

Tips for Students

The Department of State offers the following information for student advisors and for their students who plan to travel and/or study abroad.

This is an official U.S. Government source. Inclusion of non-U.S. Government links does not imply endorsement of contents.

ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO LEARN AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE ABOUT THE COUNTRIES IN WHICH THEY PLAN TO TRAVEL OR STUDY

* Students should read the State Department's [Consular Information Sheet](#) for the country in which they plan to study or visit, and check any [Public Announcements](#) or [Travel Warnings](#) that may pertain to that particular country. A Consular Information Sheet is available for every country in the world and provides an overview of conditions pertaining to travel in each country.

* Encourage students to learn about the history, culture, politics and customs of the country/countries in which they travel and study, and to respect the country's customs, manners, rules and laws. For instance, various countries and cultures respect certain manners and dress codes. American students should also abide by these manners and dress codes as much as possible.

* It is a good idea for students to learn as much as they can of the language of the country in which they plan to travel or study. Learning basic phrases of the language can be helpful, and it indicates a willingness on the part of students to make an effort to communicate in the language of the country.

* The Department of State publishes [Background Notes](#) on countries worldwide. These are brief, factual pamphlets with information on each country's culture, history, geography, economy, government and current political situation. *Background Notes* are available for approximately 170 countries. They often include a reading list, travel notes and maps.

* It is important that students learn about the local laws abroad and obey them.

Remember, while in a foreign country, you are subject to its laws! This year, the State Department has issued two press releases: [a press release for college newspapers on travel safety abroad for students](#) and [a press release on spring break in Cancun](#), reminding students about drug laws and drunk and disorderly conduct during spring and summer breaks.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT OBTAINING PASSPORTS AND VISAS TO TRAVEL, STUDY AND OR WORK ABROAD

* Students must have a signed, valid passport and visas, if required. Students studying abroad must be sure that they have the proper visa to study there. A visitors visa or entry without a visa may not allow one to study. Refer to our [Foreign Entry Requirements](#) brochure for information on foreign visas and to [Your Trip Abroad](#) for U.S. passport information.

* Students should remember to fill in the emergency information page of their passport.

* It is a good idea for relatives of students abroad to obtain and maintain a valid passport as well, in case of an emergency requiring them to travel.

* Students who wish to work part-time in conjunction with their studies or when their studies are finished, should make sure that they understand the laws that apply and comply with them.

* The United States requires student visas for study in the United States.

* Students should make copies of their passport's data page and any visas. They should keep a copy separately from the originals while traveling and leave one at home with their family and with their student advisor. This will help to obtain a replacement passport in the event that a passport is lost or stolen. Refer to our brochure [Your Trip Abroad](#) for more information on U.S. passports.

* Students are encouraged to travel with extra photos, in case they need to get a new passport quickly. Refer to our brochures [Passports-Applying for Them the Easy Way](#) and [Your Trip Abroad](#) for more information.

STUDENTS SHOULD LEARN ABOUT MEDICAL INSURANCE AND EVACUATION INSURANCE IN CASE OF A MEDICAL EMERGENCY ABROAD

Every year, hundreds of students become ill or suffer injuries overseas. It is essential that students have medical insurance and medical evacuation insurance that would cover a medical emergency abroad. For further information, see our flyer on [Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad](#), [Your Trip Abroad](#) and visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's web site at <http://www.cdc.gov>.

STUDENTS ARE ENCOURAGED TO KNOW THE LOCATION OF THE NEAREST U.S. EMBASSY OR CONSULATE AND TO REGISTER

If students are going to be in a country for more than a couple of weeks, they should to register at the American Embassy or Consulate. This is helpful to students and their families, if there is need to locate family members in the event of an emergency. See our [links to U.S. embassies and consulates worldwide](#).

WHAT U.S. CONSULAR OFFICERS CAN AND CAN NOT DO TO HELP U.S. CITIZENS ABROAD

* If students find themselves in trouble overseas, the Consular Officer at the nearest U.S. embassy or consulate can provide certain assistance and advice. Consular Officers can also help in the event of illness, injury, natural catastrophe, evacuations, destitution, or death. See our brochures [Crisis Abroad](#), [U.S. Consuls Help Americans Abroad](#) and [Overseas Citizens Services](#) for more information.

* In the United States, the Office of Overseas Citizens Services can also assist American students abroad and their families in the USA in emergency cases. There is a 24 hour number to call (202) 647-5225.

* There are certain things that consular officers at American embassies **CAN NOT** for American citizens abroad. For example, they can not cash checks, lend money or serve as your attorney. See our brochure [U.S. Consuls Help Americans Abroad](#)

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS THAT STUDENTS SHOULD TAKE WHILE TRAVELING OR STUDYING ABROAD

* Remember not to leave luggage unattended and not to carry packages for anyone. The packages could contain drugs or other illegal items. Refer to our brochure [Travel Warning on Drugs Abroad](#).

* Do not become a target for thieves by wearing conspicuous clothing and expensive looking jewelry.-- There are restrictions on photography in certain countries. Students should check the Consular Information Sheet for the countries where they plan to visit or travel. --

Students should avoid demonstrations or civil disturbances, which could turn violent. Demonstrations could also turn anti-American.

* The Department of State is engaged in outreach efforts to education-related organizations to publicize [road safety risks](#) in other countries. Students, who may chose less expensive, often less reliable methods of local travel while in foreign countries, should be aware of the potential danger.

For more information, read our [Travel Tips for Students brochure](#).

[Read the statement to the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, Committee on Education and the Workforce on the safety of study abroad programs.](#)

TRAVEL BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

[Travel benefits](#) are available for students.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR STUDENTS

[U.S. Department of State](#)

[Important Telephone Numbers](#)

[Services and Information for American Citizens Abroad](#)

[How Consular Officers Can Help In An Emergency](#)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[NAFSA Home Page](#)

[Center for Global Education](#)

[National Partnership for Reinvention's Access America for Students Home Page](#)

[Department of Education's USNEI-U.S. Study Abroad Programs](#)

[USNEI-Foreign Students Visiting the United States](#)

[Council on International Educational Exchange](#) for information on international study programs, international student ID cards, etc.

[International Youth Hostel](#)

[International Student ID Card](#)

[Peace Corps](#)

The University of Southern California (USC) has information on [Personal Safety and Adjustment Abroad](#), [Crisis and Risk Management](#) and [Crime and Violence Abroad](#).

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