



OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS
EDUCATION ABROAD

Education Abroad
1118 H.J. Patterson Hall
4065 Campus Drive
College Park, Maryland 20742
301.314.7746 TEL 301.314.9135 FAX

Statement from Education Abroad for Students on Independent International Programs
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Health and Safety Information for Students on Independent International Programs

I understand that you are participating on an independent international internship/research/field studies program*. UMD is not formally sponsoring this program and you are participating as an independent student. The Office of International Affairs and Education Abroad has provided the following guidance to help travelers such as you prepare to have a safe and successful time abroad:

1. Learn as much as you can about your destination. Use credible sources (i.e. the State Department's [international travel website](#), the Centers for Disease Control, etc.) to research the political climate, weather, crime, health issues, cultural differences, transportation culture, major holidays/celebrations, etc.
2. Be aware that the U.S. State Department has issued a [worldwide caution](#) for travelers. Please be sure to read this caution, and the information specific to the region to which you'll be traveling. Please also take a moment to do the following before your travel:
 - Visit the U.S. State Department's [travel advisories](#) website to see if there are warnings about the location to which you are traveling. If there are, carefully review and adhere to the guidance provided in the warning.
 - Visit the U.S. State Department's [Students Abroad](#) website for excellent travel advice.
 - Visit the ["Travelers with Special Considerations"](#) page to review health and security guidance specific to women, LGBTQ travelers, people with disabilities, and other groups.
3. Check your passport to be sure it is current. If it expires within 6 months of your travel, you need to renew it before you depart. Apply for a visa well in advance of your departure date if one is required for entry into your destination.
4. Register your trip with the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)
5. Check in with the [UMD Health Center's International Travel Clinic](#) or your personal physician.
6. **Purchase international health insurance.** As a UMD student, you may purchase a policy through [Cultural Insurance Services International](#) (CISI), which is UMD's insurance provider for Education Abroad sponsored programs. Please note that you would be purchasing coverage as an independent enrollee.
7. Be prepared for financial transactions while abroad. It is important that you:
 - Tell your bank and credit card companies your dates and locations(s) of travel.
 - Take only the credit card and ID you will need.
 - Have some local currency on hand before your depart.
 - Be aware of any departure or arrival taxes you may be required to pay in country. Budget for this expense.
8. Share a copy of your itinerary with your family or friend(s).

9. Make copies/photographs of important documents (i.e. passport and visa, credit card, prescriptions, etc.)
10. Have a mobile phone while abroad, and share the number with family and/or friends.
 - Be sure to add important numbers into your contacts such as the local 911 equivalent, your hotel, the CISI emergency assistance number, and your in-country program partner if applicable.
11. Consume alcohol responsibly. If your judgment is impaired because of drugs or alcohol you may make decisions that put you and others in harm's way. You may also appear to be more vulnerable to those who intend to do you harm, making it easier for them to target you.

While You Are Abroad

In general, Education Abroad advises all study abroad students to:

- Stay abreast of current political and social issues reported in the media. Pay close attention to and follow all public safety advisories.
- Stay in touch with your on-site program staff, and follow all health and safety guidance they provide. Use them as a resource as you make decisions about tourist activities.
- Dress and behave as inconspicuously as possible. Avoid American logos on your clothing and property.
- Stay away from all political demonstrations.
- Do not express your opinion on controversial political or social issues to conventional or social media outlets.
- Exercise good judgment about the places you visit during the day and at night, and avoid being out late as much as possible.
- Socialize in groups of your peers. Avoid going out alone, especially at night.
- Avoid excessive drinking and all other activities that could impair your judgment and compromise your safety.
- Heighten your awareness of your surroundings and your own personal safety.

*If your program awards academic credit for this experience and you would like to have it reviewed for eligible transfer credit, please contact Education Abroad by the [appropriate deadline](#). Approval will depend on the type of program, academic content, and review from your academic department and college. If approved, you would be eligible for transfer credit services and risk management by Education Abroad, including coverage in international insurance.