

## STUDY ABROAD PARTICIPANT RESPONSIBILITIES

The health and safety of our students who participate in study abroad are primary concerns for the Padnos International Center (PIC). While each year hundreds of GVSU students have safe and healthy experiences abroad, we believe it is important to offer these guidelines to better inform participants and their families of the expectations and responsibilities PIC has for each participant.

### PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Assume responsibility for all elements necessary for your personal preparation, participate fully in required orientations, complete all required forms and submit copies of all required documents (i.e. passport copy, health insurance card, etc.)
- B. Read and carefully consider all materials issued by GVSU and/or the program sponsor that relate to your study abroad program and host country. Information is frequently disseminated by email and through your OASIS account.
- C. Review all of your travel documents for accuracy, validity, and completeness. Students should carefully review their passport, visa (if required), airfare dates and conditions, immunization records, credit card expiration, etc. for confirmation of validity and accuracy.
- D. Conduct your own research on the country you plan to study in with particular emphasis on health and safety concerns, social and cultural norms and political conditions.
- E. Pay all fees and personal expenses associated with your participation in study abroad.
- F. Assume full responsibility for researching options to finance your study abroad experience. While information may be made available to students, PIC is not responsible for providing information on the multitude of funding options, which may include grants and scholarships available through partner institutions.
- G. Consider your physical and mental health and other personal circumstances when applying for any study abroad program and make available to your program sponsor complete and accurate information regarding your physical and mental health status.
- H. Understand that there are health risks associated with living and studying in another country. Take personal responsibility for consulting with a medical doctor regarding any medical needs, review health information related to the host country, obtain appropriate immunizations and prophylactic medications appropriate for participation in a study abroad program. Students who are on medication should make arrangements to have enough medicine to last the duration of the study abroad program.

- I. Obtain and maintain health insurance coverage for the duration of your study abroad program and research the policy so you understand any limits in your coverage, as well as the process for securing reimbursements and any other requirements imposed by your insurance provider. Assume full responsibility for all medical expenses incurred while participating in a study abroad program.
- J. Inform parents/guardians/family members and others who may need to know about your plans to study abroad. Provide your family with your emergency contact information in your host country and keep them informed of your well-being while you are abroad.
- K. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct, and emergency procedures of the program.
- L. Participate fully in the academic program by attending all classes and required activities at the host institution for the full academic term, carrying at least the minimum course load, and completing all examinations; or participate in an approved internship or independent study.
- M. Accept responsibility for verifying the accuracy and maintaining your registration status here at GVSU prior to your departure and while you are abroad.
- N. Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the on-site program staff or other appropriate individuals before and/or during the program.
- O. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to do the same. Remember that you are representing your home university and your home country while you are abroad.
- P. Accept responsibility for your own decisions and actions.
- Q. Respect and adhere to the laws and customs of the host country and understand that the intentional violation or disrespect for those laws and customs may result in my dismissal from the program and/or other legal action from the host country authorities. Always remember to be a respectful guest.
- R. Avoid illegal drugs, illegal activities and excessive or irresponsible consumption of alcohol.
- S. Work with your primary academic advisor to ensure that courses taken abroad will count towards degree requirements.

- T. Ensure that PIC receives a transcript or certificate upon completion of your study abroad. Participants are also responsible for securing all departmental approvals prior to studying abroad or within one semester upon return. (Excludes faculty-led program participants)
- U. Research all visa application procedures and requirements by visiting the host country's nearest Consulate or Embassy. Visa requirements change frequently, so each student must research the most up-to-date requirements for the host country.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARENTS**

- A. Be informed about the participant's decision to enroll in a study abroad program.
- B. Discuss the program materials with the participant directly.
- C. Be aware that the participant should be asked for information before contacting the program sponsor or the home university. Administrative staff are not legally allowed to release information to anyone other than the participant without first having written consent from the participant.
- D. Request in-country contact information should a need arise for you to get a hold of the participant while they are abroad.
- E. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
- F. Ask the participant about culture shock and plans he/she has to deal with the difficulties that arise from living in a culture different from one's own home culture.
- G. Establish realistic expectations for communicating with the participant while they are in the host country, understanding that the participant may not always be available and that regular communication may not be as consistent as when the student is on the home campus.
- H. Discuss with the participant any travel plans and/or activities that may be independent from the study abroad program and take careful notes regarding these intentions. The program sponsor and home university are not responsible for the independent activities or arrangements made by program participants, unless otherwise stated.
- I. If you are asked to be the primary emergency contact, review all travel documents for accuracy. Request a folder from the participant which contains: travel information, in-country contact information, copy of the passport, copy of the visa (if required), photocopy of credit/debit cards, photocopy of immunization records, and other pertinent information.
- J. Discuss all health concerns with the participant well in-advance of departure. Encourage the participant to address all health concerns with his/her primary physician.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES OF HOME UNIVERSITY, GVSU'S PADNOS INTERNATIONAL CENTER**

- A. Conduct periodic assessment of health and safety conditions for the programs administered by the home university (faculty-led programs or exchange programs).

- B. Maintain emergency preparedness plans and provide training to program directors on how to manage emergencies abroad.
- C. Provide students with informational resources to help in the preparation of a study abroad program. Information may be made available online, through OASIS, or in hardcopy form.
- D. Provide information to students during the application process on criteria that will be used in evaluating their eligibility to participate in study abroad.
- E. Conduct a screening process for all study abroad participants.
- F. Provide orientation for study abroad participants.
- G. Provide students with the home university's policies on obtaining financial aid, health insurance requirements, registration for study abroad, transfer of credit processes and course approval (where applicable), student code of conduct and other relevant policies.
- H. Provide students with a PIC contact in the event that they need assistance prior to departure, while abroad, or upon return from study abroad. Students will be provided a 24/7 emergency contact number at GVSU in the event that an emergency arises while studying in another country.
- I. Discuss with students, after they have been accepted but prior to participation, individual health or disciplinary issues that may impact the individual's participation in a study abroad program.
- J. Provide assistance to participants to communicate with on-site staff any special needs or services which may be required for the student's participation in a particular program. Inform students that support services may be very different from what students expect here at home.
- K. Provide information on health insurance options for those who are not covered under an existing policy or whose coverage does not extend overseas.

**THE HOME UNIVERSITY AND/OR PROGRAM SPONSOR CANNOT ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FOLLOWING:**

- A. Cannot guarantee or assure the health and safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environment.
- B. Cannot monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices and/or activities of participants.
- C. Cannot prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities.
- D. Cannot assure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings, or provide or pay for legal representation for participants.
- E. Cannot assume responsibility for actions or for events that are beyond their control or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.

**RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROGRAM SPONSOR, WHICH MAY OR MAY NOT BE GVSU**

Many GVSU students participate in programs that are administered by universities or organizations outside of GVSU. While GVSU may be familiar with affiliate organizations or certain host universities and cooperate in assisting students to participate in non-GVSU programs, we do not have involvement in the administrative infrastructure or in the planning/design of the program. Participants should conduct their own research on the program sponsor and establish good communication with those involved in the design and implementation of their program to ensure they are well informed prior to departure. To assist students in researching program sponsors, the following can be used to guide discussions with those directly involved with the programs administration.

- A. Conduct periodic assessment of health and safety conditions for the programs administered by the program sponsor.
- B. Provide relevant health and safety information prior to departure and as part of the on-site orientation.
- C. Maintain emergency preparedness plans and provide training to on-site staff who will manage an emergency situation.
- D. Provide students with informational resources to help in the preparation of a study abroad program, specifically providing information on the host institution and other country-specific information.
- E. Clearly indicate payment deadlines and options for paying fees to the program sponsor.
- F. Provide students with policies, rules and regulations associated with the program sponsor and consequences of noncompliance.
- G. Provide information on the nearest appropriate medical facility and emergency procedures for participants.
- H. Provide information regarding an emergency contact in the host country should someone need to contact the participant while they are participating in the program.