the U.S. and get extra passport-size photos of yourself. Also, when traveling, carry your passport, student I.D., money etc. on your body in a money belt or a neck purse. Losing any personal documents is a terrible inconvenience.

VISA

It is your responsibility to determine whether you need a Visa and, if so, to obtain one. A visa is issued by a foreign government, which permits you to enter a country for specific lengths of time and purposes (i.e., tourism or study). Visa requirements differ from country to country and are fully described at http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html Check immediately to see if the country(ies) you intend to visit requires a visa. Some tourist visas are available at the border as you enter a country. Others must be obtained in advance from the embassy or consulate of the country you wish to enter. Usually you must submit your passport, a photo, a visa application, and a processing fee. If applying by mail, processing a visa can take up to six weeks. If possible, apply for a "multiple entry" rather than a "single entry" visa.

ACADEMIC TRANSCRIPT

You are responsible for requesting that your overseas transcript be sent from your program to the Study Abroad Office. Some programs will do this automatically. Check with your program.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD (ISIC)

The International Student Identity Card entitles the holder to automatic travel insurance as well as discounts for transportation, accommodations, museum entrance fees, and special student charter flights between cities in Europe. When you are traveling show your card first and ask if there are any discounts available. Some programs provide this card for you. If your program does not provide a card, you can purchase one at <http://www.statravel.com> under Deals-N- Discounts.

SAFETY ABROAD

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Know your destination
- Keep a low profile
- Don't spend a lot of time in American high-visibility places
- Vary your personal travel schedule
- If your instincts tell you a situation is uncomfortable, trust them and move on.
- Avoid anything that looks like a demonstration
- Watch out for surveillance (terrorist acts are usually well planned)
- Register with your embassy online to keep in touch should an emergency arise.
http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_1186.html
- **DO NOT DRIVE**

BE PROTECTIVE OF ALL YOUR PERSONAL DOCUMENTS AT ALL TIMES

&

SAFEGUARD COPIES OF PERSONAL DOCUMENTS IN A SEPARATE PLACE

For more information tips on traveling abroad visit:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/tips_1232.html?css

EMERGENCIES ABROAD

Hopefully, you will never need to use this information, but it is extremely important that you read this and consider it carefully.

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

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

OTHER HELP ABROAD

If you find yourself in a situation that threatens your sense of well being: Use your common sense to determine if you should seek help! Situations that merit your seeking help are any that you find too challenging or frustrating to handle yourself.

This might mean that you find the behavior of someone in your host family is threatening to you. For example, women may be sexually harassed or threatened.

Don't wait until it's too late to seek help!

Contact someone who can truly help you! On nearly every program that St. Norbert offers, there is a contact person on-site to whom students can go for help. Talk to these people- that's what they are there for. You should also contact the Director about the problem so the director can prevent similar situations from occurring. The director can also help by contacting the appropriate people here at SNC.

If family back home or the staff at St. Norbert can help, contact them! If no one is in, you can always leave a message on voice mail. The phone number of the office is:

Phone:[001] (920) 403-4068
Fax: [001] (920) 403-4083
E-mail: studyabroad@snc.edu

CONCERNING YOUR HEALTH

In the midst of deciding where to travel, what to pack, and what to see, many travelers overlook important health concerns. Many fail to realize that without your health you are not going anywhere. Therefore it is necessary to give your health all the attention it needs. It just takes a little preparation to equip yourself to handle any problems that may occur, with the least amount of inconvenience and expense.

IMMUNIZATIONS

Check online at <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/contentVaccinations.aspx> to see if vaccinations are required for your country. You can also refer to the Health Packet from the SNC Health Center or contact Barbara Bloomer at x3266 with your immunization questions.

MEDICAL RECORD

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

PRESCRIPTION AND NON-PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

If you currently take any prescription medication and will continue to do so while abroad, contact your physician to receive a sufficient supply for your entire stay. Be sure to take along a written, signed prescription from your physician including the reason for taking the drug, the generic name, and the instructions and dosage. If you wear glasses or contact lenses, consider taking along an extra pair, as well as your prescription. Consider taking extra bottles of contact lens solution with you. It is very expensive to purchase outside of the U.S. You will probably be able to locate most American-made non-prescription items in major foreign cities;

however, if there is any doubt in your mind or a substitute brand will not do, be sure to take along an adequate supply (i.e., vitamins, contact solutions.)

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

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

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

<http://www.tsa.gov/travelers/index.shtm>

WATER AND FOOD

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

OTHER

If you happen to pick up an infection while you're abroad, whether it be a virus, a bacterium, or a parasite, you may not get sick right away, but weeks after your return. Some diseases can take up to six months to show up. If you get sick, tell your physician what countries you have visited and when. This information might prove to be helpful in making a diagnosis. Students traveling to developing countries should be especially careful. There is a greater risk of contracting diphtheria, malaria, and typhoid fever. All students should be aware of sexually transmitted diseases. Avoid getting any tattoos or piercings while abroad. Excessive use of alcohol is never a good idea.

LEGAL CONCERNS AND CUSTOMS

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

When you are in a foreign country, you are subject to the laws of that country. Remember to respect their laws, use common sense, and avoid areas of unrest or disturbance. Deal only with authorized outlets when you exchange money or buy airline tickets and travelers checks. Do not deliver packages for anyone unless you are certain they do not contain drugs or other contraband.

DRUGS

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

CUSTOMS

Customs declaration forms are distributed on all types of international public carriers and should be prepared in advance of arrival for presentation to the immigration and customs officials. Whether or not you have anything to declare, you must still fill out the identification section of the form. Regulations and procedures vary from country to country. To be safe, you should check with the appropriate embassy before departure to find out exactly what items are prohibited from entry. For more information on customs regulations please see http://www.customs.gov/xp/cgov/travel/clearing_goods/restricted/ Know Before You Go is also a helpful website to look at: <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

Power of Attorney

We recommend that students grant Power of Attorney to their parents while abroad.

PACKING YOUR BAGS

Almost unanimously, study abroad returnees tell us the most important thing to remember when packing is to **PACK LIGHTLY!!!!** Heavy bags are burdensome. You'll need room to bring back all that you have acquired! You'll make a much better traveling companion if you are not complaining about heavy luggage. You'll be surprised at how easily you can get by with only the bare essentials.

WHAT TO BRING

- Items that are lightweight, drip dry, wrinkle-proof (knits, permanent press, cotton), easy care and you can layer
- Dark colors are more practical unless you are always in the sun
- Interchangeable items
- Clothes you like, but nothing you would hate to ruin or leave behind
- Do not take clothes you may only wear once or twice

Here is a sample list - but remember - **items will vary according to culture and climate.**

CLOTHING:

- 3 pair pants (2 casual, 1 a bit nicer than casual)
- 1 or 2 dresses or skirts (for women)
- 1 pair shorts
- 5 casual shirts (polo, t-shirts)
- 1 pair pajamas
- Sweatshirt and sweatpants
- 1 or 2 sweaters
- 7 pair of socks and underwear (they don't take up that much room, so pack as many as you can)
- Pair of walking shoes (tennis, running, walkers)
- Pair of very comfortable casual to nice shoes
- Pair of flip-flops for the beach or shower
- Swimsuit
- Jacket (type greatly depends on where you will be)

TOILETRIES:

- Toothbrush, toothpaste, shampoo, soap, deodorant
- Comb, brush, towel, tissues
- Cold water detergent
- Prescription and non-prescription medications (see "Health")
- Cosmetics, sunscreen, moisturizers
- Contact lens solution
- Band Aids, first aid kit

For the most part, anywhere you go the basics, like shampoo, will be easy to find, so there is no need to weigh down your bags with a year's supply of toothpaste—only pack enough for a few days or a week, then purchase what you need in your host country.

ACCESSORIES:

- Swiss army knife, sewing kit, safety pins, sunglasses (consult TSA for carry-on rules)
- Camera, shoulder-strap camera case
- Travel guides, phrasebooks, maps
- Foreign language dictionary, English dictionary (both pocket size)
- Converter (changes the voltage power) and an adapter plug pack (available in travel stores)
- Travel alarm clock with batteries
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Shoulder bag or daypack for short day trips
- Photos of your home, family, and friends (great way to share your culture and keep a bit of home with you wherever you may travel)
- Umbrella
- Plastic storage bags
- Laundry soap and line
- Travel Journal

HOW TO PACK:

- Rolling clothes allows you to pack more in your bag and minimizes wrinkles
- You can get Space Saver Bags to get the best use of space in your luggage
- Pack any liquid item in a sealed bag

REGULATIONS:

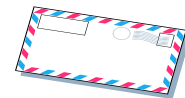
Be sure to check with your individual airline provider for regulations

- See the US Customs website <http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/travel/vacation/kbyg/>

ADDITIONAL TIPS

- Know airlines' policies on lost or damaged baggage liability
- Carry a couple of photos of your luggage. This will help to describe lost or stolen luggage to airport officials
- **Carry packed luggage around the block, repack if it's too heavy**
- Make a checklist before and while you pack, in order to avoid forgetting anything
- Put identification inside your baggage as well as have easily identifiable tags on the outside of your baggage.

KEEPING IN TOUCH



Immersing yourself in your new host culture will be your primary goal, but your experience abroad won't take place in complete isolation from parents, teachers, and friends at home. Keeping in touch can give you perspective on both your host culture and your life back home while easing the minds of your loved ones while you're away. Just be sure to recognize how constant communication will affect your study abroad experience. You should realize that time you spend elsewhere virtually (via telephone, e-mail, or social networking) is time you can't spend interacting with the people and place where you're studying. While abroad, adjust your communication habits and adapt to being unplugged a little more often.

MAIL

Check with your program provider on the best way to receive mail.

Also, let the Study Abroad Office know your address as soon as possible.

TELEPHONE

Check into an International Calling Card in the host country. Typically, US cell phones do not work overseas. Upon arrival, check into buying or renting a cell phone. Outside of the US incoming calls are free (only the person calling gets billed, not your cell phone). Skype is also a great way to keep in touch with family and friends back home by making calls through the internet. For more information see www.skype.com

MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

RESEARCH YOUR DESTINATION

Research your host country so as to have a better understanding of the people, history, and politics. Read online newspapers to keep up on the current events around the world and talk to people who studied in the country or are nationals so that they can give you an idea about your host country.

EXPLORE THE TERRITORY

Get a map and venture out, preferably alone. Get lost and ask directions. Ride public transportation. Discover old or important structures, and ask questions (people love to talk to interested newcomers).

PICK-UP THE SILENT LANGUAGE

Sit in the park or sidewalk cafe, stand in a market or store, and watch. How do people greet one another, visit, and say goodbye? How do friends act? How does one show respect? What seems to be the typical dress for different age groups? Can you spot an American? What are the American giveaways in dress, movement, voice, and gesture?

DON'T LIMIT YOURSELF TO AMERICAN FRIENDS

If you hope to form acquaintanceships in the short time you will be in your host country, you must open yourself up to others. The more you go out with fellow Americans, the more you send out the message that you prefer American friends. Avoid moving about in large groups. Venture out to meet nationals and make new friends.

MASTER THE LANGUAGE

Force yourself into situations where you must talk - no matter how scary, difficult, or awkward it may seem. You'll be surprised at how fast you can win the trust and respect of nationals when you attempt to and can speak their language.

KEEP A JOURNAL

Keep a daily record of what you observe, experience, learn, feel, and how you react to it all. Look for events or situations that provoke an emotional response. Observe everything and everyone surrounding you with an open mind.

JUST ASK

Ignorance is not bliss. If you don't understand something, are curious, or need any help, just ask someone. People's responsiveness may surprise you, plus, questions are great conversation starters.

BLEND IN AND DON'T FIGHT IT

Plunge right in - don't wait to adjust before you participate; you adjust by participating. Your host country has its own culture with its own traditions, customs, manners, and written and unwritten laws - immerse yourself. If you do all of the above, you cannot help but feel like a part of your host country. Talk to as many people as possible; they have a lot to offer and you have a lot to learn.

Whether you are staying for a semester or a year, your time abroad is too short.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR EXPERIENCE!!

As soon as you realize and accept that your host country is different from America, your adjustment will become much easier.

COPING WITH CULTURE SHOCK - *See Handouts*



RESOURCES FOR STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS

Read, read, read. Don't be an ignorant American abroad. **KNOW SOMETHING** about the country you'll be in! Also, don't be put in the situation of having people from other countries tell you what's going on in the U.S. Be knowledgeable about U.S. history and current events so you may engage intelligently in conversations with host nationals. You will be surprised at how much host nationals know about the U.S.!



ST. NORBERT SPECIFIC INFORMATION

ADVISEMENT AND REGISTRATION

Before going abroad, you must register for the appropriate International Education courses (INED). This will keep you enrolled as a full-time SNC student though it will only show up as 12 credits.

After arriving at your study abroad destination and finalizing your course schedule you must fill out the Study Abroad Courses form on the Registrar website.

http://www.snc.edu/registrar/Study_Abroad_Courses.html

While you are abroad, consult the SNC Registrar's website, <http://www.snc.edu/registrar> for the SNC Catalog and Course Timetable for the following semester. Conduct advisement via e-mail with your advisor, sending them a list of proposed courses. In turn, they will send you your alternative pin for registration. Then register at or after your designated date and time. If you encounter difficulty or are unable to register you should contact your advisor and/or the Registrar for help.

FINANCE DEPARTMENT REQUIREMENTS

Listed below are the requirements for your participation in a study abroad or exchange program recognized by St. Norbert College.

1. All payment with the exception of application fees and program deposit is to be sent directly to the college Finance Department.
2. All Financial Aid filers must have all appropriate forms (processed Student Aid Report, most recent federal income tax returns for parent and student, SNC Institutional Application and correct loan application) contained within your financial aid loan file.
3. All first time loan borrowers must attend a loan entrance counseling session. This is a requirement of the Federal Government that must be completed before you can utilize the proceeds from your loan check.

IN CONCLUSION

Have a clear idea of what you specifically want to accomplish by going abroad. An experienced traveler advises "...no matter what, keep in mind that you are there to enjoy yourself. If you enjoy sitting in a cafe watching the world go by, do that. Do whatever you enjoy and not what someone says you will enjoy or what everyone else is doing." But...

Remember that there may be difficult and even frustrating times for you overseas. As some of our students have noted, "...bad moments (days) are quickly forgotten, and even the bad experiences are priceless."

Remember this is a study abroad semester. Enjoy traveling, meeting new people, visiting new places - but don't forget to study!!