

FACULTY-LED PRE-DEPARTURE CHECKLIST 2016-2017

The information in this document should be used as a general guide for students. As always, programs vary greatly which may impact the timeline for your specific study abroad program. Please keep in mind, you may need to adhere to a slightly different timeline based on your program identify programs that deviate here (Taiwan semester/China SW/ S. Africa Teacher Assisting.

FALL SEMESTER

- _____ Attend a **First-Step Meeting** offered through Padnos International Center or access this information online by going to www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad > Getting Started>First Step Meeting.
- _____ Begin researching study abroad program options.
- _____ Meet with your primary academic advisor to discuss your academic needs and interests.
- _____ Research grant and scholarship opportunities. Many scholarship applications are due 6-12 months prior to when you plan to study abroad. Apply for grants/scholarships highlighted in green on the PIC scholarship list.
- _____ Consider your funding sources to help meet the costs associated with studying abroad. See [Study Abroad Funding Packet](#) available on our website: Financial Information>How do I pay for Study Abroad.
- _____ **Apply for study abroad through GVSU.** Check online at www.gvsu.edu/studyabroad for application deadlines. Application deadline for most faculty-led programs is **February 1. You should submit an application before the deadline. Faculty recommendations must be submitted by the Feb. 1 deadline.**

FEBRUARY

- _____ **Application Deadline: February 1st, 2017**
- _____ **Apply for a passport.**
- _____ **Research if there are any required immunizations.** Talk with your faculty director and review the CDC report to see if there are any required immunizations for the country you plan to travel to. Some immunizations require a series of shots over several months. It is important to look at the requirements early in your planning. www.cdc.gov
- _____ Mark all pre-departure meetings on your calendar. **These meetings cannot be missed.** There will likely be three pre-departure orientation meetings, which will be scheduled by your program director.
- _____ If you are an international student, inform the faculty director of this fact and request that the flight arrangements allow 4 hours at Customs when re-entering the US to avoid missing connecting flights.

- _____ **Read your Study Abroad acceptance letter thoroughly.**
- _____ **Check your OASIS Message Center often.** PIC will be posting important information through OASIS on a regular basis.
- _____ Purchase health insurance that covers you abroad if you do not already have insurance. Many students choose to purchase the International Student Identity Card (ISIC) in the Student Services Building (Allendale) to meet this requirement.
- _____ **Complete OASIS post acceptance forms.**
- _____ If for any reason you do not intend to participate in the program, immediately withdraw online through OASIS by clicking “withdraw from program.” **You will be held responsible for cost of arrangements being made on your behalf.**

MARCH

- _____ **Apply for a visa (if necessary).** Visa application procedures vary by country. **PIC recommends contacting program director for any visa questions.** DO NOT PUT THIS OFF. Many students make the mistake of waiting too long to apply for their visa and run the risk of not securing their visa by their departure date.
- _____ Continue attending all required Pre-Departure meetings.
- _____ Complete the **Spring/Summer Application for Financial Aid** which will be available by mid-March.
- _____ In late March/early April, you will receive a bill for your program fee and tuition from GVSU Student Accounts. If you are scheduled to receive a Study Abroad Grant and/or federal loan, these monies will be applied to your charges and you'll receive a bill for the balance.
- _____ Provide PIC with a copy of your **Passport Information Page.**
- _____ Make arrangements to get immunization shots. If you have questions about the immunizations you should be getting, please contact your primary care physician, visit the Kent County Health Department or contact the GV Family Health Center.
- _____ Register for program courses and pay all charges posted to your GVSU student account in order to avoid deregistration. This includes any parking fees, library fines, tuition, program fees, or other university charges. Payment deadlines can be found on the Student Account's website at: www.gvsu.edu/studentaccounts.
- _____ Make arrangements for someone back at home to assist you with issues that arise while you are abroad. We recommend that you consider completing a **Limited Power of Attorney** form in order to give someone the right to act on your behalf while you are gone. You can obtain a copy of the Power of Attorney form by logging into your OASIS account and visiting the Post Acceptance section. This form needs to be notarized. PIC offers Notary Public Services.

- _____ Develop a packing list of items you will need to take abroad.
- _____ Review the U.S. State Department website for important travel, health and safety information <http://travel.state.gov>.

APRIL

- _____ **Register your trip** with the US State Department by visiting the web at <http://travel.state.gov>.
- _____ Ask your doctor for a written prescription for any medications you will be taking during the program. Obtain a sufficient supply to last for the duration of the program.

2 WEEKS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE

- _____ **Notify your credit card company and bank** to inform them of your planned travel overseas.
- _____ **Photocopy all of your important documents** and cards that you will be taking with you (i.e. copy of your passport, copy of all credit/debit cards you will take, copy of your visa (if you have one), copy of your ISIC or health insurance information, copy of your flight itinerary, in-country contact person, etc.). Prepare a folder for the person at home who will serve as your main contact in the event that your information is lost or stolen.
- _____ **Discuss an emergency plan with your family.** If there is a natural disaster or some other critical incident that takes place in your host country or city, please discuss what the plan will be to get information back home regarding your health and safety. Please keep in mind that during emergencies, most phone lines are overloaded. We recommend you look at alternative communication methods such as an email back home. If you have access to a cell phone, you may consider using this as a back-up if phone lines are accessible.
Note: PIC also recommends that at least one of your emergency contacts have 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 does create stress for those back home. It is possible that you may not have easy access to a phone within the first 24-48 hours. We have also heard from students that their calling cards did not work and they needed to find calling cards in their host country. Please inform your family that the phone systems will be different and you may not have immediate access or it may take a day or two to figure out how to use the system. Many programs will make sure that students can contact home within the first day, but this is not always possible. **Please give your family your in-country contact information so they can call you directly once you have arrived in your host country.**

UPON YOUR RETURN

- _____ Notify the Padnos International Center of your contact information upon your return.

- _____ Bring in a CD of photos from your trip to PIC (optional).
- _____ Sign-up to be a mentor to new international students. Contact Troy VanKoeveering at vankoetr@gvsu.edu for details (optional).

HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

- _____ I know who to contact in the event of an emergency while abroad and have packed the GVSU Emergency Assistance information.
- _____ I have thoroughly reviewed the **Center for Disease Control** information and **Consular Information Sheet(s)** for the countries I will be visiting.
- _____ I understand that the availability of some prescription medications may be limited. I am bringing an ample supply of medications I am currently taking to last for the duration of time that I will be abroad. I have also checked with my host country's Embassy for information on any restrictions that may apply regarding bringing prescription medications into the country.
- _____ **IMPORTANT: Always pack medications in your carry-on luggage. DO NOT put prescription medication in your checked luggage.**
- _____ I have a copy of my prescription(s) (including information on the generic equivalent) and a letter from my physician describing the medication I will be carrying, how much I should have and what it is for.
- _____ I am aware of the recommended immunizations for all of the countries in which I will be traveling.
- _____ I have checked my records to ensure that I have received all routine immunizations for tetanus, diphtheria, measles, mumps, rubella, and polio.
- _____ I have made arrangements to meet with a health care professional to discuss any questions or concerns I have relating to required or recommended immunizations.
- _____ I have carefully reviewed my health insurance policy and understand what I am covered for in the event of illness or injury overseas. I have also explored the limitations that may apply to this policy and have considered supplemental plans that are available to me.

LEGALITIES AND CUSTOMS

- _____ I understand that I am subject to the laws of all the countries that I will be visiting.
- _____ I understand that I am subject to the laws and customs with regard to alcohol and drug use in all countries that I will be visiting.
- _____ I am aware that the sexual mores and legal and illegal practices may be different in the countries that I will be visiting.
- _____ I understand that, as an American citizen, if I am caught engaging in illegal activity while abroad, there is little that GVSU or the US Government can do to assist me.

DIET

- _____ I know what kinds of foods are typical of the region I am visiting.
- _____ I am aware of the quality of the drinking water in the region and plan to take necessary precautions for disinfecting contaminated water, if necessary.

_____ I understand that at times a strict vegetarian or other diet may be difficult to accommodate and have planned accordingly for this possible difficulty.

SOURCES TO CONSULT FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Center for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov	World Health Organization www.who.int
Mobility International (Travelers with various disabilities) www.miusa.org	U.S. Public Health Service www.usphs.gov
International Red Cross www.redcross.int/en	State Department Overseas Citizens Emergency Center (202) 647-5225
A Safe Trip Abroad www.travel.state.gov	International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) www.iamat.org
Highway to Health - City Health Profiles www.highwaytohealth.com	The Travel Clinic www.drwisetravel.com
National Aids Clearinghouse http://cscnpin.org	Medical Information for Americans Traveling Abroad www.travel.state.gov/medical.html