

COST Pre Departure Checklist

The information in the document should be used as a general guide for students interested in participating in the Consortium for Overseas Student Teaching (COST).

12-18 MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTING FOR TEACHING ABROAD

- _____ Begin researching the COST program and placement locations, budgets/standards of living, and travel and cultural information at www.costprogram.org
- _____ Meet with your COST Coordinator to discuss your academic needs and interests. Carefully review your university's student teaching requirements and how the COST Program fits within those requirements.
- _____ Talk to your institution's study abroad office about resources they may offer for internships abroad as you prepare to student teach abroad.
- _____ Research grant and scholarship opportunities. Many scholarship applications are due 12-18 months prior to when you plan to student teach abroad.
- _____ Consider your funding sources to help meet the costs associated with student teaching abroad. Visit www.costprogram.org > Before you go > Finances.

6-12 MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTING FOR TEACHING ABROAD

- _____ Attend any required informational seminars that may be provided by your college/ university.
- _____ Request the link for COST's online application from your institution's COST Coordinator to complete your application for the COST program.
- _____ Apply for a passport.
- _____ Sign COST Student Code of Conduct, Withdrawal Policy and Statement of Responsibility. Give hard copies to COST Coordinator.
- _____ Sign COST Waiver of Responsibility in front of a notary public. See more information about how to get a document notarized on the COST website. Turn in original copy to COST Coordinator.
- _____ Research entry requirements (visa) for the four (4) countries you are interested in. You will not need to apply to the embassy or consulate until 90-120 days prior to departure, but it is important for you to know what the requirements are for entry into each country and to become familiar with visa application instructions. For a link to entry requirements visit the website of the Embassy or Consulate that has jurisdiction over your current place of permanent residence.
- _____ Research if there are any required immunizations. Review the CDC report to see if there are any required immunizations for the countries to which you

may travel. Some immunizations require a series of shots over several months. It is important to look at requirements early in your planning. www.cdc.gov

3-6 MONTHS PRIOR TO DEPARTING (AFTER APPLYING)

- _____ Attend any study abroad pre-departure orientations or programming required by your institution. This programming is essential to your experience and usually offered through the study abroad office.
- _____ Communicate with your COST Coordinator to discuss student teaching requirements, concerns, etc.
- _____ Purchase the International Student Identity Card (ISIC). (Optional)
- _____ Create a short presentation (i.e. PowerPoint) to share with your future students abroad. Include pictures and information about yourself, your hometown, and the U.S.
- _____ Continue budgeting for the most expensive location listed in your placement preferences.
- _____ Work with your Coordinator, career services office, or trusted professor to begin articulating your career goals and strategies you may wish to implement while abroad.

30-90 DAYS PRIOR TO DEPARTING (AFTER PLACEMENT CONFIRMATION)

- _____ Contact assigned Overseas Placement Coordinator to gather specific information about placement dates, location, arrival, housing, and any visa requirements (within 1 week of receiving placement confirmation).
- _____ Share your flight itinerary with your Placement Coordinator, COST, and your host family. **Do not secure your airfare until you have confirmed the dates you are expected to arrive at your placement.**
- _____ Apply for visa if necessary. Visa application procedures vary by country. COST recommends you look at the application instructions for the Consulate of the host country you will teach in at least 4-6 months prior to your departure so you can inform yourself of what paperwork is required and how long it may take for a visa to be processed. **DO NOT PUT THIS OFF.**
- _____ **Complete country specific packet** (suggestions on website) using the COST website as a resource (History, culture, safety, health, travel, etc.)
- _____ Develop your packing list of items you will need to take abroad.
- _____ If you will be abroad during an election cycle and you wish to participate, you will need to make arrangement for an absentee ballot. For additional

information, contact your local County Board of Elections or County Clerk's Office.

- _____ Review the U.S. State Department website for important travel, health and safety information <http://travel.state.gov>
- _____ Secure confirmation of your in-country contact information (i.e. address, phone number, on-site contacts). Record and complete the **COST Emergency Plan** document found on the website: Before you go > Know your destination > Health and Safety
- _____ Contact your host family with an email of introduction
- _____ Contact your mentor teacher with an email of introduction

1-2 WEEKS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

- _____ Register your trip with the US State Department by visiting <http://travel.state.gov>
- _____ Notify your credit card company and bank to inform them of your planned travel overseas. Include countries you have layovers in.
- _____ Photocopy all of your important documents and cards that you will be taking with you (i.e. passport, credit/debit cards, visa, ISIC or health insurance information, flight itinerary, in-country contact person, COST Emergency Plan, etc.). Prepare a folder containing these copies for the person at home who will serve as your main contact in the event that your information is lost or stolen. Pack and carry copies with you.
- _____ Discuss an emergency plan with your family. If there is a natural disaster or some other critical incident takes place in your host country or city, discuss what the plan will be to get information back home regarding your health and safety. COST also recommends that at least one of your emergency contacts has a valid passport in the event of an emergency.
- _____ Discuss a plan for when you will call home after you arrive in your host country. Your contacts at home will want to hear from you right away. If you do not establish a plan or you do not follow that plan, it creates stress for those back home. It is possible that you may not have easy access to a phone or internet within the first 24-48 hours. Please inform your family that the phone and internet systems will be different and you may not have immediate access or it may take you a day or two to figure out the system. Give your family your in-country contact information as soon as you have it established.
- _____ Pack small gifts for homestay, teacher and students (if possible) or special hosts you will meet while abroad. See COST website for tips on giving gifts abroad and what to pack.

- Contact your overseas coordinator with a final courtesy email to maintain open communication. Share information on any planned vacation arrangements to coordinator and host family.
- Send copies of completed **COST Emergency Plan** to overseas coordinator and host family.

WHILE YOU'RE ABROAD

- Check you email regularly. Your home institution may send you important announcements from time to time that you will not want to miss.
- Stay in contact with your home COST Coordinator to alert them of any problems you might be having or highlights you would like to share!
- Revisit the goals you made for yourself and continue revising based on your unique circumstances and what you are learning abroad.
- If requested, set a date with your US coordinator for your “re-entry interview” prior to returning.
- Consider meeting with the school principal or a teacher other than your assigned Cooperating Teacher for an informational interview to learn how they got where they are and glean personal, professional and cultural advice.
- It is important to pay close attention to important deadlines that may take place during your time abroad. (e.g. Tax Returns are due April 15 and graduation applications if you are in your last semester.)
- Complete all senior surveys that may be sent from your college and/or university.
- Follow all re-entry procedures that must be completed prior to the posting of your final grades.
- Begin preparing for your return. It may seem ironic, but the more you prepare yourself for the cultural adjustments and plans you have when you return home, the easier your transition will be. Visit the COST website for tips and resources on re-entry and life after student teaching abroad.