

# Is it safe to go abroad?

Whether you're participating in a faculty-led global program, a program at one of our partner institutions, or another site you will probably be as safe as you would be if you remained on GVSU's campus.

## What are we doing?

Despite the overall safety of international study, the staff at PIC, our partners and contacts overseas, and GVSU faculty serving as program leaders are aware that risks remain for overseas travel. Even under the best and most peaceful circumstances, we can never fully guarantee the safety of GVSU students - in Michigan or abroad.

We do, however, do our best to:

- Monitor the safety and security situation at all of our overseas study sites
- Maintain communication with overseas partner institutions and GVSU faculty leaders while GVSU students are abroad
- Require students (and faculty leaders) to register with local U.S. embassies or consulates in the host nations
- Maintain contingency and crisis response plans
- Orient students and their faculty leaders before departure, and provide them with safety and security information
- Inform students and their faculty leaders of emergency procedures
- Review health and medical precautions and emergency medical evacuations coverage for all GVSU study abroad participants
- Keep in touch with the GVSU Campus Crisis Team

## What you can do

Actions you can take include the following:

- Participate in pre-departure orientation sessions and in-country orientation sessions
- Carefully read your GVSU orientation materials and other information provided
- Obtain and maintain health insurance that will cover you during your stay overseas
- Inform relatives and friends of your travel and study abroad itinerary, as well as contact information for each point in your overseas experience
- Conduct your research on the country and site you'll be visiting, including the current political situation, cultural and societal norms, and safety and health concerns
- Familiarize yourself with local conditions and customs that could present a threat to your health or safety. Keep these factors in mind as you make daily decisions about food, travel, sightseeing, and social activities
- Observe local laws, host institution regulations, and emergency procedures; avoid illegal drugs and excessive consumption of alcohol
- Maintain communication with the program leader and GVSU Padnos International Center Staff, and inform them of your whereabouts and well-being on a regular basis

## What your family can do

Actions your family can take include the following:

- Familiarize themselves with the program, the destination country and culture, and political context
- Keep handy the detailed itinerary for the student's program, as well as contact information
- Facilitate student health information and appropriate health insurance coverage that will cover the student while abroad
- Engage the student in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues and emergency procedures related to study abroad
- Keep in touch with the student while they are at the program site or traveling in the destination country
- Be aware that the student (or the faculty group leader) may be able to provide the most accurate and detailed information about situations on-site (more so than GVSU's Padnos International Center)
- Remember the time differences when phoning the student

