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## STUDY ABROAD TEAM CONTACT INFORMATION



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## LETTER FROM THE OFFICE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

Congratulations on your decision to study abroad! This will, almost inevitably, prove to be one of the most educational and memorable experiences of your life. Before you finalize your plans, however, we would like to take this opportunity to raise a few issues which require serious thought and reflection.

Study abroad presents various challenges, both academic and personal. The way courses will be taught, and consequently the way you study, will be different. In almost all cases you will have to take much more responsibility for staying on track with your coursework. Housing and living standards will also be different. You cannot assume or even expect the environment or living arrangements to be the same as they are at the University of Richmond or in the United States.

You should be prepared to be flexible, adventurous, and cautious at the same time. You should also be willing to adapt to new situations and to expect differences in all things. And you should have fun in the process!

As with all changes and challenges in life, careful and thorough preparation is key to success. This handbook has been designed to help you achieve a smooth transition to your life abroad, so you can confidently handle any difficulties you may encounter along the way. Please take the time to read this handbook and related online resources, because most questions you have are already addressed here.

We are confident that with adequate preparation, knowledge, and flexibility, your study abroad experience will be one that you will treasure for the rest of your life!

Sincerely,

**Dr. Martha Merritt**  
Dean of International Education

**Ellen Sayles**  
Associate Dean & Director of Education Abroad

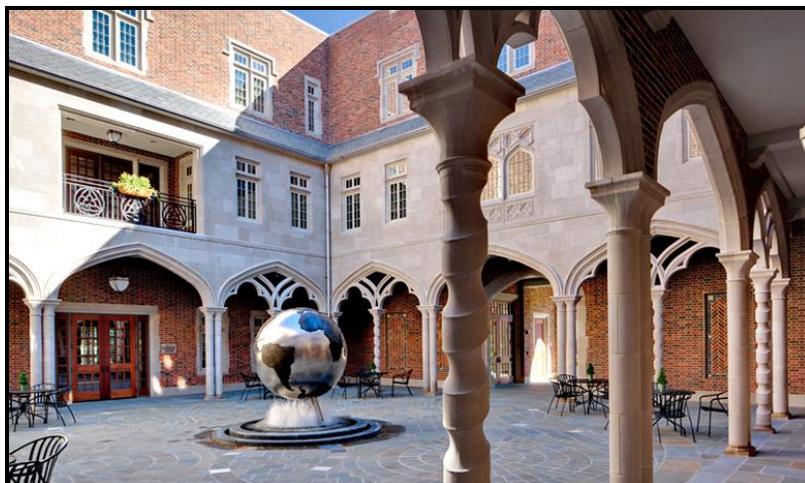
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## ADVICE FROM VETERANS

Even the students who lived through some difficult periods during their time abroad have said, without exception, that they regard study abroad as one of the greatest experiences of their lives. Here is what your peers have had to say about study abroad:

Get involved!

Plunge right in! Don't wait to adjust before participating because you adjust *by* participating.

Ask plenty of questions.

Give it time, whether for language learning or for making friends.

Live with a family, or at least with host country nationals.

If you do not like your living situation, talk to the Program Director and change it.

Spend as little time as possible with other U.S. students on your program.

Speak the local language as much as possible.

Do not judge new things right away.

Be open to new ideas and experiences.

Be relaxed, easy-going, flexible.

Blend in – don't look too much like someone from the U.S.!

Get a native friend to explain what you don't understand.

Read up about the country – all aspects of it – before you go.

Do not be defensive about criticism of the U.S.

Enjoy yourself – and if something is not great, think of it as an "experience."



## CHECKLISTS OF TASKS TO DO BEFORE YOU LEAVE

The Office of International Education (referred to here as “OIE”) has provided you with the following checklists that list various forms and their deadlines. Please mark the deadlines for your specific program in your calendar. **Missed deadlines may jeopardize your participation in the program.**

**What to Do Next checklist** – This highlights the major tasks you must do before your departure. It is provided in the Signature Documents section of [your online study abroad application](#); it can also be downloaded by [clicking here](#).

**Descriptions of Electronic Forms to Submit** – [Click here](#) for descriptions of some of the electronic forms you will be required to submit via your online study abroad application, all of which are included on the What to Do Next checklist.

**Program-Specific checklist** – This is your step-by-step guide for all tasks and information related specifically to your host university/program, including instructions and deadlines for tasks such as applying for admission to your host university/program, housing abroad, the student visa, and much more. It is provided in the Learning Content section of [your online study abroad application](#). If you do not see it in Learning Content, the OIE will email it to you when it is ready.

## ACADEMIC PREPARATIONS BEFORE YOU LEAVE

There are many academic preparations you must make before you leave for abroad. It is very important that you review the following information carefully and thoroughly to ensure that you meet all the residency, graduation, credit transfer and unit requirements from your study abroad experience.

**Click on the links below for full details and information:**

- [Fulfilling degree and graduation requirements](#)
- [Study Abroad Course Approval Forms](#) – ideally you should obtain as many course pre-approvals as possible
- [Transfer students](#)
- [Leadership Studies students](#) – includes specific steps for Jepson majors/minors
- [Business students](#)
- [Seniors studying abroad](#)
- [Minimum and maximum units taken abroad](#)
- [Transferring Hours to Units: The “First Five” rule](#)
- [Circumstances when elective credit for abroad coursework automatically transfers](#)
- [How transferred credit earned abroad will appear on your Richmond transcript](#)

### **Law students**

Please contact your Study Abroad Advisor at OIE or the Registrar’s office for information on credit conversion.

## OTHER TASKS TO DO BEFORE YOU LEAVE CAMPUS

### **Flight Information questionnaires**

The Departing for Abroad and Returning from Abroad flight information questionnaires are located on [your online study abroad application](#) on GatewayAbroad. At a minimum be sure to complete the Departing for Abroad questionnaire before you fly to your host institution. Note that this information is collected for internal OIE purposes only. It is not sent to nor shared with your study abroad institution.

### **Business School Course Requirements and Transfer Policies Contract**

This form is for business students only and must be submitted to Ms. Fae Bell, the International Business Coordinator for the Robins School of Business. Robins School “contracts” will be handed out during the Robins School orientation sessions for business majors who are approved to study abroad. You are required to read, sign, and turn in this document to Ms. Bell at the end of your B-school orientation session. For more information about study abroad policies for Robins School students, please visit [their website](#).

**Confirmation Form** (*approved NON-UR study abroad ONLY*) – This confirms that you have made your final decision to study abroad on an approved non-UR semester study abroad program. This is available in the Signature Documents section of [your online study abroad application](#) on GatewayAbroad.

### **Independent Study Project Form**

Guidelines apply to any student who will be conducting an independent study project (ISP) that involves the use of human participants (interviews, surveys, etc.). This applies especially to students on SIT and SFS programs. You will need to ensure that your project is in keeping with the rules established by [UR's Institutional Research Board \(IRB\)](#). Students on SIT programs must also select a UR faculty member to supervise their research abroad. Please review [the ISP guidelines](#) to help ensure that you are in compliance with the IRB Rules. Additional information will be given to students on programs that include research as an essential component of the program, e.g., SIT and SFS programs.

### **Visit Career Services**

Before and after you go abroad, it is a good idea to visit [Career Services](#) and talk with a career advisor to stay on top of your internship and post-graduate plans. [Click here](#) for a list of international internships at UR study abroad partner universities/programs. For other international internship opportunities, please check the [SpiderConnect](#) website.

## **YEAR-LONG STUDENTS**

Students who will be studying for the full year will need to do the following prior to the start of their second semester:

- **Newest version of SA Handbook**  
Check out [the newest version of the SA Handbook online](#), as it may have been updated since you last reviewed it.
- **Course Approval Form**  
[Download a course approval form](#) and complete one for the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester (if this was not completed before leaving).

## **YEAR-LONG STUDENTS SWITCHING SITES**

### **Cultural/travel/health information**

Check out cultural/travel/health information for second abroad destination (internet links to websites will be sent to you from the OIE).

**Visa issues** – [See section on student visas](#) for important information about applying for student visas for two countries.

## **EXTENSIONS TO YEAR-LONG STUDY**

It is not unusual for students to wish to extend their study abroad to a full year either in the same or to a different study abroad site. If you would like to stay for the year, please carefully [review the steps and procedures involved](#).

## **WITHDRAWAL OR CHANGE OF PROGRAM**

### **GENERAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

#### **UR programs**

Students who withdraw from a UR program or change programs after submitting the “Commitment Form” online are subject to withdrawal/change policies and are required to notify the OIE in writing by completing and submitting the [Withdrawal Form](#) available from the OIE website. For full details on the policies and procedures for withdrawing, changing programs, and re-enrollment at Richmond, visit the [Withdrawal Policy website](#).

#### **Non-UR programs**

Students should contact the program providers for information regarding withdrawal policies and fees, procedures, and refunds. With the exception of extenuating circumstances, the \$1,500 administrative fee for approved non-UR programs will be retained by the University of Richmond and will not be refunded to the student. For more information, please visit the [Withdrawal Policy website](#).

## HOUSING AT RICHMOND AFTER WITHDRAWING FROM STUDY ABROAD

Students who withdraw after confirming their intention to enroll in a program abroad **are not guaranteed** on-campus housing at Richmond. Please visit the [Withdrawal Policy website](#) for more information.

## WHAT TO DO AFTER YOU ARRIVE ABROAD

There are several tasks you must complete once you arrive abroad, preferably within the first week or so. These tasks and their instructions are accessed from [your online study abroad application](#) on GatewayAbroad:

- Contact Abroad Information questionnaire
- Course Registration Abroad questionnaire
- Register with Embassy or Consulate Abroad signature document

We also strongly recommend that you take the time to learn [how to request personal copies of your official abroad transcripts](#), which you should do before the end of your abroad program.

## UNDERSTANDING ACADEMICS ABROAD

### FOCUS ON ACADEMICS

While abroad you will need to attend classes regularly and to remain at the host institution for the full duration of the term abroad. Please schedule your travel so that it does not interfere with your academic responsibilities. Recreational travel should be done during vacation and holiday time and not during the academic semester. You will have an opportunity for extended independent travel before and after your semester abroad. Of course, costs for such travel are not included in the prepaid fees or cost estimates.

**Important:** You are required to register for a full course load for each semester you are abroad that meets your host country's student visa requirements. You must register for a course load that equates to a minimum of 3.5 transferable units towards your Richmond degree. Courses not approved for transfer credit towards your Richmond degree (such as certain language courses) are not calculated towards the 3.5 transferable units.

Please take time to read the University's transfer credit policy on UR semester abroad programs at [registrar.richmond.edu/registration/programs/studyabroad/index.html](http://registrar.richmond.edu/registration/programs/studyabroad/index.html).

In the event of an in-country strike by educational instructors at your host university, the OIE will seek advice from our counterparts abroad to determine the best course of action and will advise you accordingly. In the past, our partners have often been able to offer alternative course options and have amended the semester schedule during strikes to make the best of the situation (for example, students on CIEE programs can take CIEE-taught courses instead of courses taught at the host institution).

### Academic contribution upon return

Keep copies of your work from abroad (assignments, syllabi, tests, etc) as Richmond faculty may request to see this when you return to campus. It would be worthwhile to start thinking about how you might use what you learn abroad to contribute academically to your classes here at Richmond. You may wish to pursue a research project that is linked to your abroad experience and apply to the [School of Arts & Sciences annual Student Symposium](#), which is held each April. The Symposium gives students the opportunity to present their work in a professional setting, comparable to any international conference or discipline-specific symposium. Certain departments also hold their own symposia; [click here](#) for more information.

Your abroad academic experience could also be extended beyond graduation by applying for a Fulbright research or teaching grant. Since 1946, the U.S. government-sponsored [Fulbright Program](#) has provided future U.S. leaders with an unparalleled opportunity to study and conduct research in other nations. Fulbright grants provide round-trip international travel, insurance, maintenance for one academic year and tuition waivers, if applicable.

### **Language requirement for all majors**

Students studying in non-Anglophone countries are required to take a course in the local language whether or not this course is offered for credit. Extra tuition fees for such a course on UR abroad programs will be paid for by the OIE.

If the University of Richmond paid additional fees on behalf of a student for an intensive language course, whether before or during the semester abroad, you will be liable for reimbursing Richmond if you do not attend the course. Specifically, students who miss more than 3 classes without excused absences from both the professor abroad and the Richmond study abroad advisor will be responsible for reimbursing Richmond for the cost of the missed classes. The student will be informed of the charge and how the calculation was made. This charge will appear on the student's Richmond account.

## **TRANSCRIPTS FROM ABROAD**

### **Official transcripts from the host institution**

Before completing of your program abroad you must request that the host institution forward your official transcript to the Office of International Education (the mailing address options are [on the OIE website](#)). It's very important to check that you have paid all debts to the host institution, that you have taken all exams, and that you have submitted all assignments in order to ensure your transcript is sent in a timely manner.

It is not unusual for abroad transcripts to arrive several months after the semester ends. Faxed and scanned/emailed transcripts are not official and cannot be accepted. After your transcript arrives at the OIE it will be checked off on your study abroad application on [GatewayAbroad](#). Please allow approximately two weeks for the Registrar's Office to apply the credit to your UR record. You can check [GradTracker](#) to see if your credits have been transferred to your record in accordance with your course pre-approval form. Credit transfer will appear under "General Electives" on GradTracker. Contact the OIE if you notice problems or unusual delays in your transcript or credit transfer. Students studying through non-UR programs should contact their sponsoring institution directly regarding these issues.

### **When transcripts are delayed**

If your transcript from abroad is not received in a timely manner (see above paragraph), the Office of International Education will contact the abroad institution or program to try to speed up the process. Be aware that some transcripts are delayed because a student owes outstanding fines or fees to the host institution, or because a student has not signed the host institution's transcript release form. It is your responsibility to take care of such matters promptly.

NOTE: UR registration priority is determined by a student's class year as determined by admit term, so if your study abroad transcript is delayed it will not impact your ability to register on time.

### **Requesting personal copies of the host institution transcript**

Official copies of your study abroad transcripts are often required for future applications to graduate school, law school, medical school, MBA programs, Fulbright or other scholarships, even jobs. The UR Registrar's Office will not provide students with a copy of the abroad transcript or grade sheet received, so you must obtain your abroad transcript directly from the host institution. Please review [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=ObtainingAbroadTranscripts](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=ObtainingAbroadTranscripts) for more information.

### **What appears on your UR transcript**

The UR transcript will show the institution's name, course titles, and number of UR units transferred from abroad. No grades appear\*; however, courses must be taken for a grade in order to receive transfer credit. Transfer credit information will appear at the top of your printed official transcript. Even though your grades from abroad do not appear on your UR transcript, they are still part of your permanent academic records. Graduate schools and certifying agencies will require an official copy of your host institution transcript upon application and they will see your grades earned while abroad.

\*EXCEPTION: Via a special partnership with the University of St Andrews, two specific pre-med courses - Organic Chemistry (equivalent to UR CHEM 205) and Cell Structure and Function (equivalent to UR BIOL 206) - will be marked with grades on the UR transcript in order to meet medical school admission requirements. Contact the UR Pre-Health Director [Dr. John Vaughan](#) if you have questions.

## MONEY MATTERS

### UR semester abroad program costs

Costs differ from program to program. The fee for most Richmond semester abroad programs is the current full-time day school undergraduate tuition. Payment for room and meals is normally paid directly to the host institution or other entity abroad. In many cases students self-cater (prepare their own meals). In some cases, Richmond students may also pay room and or board charges to Richmond. To find out about your particular program costs, go to [the study abroad online brochure for your particular program](#) and click on “Dates and Costs.”

### Non-UR semester program costs

A \$1,500 administrative fee is assessed by Richmond for approved non-UR semester study abroad programs. Tuition and fees for these programs are paid directly to the sponsoring institution. No tuition is paid to UR for the semester abroad. Richmond financial aid does NOT transfer to non-UR programs. Students on approved non-UR programs do not receive any allowances or reimbursements nor are they covered by the UR abroad health insurance plan. Purchasing health insurance specifically for overseas travel and living is strongly recommended and can be purchased from [Gateway Plans](#) or other vendors such as [CISI](#) or [Wallach and Company](#).

### TRAVEL AND LIVING ALLOWANCES

Undergraduate and law students participating in UR semester abroad programs receive a credit on their UR student account for a travel allowance and, in some cases where the cost of living is very high, a living allowance. The allowances are intended to help with, not pay the complete costs of, travel and living abroad. For more information about travel and living allowances, please visit our website at [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=TravelAllowance](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=TravelAllowance).

NOTE: Students on financial aid from Richmond may contact the [Financial Aid Office](#) for information on how this additional funding may or may not affect existing financial aid.

### REIMBURSEMENTS

It is **very important** that students carefully read the OIE’s reimbursement policies and procedures, which are available on the [Reimbursements website](#). Not all expenses are eligible for reimbursement. Be sure to read the [Excursion Reimbursements by Program policy](#) to determine if you are eligible for excursion reimbursements. Eligible reimbursements are applicable only for Richmond undergraduate and law students participating on approved Richmond semester or year-long programs.

NOTE: All requests for reimbursement must be submitted to the OIE **within 60 days** of the date on the receipt.

### UR parking permit

Students participating in spring semester study abroad programs (including approved non-UR programs) may have the spring portion of their yearlong UR parking permit refunded to them. Unlike other study abroad-related reimbursements, this will happen automatically without the submission of receipts. Students will see the reimbursement credited to their student account.

### 5th-Year Seniors studying abroad

Students who are 5th-year seniors participating in an approved UR program will receive health and travel insurance and can be reimbursed for passport, visa and residence permit application fees. However, 5th-year seniors will not receive a travel or living allowance or be reimbursed for cultural/academic excursions or gym memberships abroad.

### DIRECT DEPOSIT

The Office of International Education strongly encourages students to sign up for direct deposit with Accounts Payable to make the reimbursement process smoother and faster. For more information about how to sign up for direct deposit, please visit [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=DirectDeposit](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=DirectDeposit).

### IF YOU PAY IN INSTALLMENTS

If your family uses the installment plan through TuitionPay (via Sallie Mae) to pay Richmond tuition and fees, contact TuitionPay (1-877-279-6092) to request an adjustment for the semester or year you are abroad. Otherwise, TuitionPay has no way of knowing that you do not owe the usual fees to UR for that semester/year. You should contact TuitionPay after you have looked at the cost section of the website for your program and understand what fees you will owe to UR for the semester(s) you will be abroad and what will be paid directly overseas.

## FINANCIAL AID

You are eligible to receive financial aid for your study abroad semester/year if you are studying on a UR abroad program, provided you meet application deadlines and eligibility criteria. University funding for study abroad is available for up to two semesters. Students approved to study on a non-UR abroad program are not eligible for UR institutional funding while abroad, but may still be eligible to receive federal and state financial aid.

Student-athletes should consult with the Director of Athletics regarding transferrability of financial aid to UR semester study abroad programs.

More details can be found on the [Financial Aid Office's website](#). Questions may be directed to the Financial Aid Office at 804-289-8438 or [finaid@richmond.edu](mailto:finaid@richmond.edu).

### Disbursement of financial aid

If you qualify for financial aid, you should plan ahead for your study abroad experience in terms of when and how funds are disbursed. Funds are disbursed 10 days prior to the first day of classes at the institution abroad; however, it can take several days for the refund to be deposited to your bank account.

This will likely mean that you may need to pay some expenses abroad (like your housing fees, for example) to the host institution before your financial aid becomes available to you. This may mean paying such expenses out of other savings or via credit card and then reimbursing yourself once your financial aid becomes available.

Students can request financial aid to be deposited to their bank account by direct deposit. [Click here](#) to learn how to sign up for direct deposit. For more information on direct deposit, call Accounts Payable (804-287-6051).

### Scholarships

For information regarding University of Richmond scholarships and scholarships from external agencies, please visit [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=URScholarships](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=URScholarships). Some scholarships have very early deadlines so it is important to read all information regarding the application process as soon as possible. The receipt of such scholarships may affect other financial aid a student is receiving.

## STUDENT ACCOUNTS

### Good standing required

Your acceptance to study abroad is contingent upon being in good standing with the Student Accounts Office. You are responsible for paying all fees related to your program. If you owe monies to UR and do not settle your account in a timely manner, you may be withdrawn from the program abroad. In such cases, UR will not be responsible for any lost monies already paid for the study abroad experience, such as plane tickets, travel arrangements, and deposits. If you owe money to UR, or to the institution abroad, you will have a hold placed on your account until all payments are made.

### Price changes

The University of Richmond reserves the right to change costs as a result of currency fluctuations or changes in agreements with institutions abroad.

## MONEY MATTERS WHILE ABROAD

### The first month

You should have adequate cash resources for the time you will be abroad. The first month abroad is when students are most vulnerable financially. Unexpected fees can appear, and costs can increase due to unforeseen changes in exchange rates. You may need to pay the full semester's housing cost upon arrival. When moving to a new location, it takes time to find bargain shops and restaurants and to adapt to the lifestyle of a local student. For these reasons it is important to be financially secure during the first month. We recommend having available twice the amount estimated for one month's normal expenditures.

### While abroad

Most students use ATMs while abroad; generally this is where you will get your best exchange rate. You can easily look up current currency exchange rates at [XE.com](http://XE.com) and [OANDA.com](http://OANDA.com). It is advisable to take some [traveler's cheques in case of emergency](#). It is also a good idea to take some foreign currency abroad.

Upon arrival, students can access local currency at ATMs or at exchange banks in the airport. Be aware that the exchange banks in the airport do not always have the best exchange rates and they will charge a commission. Some U.S. banks can, for a fee, obtain foreign currency for you with several days' notice.

### **Accessing and using money abroad**

There are a lot of different options available for accessing and using money abroad: credit cards, debit cards, [ATM cards](#) and wire transfers. Some options are better and/or more expensive than others. Please [click here](#) for a list of these options.

### **Pay in the local currency, not in U.S. dollars**

In some parts of the world, particularly in Europe, some merchants will give you the option of charging your credit card in U.S. dollars rather than in the local currency. This practice is known as [dynamic currency conversion](#). You are better off declining the offer because the ultimate purchase price is padded with a conversion fee, typically at least 3%. The article "[Why You Should Always Pay for Foreign Purchases in the Local Currency & Not in U.S. Dollars](#)" explains this very well.

### **International Wire Transfers**

In some cases, students or parents/guardians are asked to make an International Wire Transfer to pay for certain costs abroad, such as room and board fees. [This online document](#) has some very good information on international wire transfers.

### **VAT Refunds**

VAT (Value Added Tax) is sometimes refundable on purchases abroad. The VAT refund system varies by country, but many foreign visitors are eligible for a full refund on VAT paid on goods. To receive a refund, you must ask the merchant to fill out a tax refund form at the time of purchase. You must show the purchases and paperwork to a customs official when you leave the country. Your refund will arrive later by mail or may also be posted to a credit card account as a credit. For more information, please [review these VAT frequently asked questions](#).

## **INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL**

### **PASSPORTS**

#### **Applying for a passport**

You must obtain a passport to travel outside of the United States. You may also be required by the host country to apply for and obtain a student visa prior to departure. If you already have a passport, **be sure it is valid for at least 6-12 months beyond your program's end date**. It is your responsibility to obtain these documents. Visit the [U.S. Department of State's Passports website](#) find out how to apply for a U.S. passport or to check on the status of a pending U.S. passport application.

Passport processing **can take up to eight weeks (2 months)**, so students are encouraged to **apply immediately**. Passport applications may be submitted at the main U.S. Post Office on Brook Rd., ph. 1-804-775-6304, or at the branch at Patterson and Glenburnie. A 24-hour information recording can be heard by calling 1-877-487-2778.

**Non-immigrant students** at Richmond should also seek the advice of the Director of International Student and Scholar Services, Ms. Krittika Onsanit ([konsanit@richmond.edu](mailto:konsanit@richmond.edu)).

#### **Lost or stolen passports**

Report lost or stolen passports immediately to local police and go to the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate the next business day for a replacement. By presenting a police report, photos, and proof of identification such as a photocopy of the "picture page" or details page of your passport (see "[copies of important documents](#)" section below), a new passport can be issued more quickly.

### **STUDENT VISAS**

A visa is a stamp in a passport which officially grants permission for the holder to enter a country for a specified period of time for a particular purpose (e.g., study). Student visa requirements vary from country to country and from consulate to consulate.

NOTE: Obtaining a visa involves an individual interacting directly with the government of the country he or she wishes to visit. Staff in the Office of International Education can provide basic instruction and information, but cannot apply for visas on behalf of students or intervene in the visa application process.

The checklist and orientation booklet for your particular program will tell you whether you need a visa. Be sure to read these resources very carefully and meet any stated deadlines to avoid delays or complications. Some key things to keep in mind:

- It is **IMPERATIVE** that you start the visa application process **EARLY** – as soon as you accept placement to study abroad. In some cases, this means gathering the documents needed for the student visa so that when your official acceptance letter arrives from the partner abroad, you will be ready to submit the formal visa application. Check your [program checklist](#) for specific information.
- Before you apply for your visa, you'll need a passport which is valid for at least 6-12 months beyond your program's end date.
- Some visas must be applied for in person at the consulate.
- You may not be able to travel internationally before your program starts because the consulate may need to hold your passport until the visa is approved and issued.
- Many consulates process visa applications according to the program start date, not according to the student's personal travel plans.
- For expedited visa services, you can hire an agency like Travia or Perry Visa Services to hand-carry your documents to the consulate for faster processing. (Note that this option is not available for all consulates.)
- The OIE only reimburses the actual visa application fee, not for expedited services, photos, shipping, etc.
- To begin your research about the application process/fees, [contact the consulate of the country](#) in which you will study that has jurisdiction of your permanent residence. Typically you will find student visa information under "Consular Services" or "Visas."
- Changes to the stated or published policies are frequent, so it is vitally important to make certain you have the most current information and that you have allowed time in case your application is returned for any reason.

**Students who will be studying abroad in two different countries** (e.g. in Chile one term and in Italy the next term) should research the visa processes prior to going abroad. Students may need to obtain both visas in the United States prior to going abroad for the year as it may not be possible to apply for a visa outside of your home country (e.g., U.S.) and there may not be adequate time to obtain the second country's visa prior to the second study abroad term. ([back to Year-Long Students section](#))

In addition, consulates and embassies outside the U.S. are generally unfamiliar with student visa requirements as they relate to U.S. students and will often provide conflicting or incorrect information that will ultimately delay the visa application process and jeopardize a student's chances of obtaining a visa in a timely manner. **Ultimately it is the student's responsibility to obtain the appropriate visa(s) for the study abroad.** Please contact the OIE if you have any questions.

**Important note about traveling to Schengen area countries:** Some [Schengen area countries](#), such as Denmark and the Netherlands, do not require a student visa beforehand; instead, students get a residence permit upon arrival in the country. To avoid problems at the Schengen border control, students who plan to obtain their residence permits upon arrival in the destination country should fly directly to their host country or transit via a [non-Schengen country](#).

## NOTARIZATION SERVICES

Students who require **notarization services** as part of their host institution or visa applications may request an appointment at [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=NotaryAppt](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=NotaryAppt). Photo identification is required. Students **should not sign** any document(s) until they are in the presence of the notary.

**IMPORTANT:** **Before** your notary appointment, please review [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=NotaryInfo](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=NotaryInfo) to ensure your notarization request can be processed.

## BOOKING FLIGHTS

Students should carefully research their flight options and should investigate the various possible airline fees when trying to book their transportation to/from their abroad destination. Budget airlines in particular have created many additional ways to collect money from travelers, so don't be fooled by a seemingly low ticket price. Additional fees may be charged for things such as checking a bag, exceeding the (often low) baggage weight limit, selecting a seat (particularly if the seat is in a location that has extra legroom), and even for checking in at the airport. Be sure to calculate the total possible cost before clicking the "purchase" button.

Also, think about what other baggage options exist, such as shipping your items, which might possibly be less expensive and less hassle than flying with your luggage ([be sure to check this out carefully beforehand](#), and do not pack valuable items, medications, or important documents, etc. into the box).

When making your travel reservations, be sure to use your name exactly as it appears on your passport or driver's license (such as including any middle names or initials, not using nicknames, etc). Otherwise you may have problems at check-in.

**Important note about traveling to Schengen area countries:** Some Schengen area countries, such as Denmark and the Netherlands, do not require a student visa beforehand; instead, students get a residence permit upon arrival in the country. To avoid problems at the Schengen border control, students who plan to obtain their residence permits upon arrival in the destination country should fly directly to their host country or transit via a non-Schengen country.

## DEPARTURES AND FLIGHT TRANSFERS

Students are reminded that, when departing for an onward flight from a major city, check to be sure of the airport location. Many cities have more than one airport, and while some cities have an international airport for international flights and a domestic airport for domestic flights, others have more than one airport running both international and domestic flights. Also, when flying into a new city and transferring planes, it is best to check in advance whether terminals are a great distance apart or whether you'll even need to change airports. In some cities, such as Buenos Aires, a change of airports involving significant travel time may be necessary.

## GETTING THROUGH CUSTOMS

Upon returning to the United States, students may bring back a total of \$800 worth of duty-free merchandise. Items must be carried with the passenger and should be for personal use or for gifts. It is recommended that travelers keep all sales slips from purchases made while outside of the U.S. The Customs and Border Protection website has more information.

You are encouraged to read the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's "Inspection of Electronic Devices" information sheet prior to flying to/from abroad, as some travelers' devices (iPads, etc) are detained for examination or seized.

## IF YOUR LUGGAGE IS LOST

If your luggage doesn't show up, do not leave the Baggage Claim area until you report it to the airline. Once you leave that area, you cannot return!

## IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS TO TAKE ABROAD

### Insurance/Emergency Cards & Letters (IECL) packet

The OIE prepared an Insurance/Emergency Cards & Letters (IECL) packet for you, which you can download at any time from your online GatewayAbroad application (*under Questionnaires & Letters*). The IECL document contains your insurance ID card and coverage verification letter, an emergency contact card, and a Study Abroad Information for Your Family sheet, among other things. You should print at least two (2) copies of your IECL packet – one for you and one for your family.

### Copies of important documents

You should take an official certified copy of your birth certificate and a photocopy of the "picture page" or details page of your passport. These are invaluable documents to have in the event a passport is lost or stolen. These copies should be kept in a secure place, separate from the originals. Additional copies should be left in the U.S. with your family. ([back to "Lost or stolen passports" section](#))

### Extra passport-sized photographs

You should take along several additional passport-size photographs for visa applications or identity cards. Often these are required for registration at the overseas university. Photos are available on campus from One Card Services for a fee. Alternatively, you can purchase photos at CVS, Walgreen's, AAA and Kinko's, among other places.

### Printed "In Case of Emergency" forms

Hard-copies of your emergency contact information should be kept in your luggage and wallet. Please [click here](#) to read more about this and to download the fillable form.

## TRANSPORTATION WHILE ABROAD

### City transportation

Look into purchasing a long-term city transport pass and inquire about student discounts. For short visits, a day or week pass can save a lot of money. You may wonder why some passengers appear to board buses, trams, or trains without paying; however, they probably have passes that they show only when asked to by an inspector. Do not try to board a bus or other transport system without a ticket or pass, as you could be caught and taken to the police station or charged a high fee.

### Bicycles

Bicycles are the preferred method of transportation in some locations. UR does not recommend that you take a bike overseas, but you may be able to buy a used bicycle once you are settled in your location. Always wear a helmet.

### European railpass information

The Eurail Pass has many options for various countries in Europe. For fares, schedules, and special deals, see [www.raileurope.com](http://www.raileurope.com). For an online guide to make sense of the various options, you might want to check out [www.seat61.com](http://www.seat61.com).

### U.S. Department of State's Travel Information

The U.S. Department of State (DOS) maintains a [consular website](#) designed to provide comprehensive information to U.S. citizens traveling abroad. The site offers U.S. citizens information on foreign entry requirements, tips for traveling and living abroad, and travel warnings.

## MEDICAL MATTERS

As you prepare for your upcoming study abroad experience, we encourage you to review the travel abroad information on the UR Student Health Center's [Travel Abroad website](#). The SHC does not offer specific travel consultation services; however, students may receive some basic vaccinations as well as TB skin testing (PPD tests) at the SHC for a small fee. The SHC strongly recommends follow-up TB testing after travel abroad to areas with a high incidence of TB. Call UR Dial-A-Nurse at 289-8700 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Visit the UR Student Health Center's [Travel Abroad website](#) for full details and information on the following:

- Immunizations
- Pre-existing conditions
- International Certificate of Vaccination
- HIV Testing
- Legality and Availability of Medications Abroad – Not all drugs are legal or available abroad. It is strongly recommended that you contact [AXA Assistance USA](#) to check specific prescription medications before leaving.
- Physical Exam, Medical Forms, and Housing Forms
- Medical Records
- Illnesses after Travel
- Tuberculosis (TB) Testing

### Students with disabilities

The University of Richmond is committed to assist students with physical disabilities so that they are able to study abroad. The University will make every effort to develop reasonable accommodations in cooperation with the host institution so that students with physical disabilities may achieve the intended goals of the study abroad experience.

## HEALTH INSURANCE

### Mandatory health insurance

Unless a student is studying in his/her home country of citizenship, UR semester abroad participants are automatically enrolled in the [Chubb Insurance plan](#). The University of Richmond pays for this insurance at no extra cost to the student (MBA students and students participating in non-UR study abroad programs excluded). Students will receive information about how to use the health insurance policy with the insurance card from the Office of International Education prior to departure for study abroad.

Please see the [OIE's insurance webpage](#) for more information, including coverage details, instructions on how to use your insurance while abroad, to download the insurance claim form, etc.

NOTE: Medical expenses and medication not covered by the insurance are the responsibility of the student. If a student plans to travel extensively prior to or after the study abroad program, additional coverage can be purchased; [click here for details](#).

## HEALTH AND SAFETY WHILE ABROAD

### ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE

#### Dangers of abuse

Many students fall victim to crime and other hazards while under the influence of alcohol and drugs. Students under the influence of alcohol can find themselves in compromising situations. Alcoholic content is often much higher outside the U.S. Students should be aware of the cultural norms in the host country and abide by all local laws and customs. Students should review the [U.S. Department of State's warning about this issue](#).

#### Code of behavior

You are expected to adhere to the same code of behavior as if you were on campus at UR. The use, possession, transport, selling, or purchase of illegal drugs harms the reputation of the individual, the University of Richmond, and the United States.

The University of Richmond and its agents have the right to enforce appropriate standards of conduct and may at any time terminate your participation in the program for failure to maintain these standards or for any conduct which the UR or its agents consider to be incompatible with the interest, harmony, comfort, and welfare of other students or the host institution. If you are expelled from the program, you will be sent home at your own expense and there will be no refund.

#### Severe penalties

In many countries, local laws make no distinction between soft and hard drugs. U.S. laws do not protect U.S. citizens abroad who violate foreign laws. U.S. citizens are subject to the same penalties for drug violations as the nationals of the country they are visiting.

Penalties for violating the law of another country may be severe. For example, penalties for possession or trafficking in any kind of drug ranges from two to twenty-five years and include a heavy fine in many countries. In some countries, the penalty may be death. Foreign governments are not more tolerant of drug use, nor are they more permissive in their drug laws.

#### What U.S. consular officers can do

U.S. consular officers can insure, insofar as possible, that the detainee's rights under local law are fully observed and humane treatment is accorded under internationally accepted standards; visit the detainee and provide him/her with a list of local attorneys; contact family and/or friends for financial or other aid, if asked to by the detainee. See the U.S. Department of State's [Legal Considerations website](#) for more information.

#### What U.S. consular officers cannot do

U.S. consular officers cannot contact the detainee's family or friends, or lodge a formal protest about mistreatment of the detainee unless asked to do so by the detainee. In addition, they cannot prevent delays by law enforcement officials or prevent unseemly delays in bringing U.S. citizens to trial. The U.S. government cannot free U.S. citizens charged or convicted of crimes while abroad. See the U.S. Department of State's [Legal Considerations website](#) for more information.

### WATER SAFETY

In some locations, tap water may be undrinkable unless it has been boiled or treated with iodine. When in doubt, drink bottled water and check with the international office of the host institution or your program director abroad. Also, be extremely careful when swimming while abroad, particularly in the ocean, as hazards may not be marked and the water current/undertow may be more severe than you perceive.

### ROAD AND TRAVEL SAFETY ABROAD

The University of Richmond strongly advises against the operation of a motor vehicle while abroad or riding in cars driven by other visiting Americans. Traffic congestion and different traffic laws and regulations can make driving motor vehicles in a foreign country extremely hazardous. Insurance requirements and other responsibilities vary by country. UR assumes no financial responsibility for legal aid, medical care, and other direct or indirect expenses incurred as a result of a student's decision to operate a motor vehicle while abroad.

[Click here](#) for more information and recommendations about road and travel safety abroad.

## **FIRE HAZARDS**

Fire regulations differ from country to country. Smoke alarms, sprinklers, and fire exits do not exist in many places. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of the safety conditions in their home or dorm. The student should make an emergency exit plan. Questions should be directed to the international office of your host institution.

## **CARBON MONOXIDE POISONING**

Be aware of the heating situation provided by your host institution and host residence. When carbon monoxide-producing appliances are present, such as any appliance that burns fuel (such as gas, oil, kerosene, wood, or charcoal), be sure to ask how to use these appliances safely in order to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Consider taking a carbon monoxide and smoke detector with you abroad. Further information is available on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website. Additionally, this pamphlet is very informative on the subject.

## **TICK BITES**

Hiking happens worldwide, and so do tick bites! Tick bites can lead to infection or even diseases. While there is minimal risk of being bitten by ticks, it is not zero risk. When hiking, wear long pants and shirts and use insect repellent effective against ticks; the CDC has a good list of preventative measures. Also, this map shows the prevalence of tick bites worldwide.

## **SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ASSAULT ISSUES**

Due to differences in gender relations and attitudes in other cultures, situations may arise in which you find yourself in an uncomfortable or unsafe situation while abroad. Laws in other countries vary, so it is important to consult with the international office and the U.S. consulate regarding the local legal system in the event that you are sexually assaulted or harassed. Resources for victims of sexual assault and harassment will likely be different from those in the United States also.

Students who are victims of a felonious crime are covered by the Chubb Insurance overseas health insurance plan. More information on this benefit should be directed to Michele Cox in the Office of International Education (804-289-8838).

You may have questions as to whether certain situations may be defined as sexual assault and/or harassment. You should discuss any incidents that make you feel uncomfortable or harassed with the appropriate staff member in the international office at your host institution and also with the OIE. For clarification of what constitutes sexual harassment and assault, please refer to the University's Sexual Misconduct Policy.

### **Sexual Harassment**

Harassment issues may be particularly difficult to identify abroad, where cultural norms are often different than those in the U.S. A fair rule of thumb is to assume that sexual harassment consists of any unwanted sexual advances and/or behavior of a verbal, visual, written, or physical nature in living arrangements and educational or work environment.

### **Definitions of Sexual Assault**

1. Sexual Assault: Physical contact of a sexual nature which is against one's will or without one's consent.
2. Rape: Sexual intercourse that is coerced through force or threats of force, or with someone who is unconscious or incapable of giving consent.

### **Help for Victims of Sexual Assault**

Victims of sexual assault abroad can still access the support and resources they need. The Student Development Office has a webpage with available resources to ensure the recovery and support of victims abroad. This website also has information about sexual assault and what to do if it happens to you or to someone you know. This brochure is also a great at-a-glance resource for both sexual assault victims and their supporters. Lastly, the U.S. Department of State's brochure, "Sexual Assault: Reducing the Risk and Coping with an Attack," is worth reading.

SASHAA, the Sexual Assault Support and Help for Americans Abroad, is a program of the Americans Overseas Domestic Violence Crisis Center (AODVC). You can reach the SASHAA Crisis Center by calling their international toll-free crisis line, via email or live chat; please refer to sashaa.org/contact-the-crisis-center for instructions on calling from abroad.

## **SEXUAL ORIENTATION ISSUES**

In order to maximize the study abroad experience, all students should research the intended host country before departure. As an LGBT student there are some additional things you may want to consider as you prepare to go abroad. Please visit studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=LGBT for a list of things to consider as you prepare to go abroad.

## WOMEN'S HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

“Women may experience some particular difficulties while abroad and facing the unfamiliar can raise the anxiety level. U.S. women have a reputation for enjoying a lifestyle which contrasts with more traditional behavior in many countries. This image is reinforced by distorted stereotypes used in TV, movies, and advertising. Cultural differences extend to body language. U.S. students may encounter people who do not understand that their familiar way with strangers is a gesture of friendship. A smile, a hairstyle, posture, clothing, eye contact, the distance between people talking can all have profoundly different interpretations from culture to culture. Even a smile to a stranger may be misunderstood.”

For more information about women's health and safety issues abroad, please visit the [University of California's Study Abroad Center website](#).

## SHARING ANY CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE

If you have concerns about yourself or a fellow UR student abroad related to health issues or safety (which may or may not be connected to a particular “incident”), please [complete this online form](#). Your concerns will be routed to the appropriate office(s) that are in the best position to provide help and advice. More information, including a list of health and safety risk indicators to take note of, is available on [Student Development's website](#).

## SAFETY PRECAUTIONS YOU SHOULD TAKE

### Check your Richmond email account regularly

You are ultimately responsible for taking the necessary precautions to ensure your personal safety while abroad. To help you do this, the OIE will email relevant notices to you when there is a particular safety issue or crisis abroad. It is therefore very important to check your Richmond email account regularly.

### Give your contact information to the OIE

Provide the OIE your abroad address and phone numbers while abroad (dorm, apartment, host family, and/or mobile phone) via the “Contact Abroad Information” questionnaire on your [online study abroad application](#). This questionnaire allows you to list your phone numbers as well as your address.

### Prepare an “In Case of Emergency” form

Imagine you're crossing a street in your host city abroad with some friends when you're suddenly struck by a speeding motorcycle. You're unconscious and injured. An ambulance is called and you're taken to the hospital. Your emergency contact information is saved to your phone, which is in your pocket. It contains your family's phone numbers and your insurance information. Unfortunately your phone is password-protected, so your friends can't open it – which doesn't matter anyway, because your phone was shattered in the accident and no longer works.

Emergencies and accidents can happen to anyone, at anytime, anywhere in the world. Even the most high-tech devices can be rendered useless and prevent access to important emergency contact information. To minimize potential problems you are strongly encouraged to complete the [“In Case of Emergency” fillable form](#) that's included in your [IECL packet](#) and keep printed copies of it in your luggage and wallet. Put a list of important passwords in a sealed envelope and give it to your family before they go abroad. This envelope should only be opened in case of a serious life emergency, such as incapacitation. ([back to “Printed ‘In Case of Emergency’ forms” section](#))

### Leave your travel itinerary with someone

Whenever you travel within or outside your host country you should leave an itinerary with your family, the international office abroad, and with the OIE ([studyabroad@richmond.edu](mailto:studyabroad@richmond.edu)). You should also tell your roommate or host family about your travel plans—at least give them a list of cities you will be visiting as well as contact information, when available.

### Check travel warnings

Check the [U.S. Department of State website](#) to make sure there are no travel warnings issued for the country where you plan to travel, and do not travel to any country for which a travel warning has been issued. Also, check your email while traveling and carry along a list of phone numbers of the [U.S. consulates/embassies](#) in all countries you will be visiting.

## WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

In light of recent political and environmental incidents in England, France, Belgium, Ecuador, Japan and New Zealand, we would like to take this opportunity to remind you of the emergency protocol regarding your safety.

It is very important for you to provide your family, our office, and the international office abroad with your physical address and mobile telephone number (and landline, if you have both) as soon as you have these numbers available. As we have learned, sometimes the mobile network will shut down during an incident due to the stress on the system.

Also, you are reminded to register online with the nearest U.S. embassy. More information can be found on U.S. Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program website](#).

If there is an emergency where you are studying or traveling, whether the emergency is caused by nature or man, please follow these steps immediately:

- 1) If you are hurt, go to the nearest medical facility and contact the insurance company once you are stable. The telephone number (call collect 24 hours per day) is on the back of your insurance card.
- 2) Contact the international office at the host institution abroad to let them know you are safe and how you can be reached.
- 3) Call or text your family.
- 4) Email our office to confirm you are safe.
- 5) Contact your friends.
- 6) Stay calm and go home, if it is safe to do so. Do not go to the scene of the incident because the emergency personnel need space to do their work properly and to secure the area.
- 7) Stay abreast of the news for security and safety updates.
- 8) Check your Richmond email for updates.

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S CONSULAR INFORMATION PROGRAM

**Travel Warnings** are issued when the State Department decides to recommend that Americans avoid travel to a certain country. **Country Specific Information** sheets are available for every country of the world. They include information on the location of the U.S. embassy or consulate, unusual immigration practices, health conditions, minor political disturbances, unusual currency and entry regulations, crime and security information, and drug penalties. **Travel Alerts** are used to disseminate information quickly about terrorist threats and other relatively short-term and/or trans-national conditions posing significant risks or disruptions to Americans. This information is also available at [www.travel.state.gov](http://www.travel.state.gov).

## DEPARTMENT OF STATE'S RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SAFE TRAVEL ABROAD

Please take time to carefully review U.S. Department of State's [recommendations for safe travel abroad](#).

## AIR TRAVEL UNDER INCREASED SECURITY

Consult the [TSA's website](#) to find out about restrictions on luggage and items that may be carried onto the aircraft. You will be asked to show a government-issued photo identification card or passport. Also, you are encouraged to read the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's "[Inspection of Electronic Devices](#)" [information sheet](#) prior to flying to/from abroad.

## INTERCULTURAL ISSUES

One of the most rewarding aspects of study abroad is the experience of being immersed in another culture. Students often return from abroad with an understanding of new foods, art, sports or models of business, science, or government; this expanded knowledge helps former participants to be more effective and innovative in their working lives and more satisfied on a personal level.

Please visit [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=InterculturalIssues](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=InterculturalIssues) to learn about culture shock, stereotypes, the rewards and challenges of being immersed in another culture, and for tips on how to check your progress adjusting to intercultural issues you encounter abroad.

## HOUSING ABROAD

Housing will be different from the experience of living in a Richmond residence hall. For many students this will be a new experience of living more independently and will inevitably mean that this will be a time of growth and more responsibility, which will be both exhilarating and frustrating. Depending on the program, students may have the option of living in a residence hall, apartment, or home stay. Students should not expect residences abroad to be the same as in Richmond, particularly with regard to convenience and security. Housing abroad, particularly in Europe, is often in older buildings and living spaces may be smaller and more sparsely furnished than student rooms at UR.

In some countries living alone is the norm, while in other locations students will share a room or flat sometimes with students from the opposite sex or with older graduate students. Many student residences abroad include kitchen facilities and students are expected to cook their own meals. A meal plan is almost never available, although pay-as-you-go cafeterias often are available with student-friendly prices.

Although there are some exceptions, universities abroad rarely have a campus-environment like Richmond so students should not expect to live "on campus." Residences, apartment buildings, and home stays will be located throughout the host city and a commute (walking or public transportation) will likely be required to reach the academic buildings and other student residences.

While all rooms will be secure, the residence hall/apartment building may not have card or key-access to the front door, and there may not be 24-hour security provided at a front desk, even for residences located in urban/downtown areas. Repairs (unless it is an emergency) may take longer than what students are used to on Richmond's campus, which are often made within 24 hours. Student housing, regardless of whether it is a residence hall, apartment, or home stay, may not be directly adjacent to public transportation, so students may need to walk 10 or more minutes to reach their residence after getting off the metro/bus/tram.

Smoke and carbon monoxide detectors/fire extinguishers may not be a standard amenity. It is recommended that students bring these with them abroad.

Students should be aware of these differences when selecting their residence abroad. If a student has a particular concern about the quality or safety of housing abroad, they should bring it to the attention of their Richmond study abroad advisor immediately.

## APPLYING FOR UR HOUSING

### SUBMIT ONLINE UR HOUSING AGREEMENT

Fall semester and calendar year abroad students must submit their completed [online UR Housing Agreement](#) prior to leaving campus. Spring semester and academic year abroad students should refer to the [Housing Office's website](#) for their room selection procedures.

### FACTORS AFFECTING YOUR UR HOUSING

Please visit the UR Housing Office's [Study Abroad Options webpage](#) for instructions on paying your UR housing deposit, how to secure housing for when you return to Richmond, what happens if you end up on a waiting list, and other important Richmond housing factors and information.

### HOW TO CONTACT THE UR HOUSING OFFICE

When in doubt about housing issues, please direct your questions to Carolyn Bigler in the Housing Office at 804-289-8471 or email [cbigler@richmond.edu](mailto:cbigler@richmond.edu).

## UR REGISTRATION

### THINGS YOU MUST DO

- Clear holds before registration. Before leaving campus, check with [Student Accounts](#) to ensure that you have no outstanding bills. If you have an outstanding balance on your account, you will not be registered for classes.
- **Important:** Check your Richmond email account regularly, as the Registrar's Office will send you registration information via email.
- Obtain any special approvals necessary for registration, either before going abroad or by having the appropriate department chair email special approval to the Registrar's Office ([registrar@richmond.edu](mailto:registrar@richmond.edu)) after you are abroad.

**Most importantly:** Carefully review the [Registration FAQ for Students Abroad](#) (UR semester abroad and pre-approved Non-UR semester abroad) on the Registrar's website for detailed information on a proxy registration option for next semester's classes from abroad. You may also contact the Registrar by fax (804-287-6578) or by phone (804-289-8639).

## KEEPING IN TOUCH

### COMPLETE THE “CONTACT ABROAD INFORMATION” QUESTIONNAIRE

Complete your “Contact Abroad Information” questionnaire on your [online study abroad application](#) within 2 weeks of your arrival abroad. You might not learn the address until after you arrive abroad.

### SENDING LETTERS AND PACKAGES

#### Airmail

Airmail letters to or from abroad take from four to fourteen days to arrive. All items should be clearly marked "AIR MAIL" or "PAR AVION" on both the front and the back. Aerograms are convenient and relatively inexpensive stationery.

#### Packages

Package service rates vary enormously, as does the time in transit. Surface mail will always be cheaper, and will take four weeks minimum (often more). Airmail will be faster (often as fast as a letter, usually a bit longer), and more expensive. There is no guarantee that important packages will reach the recipient, and customs duties may be high.

#### Sending packages FROM the U.S.

Import taxes on packages sent from the U.S. to the student overseas can be VERY high. (For example, one mother sent packages to Europe with shipping fees of \$50; the import tax, which the student had to pay, was \$112). Be sure to talk to someone in the host country to find out how import tax rates are calculated. ([back to Booking Flights section](#))

#### Sending packages TO the U.S.

If you need to send a package home, be sure to check with the local post office or the international office at your host institution to find out the regulations concerning packing. Regulations vary widely, but as a rule packages should not be sealed before they are taken to the post office. The clerk will probably need to see what is inside.

Gifts worth less than \$50 being sent to the U.S. should be marked "Unsolicited Gift Value Under \$50" on the package. When students send their own things home they should put "U.S. Goods Returned" on the package. U.S. Customs opens packages regularly and randomly. Making a false declaration or sending illegal items home can be a serious matter. Paying for extra luggage is sometimes more economical than sending items home through the postal services.

#### Courier services

In emergencies, express mail services are available. DHL, Airborne Express, TNT, and Federal Express are international courier businesses. Two-day and sometimes one-day services are available, but they are very expensive.

### PHONING FROM ABROAD

#### Your first phone call home

Don't promise your family that you will call home immediately upon arrival at your destination. Sometimes flights are delayed or you may need to rush from one point to another, or you may be too tired to figure out a new phone system during the first few hours. It may be better to promise to call within a day or two instead.

#### Finding the most economical service

Telephone services, phone cards, and long distance rates change rapidly. For some countries, the most economical option is to purchase a mobile phone in-country. Alternatively, instead of extending your current U.S. plan to include international service, you could order a mobile phone before you arrive abroad (*example: PicCell Wireless*). The best source for the most up-to-date information would be to ask a recently returned student (one or more will be at your country-specific orientation). Once abroad, you can always ask someone in the international office at your host institution. Of course, [Skype](#) and [WhatsApp](#) are also great ways to keep in touch, and they're free!

#### Interpreter on Call

[Language Line](#) (1-800-528-5888) is a fee-per-minute service allowing travelers to speak via an interpreter to non-English speakers. This service provides access to 170 languages and is available 24 hours, 7 days a week.

### WAYS TO CONTACT THE INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION OFFICE

Telephone: 804-289-8836      Fax: 804-289-8904      Email: [studyabroad@richmond.edu](mailto:studyabroad@richmond.edu)  
After-hours emergencies: Call UR Campus Police at 804-289-8715 for assistance

## ACCESSING UR SERVICES WHILE ABROAD

### Your Richmond email

You can have your "[richmond.edu](mailto:richmond.edu)" email forwarded to another email account such as Hotmail, Yahoo or AOL. To do this, review UR's Information Services [online instructions](#).

### UR library databases

The University of Richmond provides proxy server service which allows UR students, faculty, and staff to connect to [library online databases](#) through any internet provider service located off-campus (or abroad). For more information on how to gain this access, please visit the [Off-Campus Access to Library Resources webpage](#). For troubleshooting, please visit [studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=LibraryAccess](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=LibraryAccess).

## PERSONAL MATTERS

### LONG-DISTANCE RELATIONSHIPS

If you will be abroad but are leaving a loved one (significant other, boyfriend or girlfriend) at home, you may be worried about the strain on your relationship. Please [click here](#) for some good tips that might help.

### INCOME TAX INFORMATION

If you will be out of the country between January and April 15, you may request an extension on the deadline for filing income tax. The extension is usually until June 15. Tax forms should be available from the nearest American consulate, or can be downloaded from the [IRS website](#).

### VOTING FROM ABROAD

Most U.S. states and territories require registration to vote absentee from abroad. Voter registration and absentee ballot requests can be done at the same time by submitting the [Federal Post Card Application \(FPCA\)](#) and can be easily and automatically completed by using the FPCA wizard at [FVAP.gov](http://FVAP.gov). If you are already registered to vote and only wish to request a ballot, you should submit your FPCA as soon as possible.

## LEARN ABOUT YOUR HOST COUNTRY

### KNOW THE FACTS

It's important to learn about the history and culture of the country and general geography of the area where you will be living. You should also learn some basic factual information about the country and stay informed about its current events. A good resource is the U.S. Department of State's [Country Fact Sheets website](#). You can contact the tourist board of the country (often with offices in New York or Washington, D.C.) or the nearest consulate for more information.

The transition to living and studying will be much easier for students who are familiar with the country's customs and way of life. Acquiring general, factual information before departure enables students to concentrate on learning about the more subtle aspects of the culture upon arrival.

### STAY ABREAST OF U.S. DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY

Knowledge of U.S. domestic and foreign policy issues could prove to be one of the most valuable assets a student takes to study abroad. Students will be surprised, and perhaps a bit embarrassed, by how well-informed other people are about the U.S.

Most people abroad WILL NOT be complacent or nonchalant about politics—especially not about U.S. politics. People around the world DO realize the position of the U.S. in the world today. They WILL question and challenge students on U.S. policies. Students must be prepared to discuss these issues. Students should have an awareness and basic knowledge of issues and be able to discuss them intelligently. A good resource is [WatchingAmerica.com](http://WatchingAmerica.com), whose goal since it launched in 2005 is "to reflect as accurately as possible how others perceive the richest and most powerful country in the world" by publishing articles from foreign newspapers which have been translated into English.

### **Do some reading**

There are many travel guides out there, such as:

- Lonely Planet: [www.lonelyplanet.com](http://www.lonelyplanet.com)
- Rough Guides: [www.roughguides.com](http://www.roughguides.com)
- Let's Go: [www.letsgo.com](http://www.letsgo.com)
- Fodors: [www.fodors.com](http://www.fodors.com)

Exchange Student Survival Kit by Bettina Hansel is a book that, in the words of one reviewer, “gives the reader a realistic view of what [studying abroad] will really entail.” Available from Amazon.com and other booksellers.

Survival Kit For Overseas Living, by L. Robert Kohls is an excellent book to assist in preparation for living abroad. It is easy and fun to read, too!

Women's Guide To Overseas Living, by Nancy J. Piet-Pelon. Available in Boatwright Library. This book is written for U.S. women who plan to live abroad.

## RESOURCES TO HELP MAKE YOUR ABROAD EXPERIENCE A BIT EASIER, SAFER, AND MORE THOUGHTFUL

### Helpful Study Abroad Apps and Services

[studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=HelpfulAppsAndServices](http://studyabroad.richmond.edu/?go=HelpfulAppsAndServices)

### Tips to make your life abroad a bit easier

[Always Pay for Foreign Purchases in the Local Currency & Not in U.S. Dollars](#)

[Avoiding Huge Cell Phone Bills When Traveling](#)

[Credit cards may work differently abroad](#)

[List of List of Foreign ATM and Debit Card Fees by Bank](#)

[Register as an Overseas Absentee Voter](#)

[Tips for Packing Everything Into One Bag](#)

[Tips on Using Cell Phones Abroad](#)

[Using ATMs abroad](#)

### Health & Safety articles

[Carbon Monoxide Safety](#)

[CDC's Travel Health Kits](#)

[Hotel Safety Tips](#)

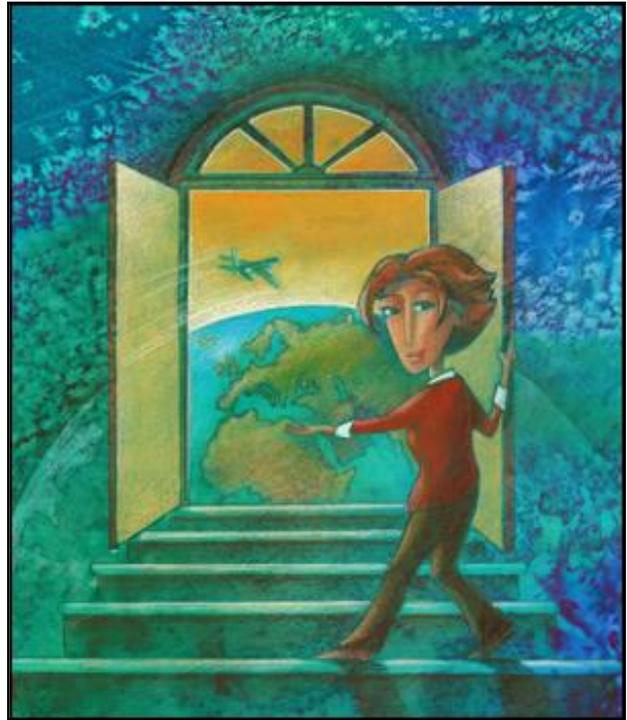
[I Lost My Wallet, Now What?](#)

[Identity Theft: What to Know, What to Do](#)

[Sexual Assault: Reducing the Risk and Coping with an Attack](#)

[Sexual Misconduct Abroad: What to do if you or someone you know has experienced sexual misconduct](#)

[Worldwide Fire Safety](#)



### Articles about being a global citizen

[An Amazing Letter of Thanks from an American Student Studying Abroad \[who's a UR student!\]](#)

[The prettier ugly Americans](#)

[Tourists have to try to combat the 'ugly American'](#)

[WatchingAmerica: Discover What the World Thinks of U.S.](#)

### Articles about the benefits of foreign language proficiency

[Proficiency in Foreign Language Important to Future Career](#)

[U.S. Public Diplomacy & Languages](#)

### Other articles you may find interesting

[In Europe, Hostels Grow Up](#)

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# TRAVELER'S CHECKLIST

Pack lightly and comfortably. Take into consideration the climate and the type of program you are going on. For example, if you will be doing a lot of outdoor activities, bring fewer dress clothes. Also keep in mind the local culture – in many countries it is not acceptable to wear shorts or short skirts. Many students purchase some clothing, and most of their toiletries, while abroad.

**Need packing help?** [Tips for Packing Everything into One Bag](#)

## Before You Go:

- Passport
- Visa (if required)
- Appointment with doctor/dentist
- Credit cards with PIN numbers
- Currency of host country (about \$100)
- Traveler's checks
- U.S. cash (dollar bills come in handy)
- Plane tickets
- Health documentation
- Extra ID
- Emergency info (medical, itinerary, contacts)

## Health Care Needs:

- Prescriptions
- Extra pair of prescription eyeglasses; enough contact lenses and solution for entire semester/year
- Condoms/birth control pills
- First Aid Kit
- Band Aids
- Antiseptic cream
- Sunscreen
- Tweezers
- Aspirin, Tylenol etc.
- Antacid
- Diarrhea Medicine
- Malaria Pills (where needed)
- Toiletries and grooming supplies

## Clothing:

- Drip-dry, no-iron, minimum care
- Layerable clothes for weather changes
- Gloves/scarf
- Dressy outfit (shirt/tie, dress, suit, etc)
- Hat
- Shirts/T-shirts (4-7 long- and short-sleeved)
- Shoes (casual, dress, hiking, athletic)
- Socks (one week's worth)
- Sweaters (1-2)
- Swimsuit
- Trousers (1-2)
- Underwear (one week's worth)
- Waterproof jacket

## Important Basics:

- Adapter plugs
- Alarm clock (battery operated)
- Batteries
- Camera and accessories
- Cell phone (if not purchasing abroad)
- Dictionary of the host language
- Good padlock/keys
- Laptop and/or tablet
- Luggage
- Money belt or neck pouch
- Small gifts for host family
- Travel pack or daypack
- Watch

## Essential Documents:

- Passport
- Visa (if required)
- Extra passport photos (4-6)
- Extra ID (driver's license, etc)
- Insurance/Emergency Cards & Letters (IECL)
- Your program checklist and other program materials
- Photocopies of important documents (passport, visa, birth certificate, etc)

## Miscellaneous:

- MP3 player, e-book reader, etc
- Cards, games
- Sewing kit, super glue
- Towel & washcloth
- International phone card
- Umbrella
- Sunglasses
- Ear plugs
- Plastic zip-lock bags
- Insect repellent
- Travel guides
- Maps
- Journal
- Small flashlight
- Small calculator
- Lots of patience
- A good attitude and a sense of humor

**Have a great adventure!**