

Education Abroad

So you want to study abroad? GREAT! These are some questions to first consider before deciding on a study abroad site.

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Do you have a passport? If yes, does it need to be renewed? The Passport section of the U.S. State Department website¹ provides information on how to obtain a passport or renew your current passport.2) Does the university provide accommodations? If so, what kind of documentation must you provide (if necessary)?3) What are the physical environments of the location? Is it metropolitan, rural, etc.?4) What kind of instruction takes place at the university? Is it mostly seminars, lectures, independent work, group work, projects, research, etc.?5) How do the assignments at the university abroad compare to the assignments at your home institution?6) What are the housing options? Will you have the option of living in a residence hall, in an apartment, or with a host family?7) Will your housing be accessible?8) How will you eat? Do you need to cook? Will meals be provided?9) What are the primary modes of transportation? Do people get around in cars, bicycles, trains, buses?10) Will there be many excursions to other cities, countries and locations?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">11) What are the healthcare options? Will you have access to necessary medicine and treatment?12) What are the cultural perceptions of persons with disabilities?13) Do you have friends with disabilities who have studied or traveled abroad? Have you asked them about their experiences in certain countries?14) How long do you plan to stay? What are your available finances? Is financial aid covering expenses? Are there fees and additional costs such as airfare and international health insurance?15) What is the political climate? Is it safe? Is the country on the State Department's "Travel Warnings" list? Check the State Department website² to find out.16) Have you thought about what you hope to gain from the experience?17) Will the experience contribute to your academic and career goals? What do you need to do receive credit for courses taken abroad?18) Will the program provide support, orientation, language training, and visa assistance?
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¹ <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>

² http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Important Medical and Prescription Considerations:

- 1) Ask your doctor for enough prescription medicine for the duration of the stay.
- 2) Arrange for all immunization shots well in advance. Google local offices that provide immunizations for international travel.
- 3) Make sure that your medicine is LEGAL in the country you will live. Google the nearest embassy or consulate and contact them to find out about medical restrictions. Embassies and consulates are official, government affiliated locations where officials approve and assign travel visas.
- 4) Call your health insurance provider to confirm that they will cover your needs while overseas.
- 5) Note: It is ILLEGAL to have your medicine sent to you through postage mail.
- 6) Make sure to keep all medicine in the original bottles with the labels on the outside.
- 7) Always put your medicine in your carry-on bag in case your luggage gets lost.
- 8) Find out if you will have access to counseling and mental health services abroad.
- 9) Get creative! See if you can talk to your counselor via [google voice³](#).

These considerations can apply to persons with all kinds of disabilities including:

Medical and/or Chronic Health Conditions

Physical Mobility and/or Dexterity Impairments

Learning Disabilities

Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

Psychiatric Disorders

Cognitive Disabilities (Traumatic Brain Injuries)

³ <http://www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html>

Key things to remember before you depart:

- 1) Make sure to disclose your disability to program staff as early as possible so that the appropriate accommodations can be arranged.
- 2) If you are studying in a non-English speaking country, learn the right words and phrases to describe your disability. Use a dictionary to look up key terms. [Word Reference.com](http://www.wordreference.com/)⁴ is a good site to translate foreign words into English, and English words into a different language!
- 3) Other countries may perceive disability differently than at your home institution. Make sure to find out exactly how the university can accommodate you and be open to alternate methods of assistance. You can find more information about this at the [University of Minnesota Accessibility Abroad](http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities)⁵ website.
- 4) You will be required to provide health information in order to obtain a visa. This requires a lot of paperwork and might cause a delay. Contact the official contact at the embassy or consulate to find out exact requirements.
- 5) There is a chance that the university does not provide accommodations and the country might not recognize your disability. Be aware of this possibility before deciding on a study abroad site. You can find more information about this at the [University of Minnesota Accessibility Abroad](http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities)⁵ website.
- 6) Keep in mind that sign language interpreters might not use American Sign Language.
- 7) Do your research! Learn as much as you can about the culture. Read literature. Talk to other students who have studied in that location. Attend pre-study abroad sessions. The more familiar you are with the culture, the easier the transition.

⁴ <http://www.wordreference.com/>

⁵ <http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities>

Education Abroad Checklist: Carefully follow this checklist and you will be on your way!

Activity	✓
GET STARTED! You should begin planning for your study abroad trip AT LEAST 9 to 12 months in advance.	
Where do you want to go? Visit the UConn Education Abroad office website⁶ and meet with a Study Abroad Advisor to explore program options.	
<p>What do you need to do to get academic credit? Make an appointment with your academic advisor to discuss your coursework overseas. Check the UConn Study Abroad website under Credits and Grades⁶ for more information.</p> <p>Make an appointment online with a study abroad advisor on the UConn Study Abroad website⁶.</p> <p>You should also make an appointment with your disability service provider (DSP) at the CSD to talk about your plans.</p>	
When you have narrowed down program options, visit the State Department website⁷ for country “fact sheets” for country specific information.	
<p>Once you know what program interests you, pay attention to the costs and application requirements.</p> <p>Follow the detailed directions on the UConn Education Abroad website⁶ to apply to a program.</p>	
Do you receive financial aid? If you receive financial aid, make an appointment with a financial aid advisor to find out if they cover the costs. To find study abroad information about financial aid, visit the financial aid website⁸ .	

⁶ <http://studyabroad.uconn.edu/>

⁷ http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_4965.html

⁸ <http://financialaid.uconn.edu/study-abroad/>

Activity	✓
<p>If you don't already have a passport or if yours is expired, you need to apply for your passport through the State Department website⁹.</p> <p>More information about how this process can be found on the UConn Education Abroad website¹⁰.</p> <p>Next, find out if you need a visa. A visa is a permit to enter a certain country. In most cases, it is stamped onto a blank page in your passport. It's just as important as the passport. Depending on your citizenship and the country where you are studying, you may need a visa for your study abroad program.</p> <p>Plan ahead! Start this process as early as possible. Some countries are very strict about rules and requirements. Each country varies widely on the requirements for a student visa and the length of time it takes to acquire the visa. Sometimes it will take a few weeks. On the other hand, it might take a few months.</p> <p>Keep in mind: You <u>must</u> have a passport to obtain a visa. Check with the embassy/consulate of the foreign country that you are planning to visit for up-to-date visa and other entry requirements. Remember, embassies and consulates are official, government affiliated locations where officials approve and assign travel visas.</p> <p>A great site to visit is STA Travel¹¹, where you can find out more about entry requirements.</p>	
<p>You have the option to apply for an International Student Identification Card (ISIC). You may receive discounts on travel (flights, buses, and trains) as well as at museums! ISIC is primarily recommended for students going to Europe. You can apply for an ISIC at the UConn Study Abroad Office. For further details, please go to the STA website¹².</p>	
<p>You may have to purchase your own plane ticket for the program. Some round-trip tickets are included in the program cost. Check the budget sheets on the UConn Education Abroad website¹³ in your program brochure to find out if airfare is included.</p>	

⁹ http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

¹⁰ <http://studyabroad.uconn.edu/>

¹¹ <http://statravel.visaheadquarters.com/visas.php>

¹² <http://www.statravel.com/student-discount-card.htm>

¹³ <http://studyabroad.uconn.edu/>

Activity	✓
<p>Money Matters: You may want a debit card, which allow you to withdraw money from your bank account in the US in the currency of the host country using an ATM machine. Check with your bank/credit union to learn about any convenience fees or international withdrawal fees. You may also want to apply for a credit card that is universally recognized around the world (e.g. Mastercard or VISA).</p> <p>Some countries may allow you to open a bank account at a local bank where you are studying abroad. You may wish to compare the services and costs of several banks before choosing one at which to open an account.</p>	
<p>Important! Call your bank to inform them that you will be withdrawing money and making purchases abroad. This will ensure that your card does not get shut off and you <u>do not</u> want that to happen! Also, make sure that your ATM card will work in your host country. You can ask your bank for more information.</p>	
<p>If required, get a comprehensive physical, vaccines and immunizations. The UConn Travel Clinic (860-486-0773) provides information about vaccines and immunizations that are required around the world. You might have to include your medical record in your study abroad package. Keep it with you.</p>	
<p>You're almost there! Book your flight. It is important that you arrive <u>on the date in your acceptance packet</u>.</p>	
<p>Stock up on prescription medication. Have a doctor's note that authorizes their use and refills.</p> <p>Make sure that the over the counter medicine you bring is legal in the country you are visiting (check with your doctor or check with your host country's consulate). For customs purposes, keep all over the counter medications unopened and in the original package. You must also keep your prescription medicine in their labeled containers. This is to make sure that customs does not think you are smuggling illegal drugs into the country.</p>	

Activity	✓
<p>Invest in enough contact lenses (if needed) to cover you for the duration of your program. Take along a copy of your eyeglass prescription in case you lose your contacts or glasses and need to get replacements. Don't wear contacts? You might consider purchasing another pair of backup glasses.</p>	
<p>Make sure you have international medical insurance for your time abroad. Most UConn Study Abroad programs provide international medical insurance as a part of the program. Contact UConn Study Abroad with questions about this.</p>	
<p>You may want to purchase travel insurance to cover replacement costs of lost or stolen possessions.</p>	
<p>Many U.S. cell phones will not work abroad; check with your cell phone provider for information on international calling plans or rates. Alternatively you can purchase an international cell phone or an international calling card to keep in touch with home and use around the country you are in. International cell phones are included in the price of some programs. Check UConn Education Abroad if you are unsure if the program you are interested in provides international cell phones. Generally, most students use Skype to communicate with friends and family.</p>	
<p>Purchase at least one international power adapter to use your electronics abroad. You can buy these in the host country, or online.</p>	
<p>Make multiple copies of important documents. Take a set with you and leave one for your parents. Keep them in a secure location, separate location from your passport. These can include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First pages of your passport, as well as your visa • Credit cards (both sides) • Student ID/driver's license <p>In the event that something bad happens, you'll know that your family will have your information. You should always be prepared in case something unexpected happens!</p>	

Activity	✓
<p>Make sure you have everyone’s email and telephone numbers (your program coordinator’s email and phone should be at the top of the list). Leave that same info with a guardian or a friend.</p>	
<p>Google the nearest U.S. Embassy in your country abroad and keep that information with you. This is important because you might need assistance in the event that you run into trouble (get arrested, lose your passport, etc.).</p>	
<p>Confirm your flight at least twice. Make sure to confirm the flight the night before departure.</p>	
<p>Pack your carry-on bag.</p> <p>Important! All medication should be <u>in your carry-on bag</u>, not in your checked bag in case it gets lost. Include all important documents (passport, visa, international student identification card, address and phone numbers of destination contacts, credit card(s), documents, change of clothes, toothbrush, travel size toothpaste etc.), and any electronics (cameras, iPods, laptops, etc.).</p>	
<p>Most importantly: Be safe and trust your instincts! You will be abroad in an unfamiliar country and can find yourself vulnerable to all kinds of situations-good and bad. Use your common sense. Don’t be nervous, be sensible! You should always be aware of people and your surroundings at all times! And keep in contact with your family and friends on a regular basis.</p>	
<p>The UConn Education Abroad Student Guide¹⁴ provides comprehensive information about the study abroad process at UConn. You should definitely read the entire guide.</p>	

¹⁴ <http://studyabroad.uconn.edu/>

Good luck!

Enjoy your time abroad!

**Be prepared, be safe, and have
fun!**

Center for Students with Disabilities
Division of Student Affairs

Complete list of Weblinks within the Checklist:

Foreign Consulate Offices:

<http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/fco/>

Googlevoice:

<http://www.google.com/googlevoice/about.html>

STA Travel:

<http://statravel.visaheadquarters.com/visas.php>

State Department Website:

Country Facts: <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/country.html>

Passport: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/first/first_830.html

Visa: <http://travel.state.gov/content/studentsabroad/en/visa.html>

University of Minnesota Accessibility Abroad:

<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities>

UConn Financial Aid Study Abroad:

<http://financialaid.uconn.edu/abroad/>

UConn Study Abroad:

<http://abroad.uconn.edu/>

Word Reference:

www.wordreference.com

Google Translate:

<http://translate.google.com/>

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References:

University of Minnesota Accessibility Abroad

<http://umabroad.umn.edu/students/identity/disabilities/accessibilityabroad.php>

This website provides detailed information about accessibility at universities in Europe, Asia/Oceania, Africa and the Americas.

Study Abroad 360

<http://www.studyabroad360.com/>

Studyabroad360.com provides information and advice for students who study abroad.

Study Abroad at UConn

<http://studyabroad.uconn.edu/index.cfm?FuseAction=Abroad.Home>

This is the official study abroad website for students at the University of Connecticut (UConn).

Mobility International

<http://www.miusa.org/>

Mobility International USA is a non-profit organization that provides short-term disability leadership programs in the U.S. and abroad with 2,000 youth, young adults and professionals from over 100 countries.

Independent Living Institute

<http://www.independentliving.org/studyworkabroad/>

This website provides an extensive catalog about study abroad for persons with disabilities in Europe, North America and other parts of the world.

