



# 2019-20 Study Abroad Student Handbook



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## Important Contacts

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Welcome Study Abroad Student,

On behalf of Savannah State University and the International Education Center, we congratulate you on your decision to study abroad. This educational opportunity will be a milestone in your maturation and intellectual growth. You have made the right decision.

Study abroad is one of the best means to transform students in a positive way. In addition to the knowledge you will acquire from the course, you will gain valuable international and intercultural experiences that will certainly provide you a competitive advantage over your peers.

As you embark upon this learning opportunity, please have an open mind and appreciate cultural differences. Cultures elsewhere view the world entirely different than Americans. For example, Americans view "black" symbolic color for mourning however Chinese view "white" as symbolic color for mourning. Americans view certain animals as pets, but in some countries what we view as pets is considered food, while what we view as food, in other countries is seen as pets (e.g. cows are considered sacred in India). When traveling and interacting with people do not make value judgments based on American standards. Seeing the world from other people's lenses may also help you reflect on ways through which we can build a more peaceful world.

Once you return to the United States, please remain internationally engaged through various activities such as Model United Nations, local and national conferences focusing on international issues, joining SSU's International Students Association, or become certified with SSU's Peace Corps Prep Program. We would like to seize this opportunity to thank your parents, relatives, friends, or sponsors who played some role in your decision to study abroad. Many years from now, you will appreciate their contribution in shaping positively your life.

Have a safe trip and share with us your fond memories upon your return.

Sincerely,

The Office of International Education Center  
Savannah State University

## Pre-Departure Checklist

- Read this handbook thoroughly
- Apply for your passport
- Attend pre-departure orientation
- Meet with academic advisor to ensure appropriate credits for the courses taken abroad
- Meet with Study Abroad Faculty Advisor
- Apply for the Study Abroad Program of choice, deadline is March 31<sup>st</sup>
- If you want to use financial aid, make an appointment with the Financial Aid Counselor to apply financial aid to your account
- If a visa is required for your location, apply for student visa, see Study Abroad Coordinator for assistance
- Obtain the necessary vaccinations, the faculty advisor and study abroad coordinator will help you should you need assistance
- Do some homework on the country, while your faculty advisor will provide information during the interest meetings, it's good to look for yourself and see what questions arise for you
  
- Obtain enough prescription medication to last more than the days you will be gone, carry medicine in its original container, and take the label containing your prescription
- Place a luggage tag on the outside of your suitcases, the tag should be the closure type that does not show your name or any U.S. affiliation on the outside
- Determine the amount of money you will take with you
- Take only the credit cards and personal identification you will actually need
- Make copies of all important documents and leave a copy of each document with the International Education Center, a file will be created for you including the paperwork requested prior to travel
- Keep a copy of your credit cards (front and back) and passport, International Education Center will add these copies to your file if requested
- International Education Center will file for study abroad health insurance through CISI, you will obtain an electronic health insurance card
- International Education Center will register you with the US Embassy in the country to which you are traveling
- Learn about your responsibility and the non-reimbursement policy in situations resulting from a student's negligence
- Required forms prior to departure are: Health Information form, Student Statement of Responsibility, Liability Waiver, and Study Abroad application
- Be sure to exchange cell phone numbers with your faculty advisor for the trip and several of your classmates in order to stay in touch throughout the trip's duration
- Attend the Unpack your Study Abroad event in Fall Semester

## Before you leave

### *On-Campus Orientation*

To help students prepare to study abroad, program managers will host a series of interest meetings for students to inform participants of the cultural differences in the country to which students are traveling. The Study Abroad Coordinator will also host a required orientation that will remind students of obligatory requirements as well as:

- History, politics, geography of the country and the culture of the people
- Travel inside the country, visa, health, housing, transfer of credits for transient students
- Currency and exchange rate
- The contact information abroad
- What to do in case of emergency

Orientation will also allow students to meet other participants so that they can get acquainted with one another prior to the trip. Attendance to this orientation is mandatory and parents, relatives, friends, spouses, and any member of the student's support team, are encouraged to attend. The Study Abroad Coordinator will remain in contact with the parents to keep them posted about the whereabouts of their loved ones.

### *Credits for your study abroad courses*

Program managers work tirelessly to ensure summer courses correlate with courses within your major. Many courses can be substituted for other electives on your grid, which is why the Study Abroad Coordinator will work closely with your Academic Advisor to ensure you take the courses that are right for your program.

For Fall and Spring Semester Exchanges, the requirements are similar, there are more courses required to align and therefore can be a little trickier than summer semester. It is important to work closely with your Academic Advisor and the Study Abroad Coordinator to receive the necessary credits during your time overseas.

### *Registration and payment*

Taking a course abroad requires permission for course registration. Once you have permission from your academic advisor, ask them to either sign your application or email approval to the Study Abroad Coordinator. Making tuition payment is completely separate from paying for your trip expenses.

Given the fact that study abroad fees must cover air and ground transportation, excursions, meals, lodging, admission to museums or tourist places, and insurance, study abroad students must pay trip expenses. The budget for the trip can vary according to the cost of living of the country. Fees are added to your student bill but appear separately on your account. Financial aid can be used to cover both expenditures.

The timeline for payment is as follows:

*Recommended Payment Timeline*

5 months before departure – \$100 application fee and \$300 deposit

4 months before departure – 25% of total program cost

3 months before departure – 25% of total program cost

2 months before departure – 25% of total program cost

1 months before departure – final balance is due

*Academic and Conduct Standing*

All students accepted to study abroad must be in good academic and campus conduct standing. If you are placed on academic or conduct probation prior to departure, you will be withdrawn from the program. Participants are given a large degree of social and academic freedom, however, as members of a foreign community, you must be sensitive to and strive to conform to local customs. You are, of course, subject to all laws of the country where you will be studying.

**Note:** The International Education Center (IEC) reserves the right to dismiss from the group any individual who, in the judgment of the program director, fails to meet his or her academic obligations and/or whose conduct is detrimental to the group or the program.

## Health Considerations

Travelers should be in good health before traveling overseas. If you need prescription medication, be sure to take more than you need with you in the bottle labeled with your prescription. This should dissuade any concern brought about as you proceed through customs. If you have over-the-counter medications that you prefer, take them with you in the original box. If you wear glasses, try to carry a spare pair or if you wear contacts, bring an extra set.

Vaccinations are required for studying abroad in some countries. For up-to-date information on health advisories and recommended shots, the International Education Center continually monitors the Centers for Disease Control website at: [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel), which you are encouraged to do as well.

You should consult your doctor to make an informed decision regarding any immunizations or other medications you want or need to obtain before traveling. Some immunizations involve a series of shots and need to be arranged at least two months prior to departure. The Health Information form you submit prior to departure ensures both the International Education Center and your Study Abroad Program Manager are aware of any medicines you are currently taking or of any allergies you have should you become ill while you are overseas. It is suggested that you have an annual check-up with your family doctor before you leave to go abroad.

**Immunizations:** At least 4-6 weeks prior to departure, contact your doctor, clinic, state health department, or the clinic at SSU's Student Health Center regarding immunizations and medication.

**Water:** In areas with poor sanitation only the following beverages are safe to drink: Boiled water, hot beverages, such as coffee or tea, or canned or bottled carbonated beverages. Ice may be made from unsafe water and should be avoided. Where water is contaminated, travelers should not brush their teeth with tap water.

**Food:** Food should be selected with care. Any raw food could be contaminated, particularly in areas of poor sanitation. Foods of particular concern include: salads, uncooked vegetables and fruit, unpasteurized milk and milk products, raw meat, and shellfish. If you peel fruit yourself, it is generally safe. Food that has been cooked and is still hot is generally safe.

**Eating Habits:** While studying abroad, your eating and drinking habits will be different than what you are used to at home. Here are some simple precautions/rules you should follow in order to reduce the risk of illness:

- Always wash your hands before eating
- Drink plenty of fluids so as not to become dehydrated
- Drink only boiled or bottled water
- Avoid food that has not been thoroughly cooked (like salad)

Contaminated food and drink are the major sources of stomach or intestinal illness while traveling.



**Traveler's diarrhea:** The typical symptoms of traveler's diarrhea (TD) are diarrhea, nausea, bloating, urgency, and malaise. TD can persist for 3 to 7 days. It is rarely life threatening. The best ways to prevent TD is by paying meticulous attention to choice of food and beverage and wash your hands frequently. As part of a recommended **first aid kit**, be sure to take your favorite antidiarrheal/indigestion medications such as Lomotil or Imodium, and stay hydrated as directed by the medication label. Most episodes of TD resolve in a few days. Travelers should seek medical help if diarrhea is severe, bloody, or if it is accompanied by fever/chills.

**First-aid Kit:** Especially if you're traveling extensively or going to remote areas, consider taking along the following: insect repellent, water disinfectant, thermometer, Band-Aids, blister remedies/pads, Pepto-Bismol or Imodium for diarrhea, antacid, headache medicine, cold and cough medication, mild laxative, sunscreen, sunburn medication, anti-fungal/anti-itch medication, anti-bacterial cream or spray, tweezers, and a bee sting kit (if you're allergic). Any medication that is your favorite in the US may not be available, at least not at the cost you are used to, in the country to which you are traveling. If you choose to mix some of your meds into one bottle, be sure to carry it in your carry-on bag. Any prescribed medications need to be in the prescription labeled container in your checked luggage. If you want to take a LOT of a specific kind of medication, it is best to pack it in its original packaging inside your checked luggage.

#### **Dealing with jet lag:**

- Drink lots of fluids: water, juice, soft drinks (without caffeine)
- Avoid alcohol
- Eat lightly
- Get up and walk around or stretch at least once an hour
- Try to get plenty of sleep before departure
- Anticipate a day of adjustment for each time zone you cross
- One method recommended by frequent travelers is the Ehret method: Three days in advance of your trip, start shifting your activities as if you are already in the new time zone. Alter eating habits as follows:
  - *Three days prior:* Feast day, with three full meals; make breakfast and lunch high in protein, dinner high in carbohydrates.
  - *Two days prior:* Fast day, with low calories and low carbohydrates (soups and salads), with caffeine only in the afternoon.
  - *One day prior:* Feast day (see above).
  - *Day of departure:* Fast day, with lots of liquids.
  - *Day of arrival:* If you arrive in the morning, eat a high-protein meal; if you arrive in the evening, eat a high-carbohydrate meal.

## Financial aid

Study abroad student can use their financial aid to cover the fees associated with study abroad. Therefore, a meeting with the financial aid advisor is strongly recommended to determine your eligibility. A financial aid counselor can work with you to utilize all aid available to you.

Before meeting with the financial aid counselor, make an assessment of the total cost of your study abroad (tuition plus travel fees). Fees will be reflected on your account at the same time you register for the course abroad. Refer to the payment timeline on page 8 for details.

### *Refund Policy*

If the student is unable to travel for any reason, he or she will get back the full amount of his or her deposit but not the non-refundable \$100.00 application fee and, depending upon how late in the trip process, the reserve fee (5% of the total travel cost). As far as the tuition payment is concerned, the student will be subject to the school's policy regarding withdrawal from class. The travel fees will be reimbursed if the non-participation in the program was due to circumstances beyond the student's control. The Study Abroad Coordinator will work with students requiring a refund on a case-by-case basis depending on when the student chooses to withdraw. Once airfare and housing deposits have been made, the ability to refund may be out of the hands of the International Education Center office. Emails will be sent and written confirmation of participation will be required prior to purchase of airfare. There will be no refund in situations caused by the student's negligence, such as being late to flight or excursion departure. Should a student choose to rejoin the group, the student will be responsible for any fees associated with travel to rejoin the group.

### *Study Abroad Scholarship*

The International Education Center is committed to helping students gain international and intercultural experiences through the study abroad program. In order to help students who are in financial need, an application for scholarship can be submitted to the Study Abroad Advisory Committee through the International Education Center. The Committee will determine the amount of scholarship on the basis of merit and need for each applicant.

The Study Abroad Coordinator will also maintain a database of scholarships available for student applications. IEC staff cannot guarantee all available scholarships will be listed in the database but members will update and distribute the list for student convenience as requested. The center will also offer workshops when applicable to assist students with the application process.

### *Your Money*

The amount of money you take with you should depend on the cost of living in the country to which you are traveling. Prior to the trip, you will be told about the exchange rate. Be sure to call your bank regarding any credit/debit cards you intend to use while abroad. In any case, you will need to carry a small amount of cash to spend while traveling.

**Cash:** We recommend taking a small amount of cash (\$50- \$100) for use in the airports and to exchange immediately upon arrival. Consult your program director for more guidance in this area.

**Credit or Debit Cards:** These are probably the most convenient way to get money while you are abroad. You will receive your withdrawal in the local currency, so it's particularly convenient when you're traveling in several countries. The exchange rate is generally good, too. Check with your bank to know what fees are associated or if there are "sister banks" that will charge you no fees for usage (see note below).

**Note:** Be sure you inform your bank of your travel dates so that they are aware. Some banking institutions will freeze your account if they believe the charges are fraudulent. Questions to ask your bank:

- 1) If your bank is international or if there is a "sister bank" in the country to which you're traveling
- 2) If fees are charged for using a foreign bank
- 3) If your daily withdrawal limit is going to be sufficient for your needs when you are abroad
- 4) If your bank offers international ATM services
- 5) Call banks for both credit and debit cards for all services related to your needs

Remember, credit card interest rates may be high if you don't pay off your card every month. You can access cash from your credit card but the interest rates are extreme, so be sure to ask your bank prior to selecting this option. Also, it is recommended that you take pictures of the front and back of your debit and credit cards in case they are stolen so you can quickly contact your bank to cancel the card. The International Education Center will keep a copy on file if you ask, you can also keep the pictures on your cell phone if you prefer.

**Personal checks:** Personal checks drawn on a U.S. bank will NOT be accepted abroad.

### *Money Tips*

Exchanging some U.S. money for local currency when you first arrive, at least enough for phone calls and taxi from the airport, is a wise idea. This can be done at major banks or in currency exchange offices at international airports. Your banking institution in the United States may be able to exchange some money for you prior to departure, check with your bank for details.

Consider purchasing at least \$100 in local currency as soon as you arrive in country. Several banks in the US will exchange USD to the currency used in the country to which you will be traveling, but check the rates charged by your bank to do that. Carry cash in a safe place on your body, such as in a money belt or pouch around your neck under your clothes. You will want to keep your credit/debit cards, cash, and passport in separate locations when you travel, that way if you are a victim of pick-pocketing (the most popular crime to happen to international travelers) you won't lose everything all at once.

If you are spending a semester or more abroad, you may want to set up a bank account in a local bank after arriving. Opening an account will allow you to obtain a local ATM card and not have to worry about

locking up large amounts of money. You can choose a local bank or a branch of a U.S.-based bank. Some banks require a letter of recommendation from your home bank in the U.S. Usually fees are charged for transferring money from your home bank to your new account. Be prepared for a 4-to-6 week waiting period while they activate your account.

#### *Packing Tips*

- Do not take expensive items such as jewelry
- Good walking shoes and jeans will be helpful
- Take bedroom/house slippers
- Do not forget your prescription medicine and take enough refills for the duration of the trip, plus a few extra – in case you drop a pill, miscount, etc.
- Take your own towels and washcloths
- Take a camera for pictures
- Take personal hygiene products
- Take an electric voltage converter and a wall socket converter when needed, if you need one of each, you can take an outlet strip but be mindful of how much you plug in at one time, outlet shortages can happen
- Take SSU paraphernalia as gifts for others

#### *Taking Your Personal Computer Abroad*

- Depending on how computer savvy you are and your level of patience, taking your laptop with you on your travels can be either practical or frustrating
- Getting connected may mean having to find a hardline, WiFi is not available everywhere and may be spotty depending on where you are
- Taking advantage of cybercafes or university computer labs can be a reasonable alternative, remember to take jump drives with you

In general, unless you absolutely need your laptop, don't take it. It's just one more thing to be lost, stolen or damaged!

#### *Health and Accident Insurance*

Study abroad budgets include the required fees health insurance through CISI. If you are traveling for a full semester, discuss the cost of insurance with your Study Abroad Coordinator. The emergency cards provided to you prior to your departure will have the closest facilities that accept this insurance so you know where you can go in case of a health or mental health emergency.

#### *Student Waiver for Educational and Cultural Trips*

All students traveling in or outside the United States must sign a liability form provided by the International Education Center. The form states, "Savannah State University encourages students to strengthen their education and cultural competencies through participation in university sponsored, off-campus events. When students travel to and from university sanctioned events in a university owned or

leased vehicle, or privately owned vehicle, Savannah State University requires you to assume all liability for your personal safety and well-being.” In any case, The International Education Center and professors traveling with students will make the safety of students their top priority but much like activities on campus, safety cannot be guaranteed. Students are young adults and must accept responsibility for his/her own actions particularly when the student is out of the country.

#### *Passport and Visa*

A passport is required for every person traveling to any foreign country including neighboring countries Canada and Mexico. Applications for passport can be obtained online, at a passport acceptance facility, or at the International Education Center. Once the application is submitted to an acceptance facility, it can take 4-6 weeks to receive your passport. Express service takes about 10 days but the cost almost double that of regular service, therefore, students are encouraged to apply for a passport three to four months before the trip. Many countries require a visa for entry, which requires your passport as part of the application. The IEC will assist you in mailing your application for a visa if necessary. Costs affiliated with regular service for obtaining visas will be included in your program costs, if expedition of the visas becomes necessary, additional fees will be required and students will have to pay the additional charge.

Before leaving the USA, all copies of your important documents must be left with the International Education Center. The study abroad coordinator will provide a copy of these documents to the program manager. In case you lose your documents, we will be able to use the copies of your travel documents to help you return to the USA safely. Foreign students must meet with the Director of the International Education Center to ensure that all his travel documents including the F-1 visa are in order.

#### *Students with Disabilities*

Savannah State University strongly encourages all students to consider studying abroad. The International Education Center will require that our host institutions accommodate our students with disabilities. Therefore, if you have a disability, you should speak to the Director of the International Education Center prior to registering for your trip so accommodations can be provided in country.

#### *Students of Color*

No two students studying abroad ever have the same experience, even if the students are in the same program at the same time. This same variety is true for students of color. Reports from the past participants vary from those who felt exhilarated by being free of the American context of race relations to those who experienced different degrees of 'innocent' curiosity about their ethnicity to those who felt new types of prejudice due to skin color and all feelings in between. Feel free to discuss race relations with other students, in-country guides, or even the Study Abroad Coordinator who will work with you to guide you through whatever difficulty you are facing.

## At the airport

- Check in at least two hours early; some airlines will not allow you to board if you are late
- All carry-on luggage is subject to search, DO NOT change items from one bag to another while waiting for security or customs
- Be sure to do anything customs officers request of you, while the request may seem strange they do have the right to arrest you, if you are uncomfortable with the request, ask the program manager or another student to accompany you
- Keep your luggage with you at all times; do not allow anyone else to watch it for you
- Wait for your flight past the security checkpoint, only passengers are allowed in these areas
- Dress casually and do not wear expensive jewelry
- Do not leave your personal items unattended on the plane, items can be stolen in flight
- Remember "3-1-1" for carry-ons: 3.4 ounce bottle or less (by volume); 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin
- Rules for allowed items changes regularly through TSA (Transportation Security Administration), be sure to check [www.tsa.gov](http://www.tsa.gov) for the most up to date information

### *When you arrive:*

- Exchange some money at the airport for transportation and food
- If you have not prearranged for or do not know about ground transportation, ask an airline official, finding someone that speaks English is more available in the airport than almost anywhere else
- Do not engage in idle conversation with strangers, especially if they ask personal questions, they may be trying to distract you while their partner steals your bags or picks your pocket
- Do not hang the "Make up Room" tag on your door, it notifies thieves that you are not in.
- Do not leave valuables in your room, use the hotel safe or carry them with you
- Check for the nearest fire stairwell
- On a train or in some hotels you may need to show your passport to security, always ask when you can retrieve it and get it back as soon as possible

## Communicating Across Cultures

There are a number of skills and guidelines that can be suggested for communicating successfully in cross-cultural situations:

- Pay Attention. Clear your mind so you can concentrate on what is being said. Remember that there is no point in talking if you cannot pay (or receive) attention. If you cannot, try to postpone the conversation.
- Set your assumptions and values aside and try to hear not just what the other person is saying but what is meant by what was said. This may require asking many questions. Be patient with one another and do not try to finish the other person's sentences.

- Withhold judgment. You will have more success in communicating with other people if you are trying to understand them rather than to evaluate them.
- Be complete and explicit. Be ready to explain your point in more than one way and why you are trying to make a particular point in the first place. Give the background of your situation, provide the context so communication will be as clear as possible.
- Download a translator to your phone. Before taking out the device, say, "I am taking out my phone to help with translation," so the other person does not immediately think you are being rude. Most cultures are not as obsessed with technology like the US.

## **Safety Practices**

- Stay in well lit, public places
- When you go out, go with a friend
- Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return
- Don't use short cuts, narrow alleys, or poorly lit streets
- Carry only enough money for the day
- Know and obey local laws
- Learn local customs and dress in a manner that is not offensive
- Remember that no matter how safe you feel there is crime everywhere. Pick- pocketing and theft of a purse or bag is most common. Keep your valuables in a pouch under your clothing. Wear jackets with zippers and inside pockets. Never place your jacket, purse or backpack on the back of the chair, even if you are sitting in the chair.
- Maintain a low profile, especially in places where there may be hostility toward Americans
- Avoid restaurants or entertainment places where Americans are known to congregate
- Avoid protest groups or other potentially volatile situations. If you find yourself close to an unruly crowd, back away until you are out of range and then leave the area quickly.
- Politely decline offers of food or drink from strangers
- No matter where you are staying, do not open your door to a strange
- Do not discuss travel plans or other personal matters with strangers
- Never loan your house or room key to anyone

### *Independent Excursions:*

- If you are traveling outside the group, always tell someone your travels plans including your destination, hotel, dates of travel, and method of travel
- Travel with others you know
- Avoid travel at night, do not sleep on the public transportation without using the buddy system
- Do not hitchhike
- Use reputable hotels, hostels, etc.; your safety is worth the cost

- Check in with the embassy, prior to your departure the study abroad coordinator will register you with the state department through STEP so the embassy will have a file on you should you need to utilize their services.

## **Travel Safety**

*Safety on the Street:* Use the same common sense traveling overseas that you would at home. Be especially cautious in areas where you may be more easily victimized. These include crowded subways, train stations, elevators, tourist sites, market places, festivals, and crime-ridden neighborhoods.

- Avoid scam artists by being wary of strangers who approach you and offer to be your guide
- Be mindful of people trying to sell you something at bargain prices
- Beware of pickpockets, they often have accomplices who will:
  - Jostle you
  - Ask you for directions or the time
  - Point to something spilled on your clothing
  - Distract you by creating a disturbance
  - Groups of children can be used as a distraction
  - 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
  - Move with a purpose, even if you are lost, try to ask for directions only from individuals in authority
- Learn a few phrases in the local language or have them available in your phone so that you can signal your need for police or medical help
- Keep your emergency cards on you at all times, it will have the number of the nearest medical facility that will take your insurance as well as contact numbers of your program managers, your hotel address, and the information of 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, do not invite people to your room, meet all visitors in the lobby
- Do not leave money and other valuables in your hotel room while you are out
- Use the hotel safe, if one is available
- 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, now how to report a fire, and know where the nearest fire 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:*

Taxi or Uber: Only take vehicles clearly identified with official markings



- Avoid overcrowded taxis or Ubers
- Be alert for reckless driving (e.g. speeding, inattention to driving, apparent drowsiness, disregard for signage and signals)
- If driver is irresponsible, get out at first safe opportunity
- If you feel you are at risk, speak up
- Avoid riding with drivers who seem to be under influence of alcohol or medication, or appear over-tired, irrational or distracted
- Ride only in vehicles with functional seat-belts in back seat
- Avoid night travel, especially in rural areas, and plan ahead how to get home before you go out
- If you are unsure of which taxi companies to use or if Uber is available, inquire at the airport information desk, hotel concierge, shop keeper, restaurant personnel or in-country contact, they may be able to help with communication issues as well, have a local write your destinations on a piece of paper for your driver
- Take a business card of the taxi service with whom you are most comfortable
- Calling for taxis or Uber is the safest way to travel, especially at night
- Try not to let anyone overhear you ordering a taxi, if they hear your name and destination, they may pretend to be the taxi you ordered
- If you have ordered a taxi or Uber, wait for the driver to approach you. Ask the driver his/her name or vehicle they are driving, do not get into a taxi or Uber you aren't sure is yours
- When you get into the taxi or Uber, note the code number, displayed driver's name, ID and photograph if possible
- If the taxi driver tries to bargain instead of using the meter or claims the meter is broken, get out of the taxi

#### Trains:

- If your path is being blocked by a stranger and another person is very close, move away, this has been known to happen as a theft tactic in the station or on the train
- Do not accept food or drink from strangers, criminals have been known to drug food or drink offered to passengers
- If you are on an overnight train, lock your compartment. If it cannot be locked, take sleep in shifts with your traveling companions. If you must sleep unprotected, keep your luggage next to you so that if it is moved, you will be jostled awake
- Do not be afraid to alert authorities if you feel threatened, security on trains is often heightened especially to tourist destinations

#### Busses and Minivans:

- Wait for the bus in a safe place, several steps away from the road
- When possible, avoid overcrowded buses and minivans

- Be alert for reckless driving but be mindful not all road rules are the same in other countries as they are in the US
- If you feel you are at risk, speak up!
- After you get off the bus, keep walking do not stand in one place as to try to get your bearings, do that as you are moving
- If you drop something near the bus, tell the driver before you pick it up
- After getting driver's attention, cross the street in front of the bus, never go behind the bus
- Stay seated at all times
- Avoid night travel, especially in rural areas

*Road Safety:* At an October 2000 Congressional hearing on "Safety in Study Abroad," it was stated that the major cause of student injury or death in overseas programs is traffic accidents. According to the U.S. State Department, road travel is the greatest risk to healthy Americans abroad. This doesn't just refer to those who drive a car but also refers to students as pedestrians as well as riders in a taxi or bus. The following helpful checklists are from the website of the Association for Safe International Road Travel at [www.asirt.org](http://www.asirt.org).

*Pedestrian Safety:* These guidelines serve as suggestions. Each suggestion will not necessarily apply in your country or location.

*Rental Vehicles:* Because driving in another country can be completely different from driving a vehicle in the US, the International Education Center does not recommend students driving while studying overseas however, if you choose to do so:

- Be sure to thoroughly read and understand all traffic laws where you are located
- If you are driving to another country, be sure to know those laws before you hit the road
- When you rent the vehicle, make sure your driver's license is valid as an international driver's license in the country where you will be driving – the rental company should be able to give you that information
- Obey all traffic laws
- Understand the liability you take in this venture is your own, SSU cannot take responsibility for anything that happens during that time
- Know where the nearest embassy is located in case you get pulled over, you may need to ask for legal assistance depending on what happened

## **Sexual Misconduct**

From the Savannah State University student handbook:

Savannah State University supports a safe learning environment for all students, faculty, staff and campus visitors. The university prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct of any kind, and enforces a Sexual Misconduct Policy. The policy applies to all students, employees and third parties, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. Any form of sexual misconduct, including but not

limited to sexual assault, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment and stalking, will not be tolerated on the Savannah State University campus. The university encourages members of the campus community to report sexual misconduct immediately and has several tools available to ensure the process is fair, prompt and confidential.

Although you are not on Savannah State University's campus, Title IX is still the law among SSU students, the tricky part comes in dealing with people from another culture. Cultural norms vary regarding what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate sexual behavior. You cannot assume behavior that is considered acceptable or unacceptable in the U.S. will be viewed similarly abroad. While suggestive catcalling, aggressive advances, and other inappropriate interactions might be considered normal in some locations, it does not have to be tolerated. Your response in these situations can help determine the outcome.

### *LGBTQ Issues*

Attitudes toward sexuality vary greatly from country to country. Some cultures are open about homosexuality while some cultures are intolerant of different sexual preferences. Sadly some countries still have laws against LGBTQ relationships. Savannah State University will not approve study abroad programs in areas where criminal prosecution is permissible for sexual orientation. It is important that you stay vigilant of all local laws and obey the laws whether or not you agree with those laws. You are a guest in someone else's home, you should behave better than you would if you were in your house.

### *Sexual Harassment*

Sexual harassment, although clearly prohibited by law in the U.S., is subject to cultural interpretation in other countries. In cultures where males have traditionally held most of the power, verbal suggestion and even touching of women by men which we would consider inappropriate in the U.S. may be tolerated. **This in no way makes these actions acceptable.** If you experience what you would consider to be sexual harassment, you should immediately report it to your program director. Your program director will then keep the Office of International Services and Programs informed of the situation.

### *Dealing with Sexual Assault and Rape*

Being informed, exercising good judgment, and taking appropriate precautions can reduce the risk of sexual assault. Talk with your Program Director and do some research about cultural norms as they relate to dating. It is important to know that American women are often stereotyped as being promiscuous and this may be reinforced by styles of dress and generally over-friendly interactions. While the majority of cases involve women, sexual harassment, assaults, and rape can also happen to men. In some countries, the concept of date rape is not understood and in some cultural settings your behavior prior to an assault may be more important than the number of times you say no. Consider these guidelines in dealing with interactions of an intimate nature:

- Remain sober. This allows you to both judge situations and react if needed.
- Dress conservatively and in the manner of local norms.

- Employ the buddy system (it's always good to have friends watching out for you), especially if you are intending to travel outside of the group.
- Take care of yourself on a date. Be prepared to pay your own way, have access to a phone, have your own transportation, and consider dressing in a way that allows you to move freely and quickly.
- Make your intentions clear.
- Trust your instincts; listen to your inner voice and act on it if you feel uncomfortable and can safely remove yourself from the situation.
- Ask yourself, "am I able to say no?" and, "am I comfortable with what is happening?"
- If you don't like what someone is doing, you can reject the activity without rejecting the person.
- Remove yourself from the situation as soon as you sense danger or feel afraid.
- Try to walk on well-traveled, well-lit streets, and avoid standing in shadows.
- Look confident and strong and ignore inappropriate remarks from strangers.
- If an assault is attempted, consider your options to find an escape.
- Last, but NOT least, if something does happen remember that it is not your fault, no matter what you did or didn't do; it is the perpetrator's fault.
- Report any and all inappropriate interactions immediately to your program manager, if additional reporting is necessary he/she will help you take the next steps

Remember you are not alone. Your health insurance covers you if you need to seek medical or mental health assistance while you're in country, so do not be afraid to use it. Also, SSU health facilities will work with you even overseas, so if you need to speak with a counselor from Savannah, please ask. We can set up Skype sessions, telephone sessions, whatever you need to help deal with the situation at hand.

### **If you run into trouble:**

- Communicate your program director should you have any question regarding local laws or any interaction with local law enforcement – do not do anything until someone from the U.S. arrives
- Call the U.S Embassy immediately, contact information will be on your emergency card given to you before you travel – you will be register with the US Embassy through the STEP program prior to your departure
- If you are arrested or detained, ALWAYS cooperate with local authorities and ask to call the U.S. Embassy and your program manager as soon as possible
- Your program manager will contact the International Education Center, the study abroad coordinator will coordinate communications between the embassy in the country where you are, the embassy in the US, your program manager, and your family should they need to be involved.

## Dealing with Terrorism

Terrorist acts occur unpredictably which makes it impossible to protect yourself in all instances. The first and best protection is to avoid travel to areas where there has been a persistent record of terrorist attacks or kidnappings. Because of the changing international climate, the university will not sanction any study abroad trips to locations currently on the U.S. State Department Travel Warning list.

Unfortunately there is no guarantee of absolute safety even in your own city. Please keep the following tips in mind while traveling:

- Be aware of your surroundings
- Move confidently
- Stay in well-lit, busy areas, especially after dark
- Employ the "buddy system" (don't go anywhere alone)
- Blend in
- Dress like the locals
- Dress and act conservatively
- Drink responsibly
- Avoid confrontations
- Avoid public demonstrations
- Become familiar with local customs
- Be aware of scams
- Carry your carry-on bag or backpack/day bag on the side away from the street so bicyclists and motorcyclists can't snatch it
- Keep your bag under your elbow or in your lap
- Carry your camera with caution
- Secure your belongings when you are in youth hostels
- Do not leave bags/luggage unattended
- Take only the luggage you can manage by yourself
- If you are on an exchange program and want to visit another country during your stay, be sure to visit the embassy in the country where you are registered PRIOR to traveling elsewhere, they can give you tips and information you wouldn't receive elsewhere



## Study Abroad Code of Conduct

1. Possession and/or use of drugs (controlled substances) as defined by the State of Georgia is prohibited regardless of the laws of the host country or countries where the program takes place. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, the student will be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.
2. Excessive alcohol use is prohibited. Violation of a host country's laws regarding alcohol use and/or possession is also prohibited. Students accused of violating these alcohol policies will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, the student will be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense. Excessive alcohol use includes but is not limited to the following:
  - Consumption of alcohol to the extent of requiring medical intervention or transport
  - Endangering self or others while under the influence of alcohol
  - Causing property damage while under the influence of alcohol
  - Causing a disruption to the program's educational mission while under the influence of alcohol
  - Causing a disruption to the community while under the influence of alcohol
  - Any incident of alcohol consumption that demonstrates a pattern of alcohol abuse
3. Students are prohibited from damaging or destroying facilities or property. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense. In addition, students accused of violating this policy will be required to cover the costs of repair or replacement.
4. Fighting is strictly prohibited. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.
5. Theft of property is strictly prohibited. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.
6. Students who travel on weekends without faculty members are required to provide their destinations, probable time of return, and contact information. Failure to do so is a violation of policy. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

7. No person shall subject another person to unwelcome sexual overtures or conduct, either verbal or physical. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

8. No student shall act in a manner that can reasonably be expected to disturb the academic pursuits of others or infringe upon the privacy, rights, or privileges of others, or the health or safety of him/herself or other persons. Students accused of violating this policy will meet with the program director to explain their actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, at the discretion of the program director, the student may be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

9. If a student has violated a rule but has been allowed to remain in the program, the director will have the SSU International Education Center contact the student's parent(s), or guardian (emergency contact) to obtain their assistance in correcting the student's behavior and to inform the parent(s) that the student will be terminated from the program on the next violation.

### ***Policy Violation Process***

1. Once a student has violated a rule but been allowed to remain in the program at the discretion of the director, if a second violation of any rule occurs then the student will meet with the program director to explain his/her actions. After this meeting, if the program director determines that a violation of this policy has taken place, the student will be terminated from the program and sent home at his/her own expense.

2. If a student has been terminated from the program, the director will have the SSU International Education Center contact the student's parent(s) or guardian (emergency contact) who will be notified within 24 hours of the termination that the student is no longer enrolled in the program and has been asked to return home at his/her own expense.

3. Whenever a student is accused of violating these SSU study abroad program policies he/she will have the opportunity to meet with the program director to explain his/her actions before a decision is made as to his/her responsibility for the violation(s). The program director should document in writing the policy the student is alleged to have violated, a summary of the evidence that is available concerning the matter, the decision the program director makes concerning the allegation, and any sanction(s) applied to the student. This written documentation should be sent within 24 hours of the decision (email or fax) to the SSU International Education Center. The IEC will forward this documentation to the SSU Office of Judiciary Programs if the student is enrolled at Savannah State University or to the appropriate collegiate administration of the student's home institution if he/she is not enrolled at SSU.

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Signature of Participant

Printed Name

Date



## Student Statement of Responsibility

1. I acknowledge that participation in a study abroad program involves some risk of injury, illness, or loss of personal property. I have read the International Education Center's (IEC) Student Handbook and understand that I am responsible for my day-to-day choices and behaviors regarding my health and safety during the program. I have also read and understand the Savannah State University (SSU) Code of Conduct and Housing Policy remain in effect when I travel abroad.
2. I understand that as an American citizen in a foreign country, I will be subject to the laws of that country. I understand that being charged with any infraction of the laws of the host country is grounds for immediate expulsion from the program without refund. In addition, I understand that should I have any legal problems in the host country that I will be responsible for any legal costs incurred.
3. I agree that I will be fully responsible for any and all expenses, including transportation costs, associated with or in any way related to medical care. I am responsible for bringing and administering any prescribed medications. I further certify that, to the best of my knowledge, I am in good health and physically capable of undertaking a study abroad program. Any medical or health-related problems have been disclosed on the Health Information and Emergency Treatment Form.
4. I understand that if I become detached from the group due to failure to comply with directions given by the program manager, I will bear all responsibility to find and reconnect with the group at the next destination. I understand that I will incur all the costs involved in contacting and reaching the group.
5. I agree that I shall be subject to the supervision and authority of the program manager and to the SSU's Student Code of Conduct and Housing Policies. I further acknowledge that the program manager has the sole authority to make decisions regarding disciplinary actions.
6. I understand that if my program participation is terminated due to disciplinary actions, I will not receive a refund of program fees. If I am dismissed before the completion of the program, I understand I will be responsible for any and all expenses associated with my return home. I also understand that if I leave the program voluntarily, I will be responsible for any cost associated with my return home and that no fees will be refunded.
7. I authorize SSU to communicate with the contact person(s) provided in my application materials in the event of an emergency.
8. I understand that during non-class time, I may elect to travel independently at my own expense. I agree to inform the program manager of my travel plans and understand that neither SSU nor program staff are responsible for me while I am traveling independently during such free time.

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Signature of Participant

Printed Name

Date





## Health Information and Emergency Treatment Form

Please answer each of the questions below. It is in your best interests to provide a candid evaluation of your physical and emotional health. We hope to create an awareness of any health issues to be taken into consideration before you go and as needed while abroad. We appreciate your cooperation in completing this form and adding any information that you feel is relevant to your well-being and participation in the program.

Submit this original completed document to along with your application and keep one on your person at all times. If on religious or other grounds the student or her/his parent/guardian is unwilling to sign the Permission for Emergency Medical Authorization and Release, a written explanation signed by both the participant and her/his parent or guardian must be attached and returned to the International Education Center.

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID # \_\_\_\_\_

### Program

**If you answer "yes" to any of the following questions, please use the space indicated or a separate sheet to provide details.**

### General Health & Medications

1. Will you require any medical attention while abroad, or do you have any conditions (including dietary restrictions) which may affect your participation in the program? no yes
2. Do you have any medical conditions which may, under stress or duress, require immediate medical attention during your participation in the program, e.g., epilepsy, heart trouble, asthma, ulcers, hemophilia, diabetes, past illness? no yes
3. Do you have any conditions or impairments which may affect your emotional or mental well-being during your participation in a study abroad program? no yes

If so, what kind of accommodations or support might be needed (e.g., classes, counselors, signers)?

4. What treatments or prescribed medications do you currently receive on a regular basis? If none, mark N/A.
5. Will you be able to perform the essential functions of this study abroad program? no yes

If you are a person with a disability and would require a reasonable accommodation to perform the essential functions of this study abroad program, please contact the Director of Disability Services at SSU before submitting this form.

6. What is your blood type (if known)? \_\_\_\_\_

**Allergies**

7. Do you have any dietary restrictions or known food allergies? \_\_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_\_yes If so, please explain:  
Are you allergic to any of the following? \_\_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_\_yes If so, please check appropriate line:  
\_\_\_\_\_ Penicillin \_\_\_\_\_Aspirin \_\_\_\_\_Sulfa \_\_\_\_\_Local anesthetic

8. Do you have any other allergies (e.g., bee stings, environmental) \_\_\_\_\_no \_\_\_\_\_yes If so, please explain:

**Emergency Contacts**

Name (and relationship to you): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(daytime): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone (home): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_

**Secondary Contact** (this person will be contacted if your primary contact is not available)

Name (and relationship to you): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone(daytime): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone (home): \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone (cell): \_\_\_\_\_

**Emergency Medical Authorization and Release**

On occasion, emergencies arise which may require medical care, hospitalization or surgery for a program participant. In order for such treatment to be administered without delay, we ask that participants sign the following statement authorizing Savannah State University to secure, at the expense of the participant, any treatment deemed necessary.

*In the event of injury or illness, if I am unable to do so myself, I hereby authorize the Resident Director or other official appointed by Savannah State University at my expense, to secure any necessary treatment, including administration of anesthetic and surgery, and such medication as may be prescribed. It is further agreed that, if my condition so requires, I may be evacuated to the United States at my own expense.*

*I hereby release Savannah State University and/or any cooperating institution and their officers and agents from any and all claims and causes of action for damage to or loss of property, medical or hospital cares, personal illness or injury, or death arising out of any travel or activity conducted by or under the control of Savannah State University or cooperating institutions.*

I have read all the information on this form. I certify that the information I provided on this sheet is true and correct to the best of my knowledge. I consent to the Authorization and Release. I understand that this information may be shared with my program provider, program leader or host institution.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_