

STUDY ABROAD CODE OF CONDUCT AND AGREEMENT

Participating in a study abroad through Grand Valley State University (GVSU) comes with many exciting opportunities, and important responsibilities. All students serve as ambassadors for the U.S. and for GVSU at all times. GVSU aims to foster an environment of learning through cooperation, flexibility, and respect. Students are responsible for knowing and complying with the terms outlined in this document, as well as any policies and laws of the host institution, and host nation. Participants must abide by the Code of Conduct & Study Abroad Agreement or forfeit their application. Continued eligibility for participation is conditioned upon adherence to the established requirements, and expectations.

PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

I understand it is my responsibility to research and understand issues that relate to health, safety, political, legal, and cultural norms and expectations in the host country. I assume responsibility for all elements necessary for my personal preparation for the program, including full participation in orientation, and acquisition of proper documentation such as, but not limited to:

- valid passport – if you already have a passport, check its expiration date! (Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months past your date of return.)
- Visa and/or required residence permit
- Medical insurance coverage
- Flight confirmation
- Proof of funding to support yourself for the duration of your time abroad
- Prescription medications – letter from your prescribing physician and clearance to bring a supply of your medication into the host country.

I understand I am fully responsible for the planning and management of all personal travel plans. In addition, it is my responsibility to carefully research my study abroad program, and the services that will be available to me. I agree to notify appropriate representatives in the Padnos International Center, and representatives at the host institution of any physical, mental, or personal circumstances that may affect my participation in the program.

I understand that studying abroad requires students to accept a high level of independence and self-sufficiency. By virtue of signing up for study abroad, I agree to take on the responsibility to review all program materials and information provided to me, ask questions if any information presented is unclear, and/or request information or advice if there are unique circumstances that apply to my situation that may need additional explanation or investigation.

I understand that a successful study abroad experience requires flexibility and adaptability on the part of all participants. Despite best efforts in planning, there are often many things that are outside of the participant's or GVSU's control. I understand that living in another country, away from familiar support networks is challenging and will require self-reliance, flexibility, adaptability and personal responsibility.

I understand that living in an unfamiliar place, and communicating in a different cultural setting or language, will require resourcefulness, problem-solving skills, cultural sensitivity, and strong interpersonal communication skills.

I understand that the most successful students are those who communicate clearly with program administrators, and who take responsibility to cultivate positive and appropriate relationships with other program participants, on-site program contacts, and GVSU faculty and staff. Failure to develop positive relationships can lead to feelings of isolation and/or challenges in resolving conflicts that may arise in the future. I acknowledge that a spirit of cooperation and flexibility are skills essential to a successful study abroad experience.

I agree to take responsibility for communicating information directly to interested parties such as my family and friends. I understand that an important part of accepting responsibility is managing my own communication with parties who have a vested interest in my success.

EMOTIONAL AND PHYSICAL STRESS – CHOOSING THE RIGHT PROGRAM

I understand that living and studying in another country may create unexpected emotional and physical stress. Study abroad participants often experience very dramatic changes in climate, diet, living conditions, cultural norms, and academic expectations that may be seriously disruptive to one's routines and coping mechanisms. I understand that it is required that all study abroad participants be able adapt to the local environment; especially to different cultural norms and expectations. I fully acknowledge that while the process of adapting to a different culture can be challenging, it is often the challenges that serve as a catalyst for personal growth.

I understand that study abroad programs can range anywhere from offering very minimal support to students to offering a wide variety of support services that help participants meet their goals. It is my responsibility as a study abroad participant, to research and carefully select a program that offers an appropriate level of support, taking into consideration my previous experiences, or lack thereof, traveling independently in other countries.

I understand that the Padnos International Center will work collaboratively with me to help identify the on-site support services that will be available through the program I select. I also acknowledge that the Padnos International Center cannot anticipate all of the needs of every study abroad participant.

SAFETY

I understand that I am responsible for educating myself on the safety situation and the laws of the country I will study in. I have been directed to review the safety information provided by the U.S. State Department and will conduct additional research on my own utilizing travel guides or other reputable sources including, but not limited to:

US State Department: <http://travel.state.gov>

Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov>

I understand that I am fully responsible for using good judgment, and avoiding situations that may put me or other program participants in serious risk of harm or injury. I acknowledge that an important factor in having a safe study abroad experience is the sensible and cautious behavior of participants.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

I understand that I am responsible for paying program charges in full, whether this is to GVSU or another entity. This includes any financial obligations due to damages, or fees incurred during my participation in

the program. I understand that failure to pay program fees in full may result in my transcript not being released by my host institution or not being able to register for future semesters at GVSU.

EARLY WITHDRAWAL

I understand that I can withdraw from my study abroad program at any time. If I choose to withdraw from my study abroad program, I agree to notify GVSU, and my host institution or provider immediately. I understand that it is my responsibility to investigate any financial penalties that will be associated with my withdrawal.

MAKING SPECIAL REQUESTS OUTSIDE OF NORMAL PROGRAM OFFERINGS

I understand that if I make special requests that are outside the normal arrangements for a particular program, the Padnos International Center is not responsible for identifying every possible consequence as a result of the special request or tailored program arrangements (example: participating in two separate and distinct programs back-to-back; requesting housing that is not part of the normal program offerings; requests for internships or volunteer placements; etc). I understand when programs make tailored arrangements at my request a variety of issues can arise as a result of deviations from normal program operations.

SUBJECT TO THE GVSU STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Because I will be maintaining my enrollment at GVSU while studying abroad, I understand that I am subject to all of the rules of the GVSU student code of conduct, sexual misconduct policy, and all other university policies. I understand that GVSU has a right to enforce the standards of conduct described in these documents, as well as all its policies, rules, standards, and instructions. **Furthermore, I understand that I am solely responsible for my own actions.**

GVSU Student Code of Conduct:

<http://www.gvsu.edu/studentcode/>

I understand that I am subject to GVSU's Sexual Misconduct Policy:

https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/B207BF89-D06A-D01F-D6900A235A2FF912/sexual_misconduct_policy_final_5-12-16.pdf

I understand that I am subject to GVSU's Sexual or Gender-based Harassment Policy:

https://www.gvsu.edu/cms4/asset/BF5E43E1-03EA-FF17-2979FC77EA972914/gender_based_harassment_and_retaliation_policy_rev_july_1_2016.pdf

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR

I understand that behavior that violates local laws or norms could harm Grand Valley State University's relationship with those countries and the institutions therein, and may also impact the health and safety of myself and/or other program participants.

I understand that participants who engage in any of the following acts, may be subject to disciplinary actions or immediate dismissal from the program:

- violation of the alcohol and drug policy
- criminal behavior or violation of local laws

- excessive absences
- behavior that puts others safety and well-being at risk
- disruptive behavior
- physical or verbal abuse
- property damage
- disorderly, indecent, or obscene conduct
- abusive or threatening language towards other students, GVSU staff or staff at the host institution
- violent, demeaning, humiliating, or threatening behavior towards others
- harassment
- theft
- obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, or other activities associated with the administration of the program.
- All other prohibited behaviors as listed in the student code.

I acknowledge that GVSU strongly discourages participants from engaging in any employment or conducting of business in the host country without proper authorization to do so. I understand it is my responsibility to research the laws and authorizations required for such activities.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

I understand that accidents and injuries are common among those who consume too much alcohol. That alcohol impairs judgment, coordination, perception, and concentration. Impairment of these skills can lead to accidents causing injuries that range from minor to life-threatening. I understand that a number of college students have died in accidents abroad while intoxicated. I understand that the risk of accident or injury abroad is increased by the use and abuse of alcohol or drugs.

I understand that if I am convicted of violating alcohol or drug laws while abroad, the consequences may be severe including: lengthy jail sentences, large fines, or other punishment that may be much harsher than the punishment for similar offenses that take place in the U.S. I am also aware that I will be responsible for providing my own legal defense.

DISCIPLINARY PROTOCOL

I recognize that due to unique characteristics of study abroad programs, procedures for notice, hearing and appeal related to disciplinary proceedings will be carried out in the best possible manner. Minor violations will be addressed with a verbal and/or written warning. Major violations may result in immediate dismissal from the program and could result in suspension or dismissal from Grand Valley State University. Disciplinary hearings and appeal processes will be available upon return to Grand Valley State University. If I am dismissed from the program, I agree to be sent home at my own expense with no refund of fees. I also understand that if I am dismissed from the program, I will not receive credit regardless of when in the semester I am dismissed, and may be required to return the financial aid (including any grants and scholarships) I received for participation in the program. I also understand that any student who is dismissed from the program immediately loses all program benefits including, but not limited to, housing.

I understand that if I am dismissed from the program, GVSU will inform the emergency contact person listed in my application.

Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to: restitution, suspension or loss of privileges, housing termination, disciplinary probation, dismissal from the program, and a ban from participating in future study abroad programs.

My signature below signifies that I have read and agree to the terms outlined in this document. I expressly waive and release all claims against Grand Valley State University pertaining to my failure to comply with the above Code of Conduct, Conditions of Application, and the Risk Release.

Signature

Date

Print Name