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| **Faculty/Staff Exchange**  **Information Sheet/Pre-Departure Checklist** |

**Pre-departure Checklist**

**\_\_\_\_\_ Is it safe to go?** Make sure that you are traveling to a destination that is not under a Travel Warning by the U. S. State Department <http://travel.state.gov>. If you are traveling to a destination currently under a travel warning or embargo, you will need approval from your Appointing Officer. You may also be required to secure approval through the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity.

* Contact International SOS (ISOS) for pre-trip travel information - +1 215 942 8478 or visit the website at [www.internationalsos.com](http://www.internationalsos.com).
* OSAC Country Reports - <https://www.osac.gov/>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Will you be accompanying GVSU Students?** As an employee of GVSU, you must adhere to University policy on accompanying students outside of the USA. Make sure you plan well in advance to gain appropriate permission/approval, for your personal liability and protection, in addition for the safety of students. The policy can be found at: <http://www.gvsu.edu/pic/accompanying-students-abroad-105.htm>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Passport.** Apply for a passport if you do not already have one. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months after your return. If you need to renew your passport, Padnos International Center offers passport photos at a discounted rate during regular business hours.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Visa.** Research whether or not you need a visa for entry into the country for which you plan to travel. For additional information, you can consult ISOS, refer to the Embassy’s website of the host country, or reference the information available on the U.S. State Department website: [http://travel.state.gov](http://travel.state.gov/).

\_\_\_\_\_ **CHECK ENTRY REQUIREMENTS.** While entry requirements are subject to change, it is important to know what will be required for entry into your host country. Many countries still require proof of COVID vaccination or a negative COVID test. Some countries conduct random COVID testing upon entry. It is important to have a contingency plan in the event you test positive and are required to quarantine.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Immunizations**. Please visit the CDC website for information on recommended immunizations. Faculty and staff should consult their primary care physician or the GV Family Health Center regarding immunizations for travel. <http://www.cdc.gov>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Register for** **Travel Insurance**. GVSU offers comprehensive travel insurance through Chubb with access to 24/7 emergency assistance through International SOS. Registration is required. The cost per day and details on the policy are available on the PIC website: <https://www.gvsu.edu/pic/gvsu-international-accident-and-sickness-insurance-159.htm>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Register with the US Embassy**. In order to receive up-to-date safety/security information about your destination, and to ensure that the local US embassy knows of your presence in the host country, register your trip in the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) on the U.S State Department website before your departure: <https://step.state.gov/step/>. If you are not a US citizen, check with the Foreign Affairs Office in your home country for guidance. You may still enroll in STEP as a non-citizen for security notifications.

**\_\_\_\_\_ File Travel Information with PIC.** GVSU requests that all faculty and staff who travel under university-related business file their travel plans with the Padnos International Center. PIC keeps a copy of your passport, flight information, and the Faculty and Staff Emergency Contact Information form on file. To enter your travel information visit: <https://www.gvsu.edu/pic/international-resources-102.htm>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Support from home.** Make arrangements for someone back home to manage your affairs while you are gone.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Photocopies.** Make photocopies of important documents such as: passport, visa (if needed), credit cards, insurance card, ID cards, housing address, arrival instructions, etc. Leave a copy at home with someone you trust. If anything is lost or stolen, you have a main contact to assist you with reporting lost items. It is also advisable to keep a photocopy of your passport and other important information with you, some place other than with the original documents. **Keep arrival instructions, ISOS emergency number, and address for where you plan to stay in your carry-on luggage.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Stay Healthy**. The CDC report offers great information on food and water safety as well as tips for minimizing the risk of getting sick. With proper preparation and good judgment, many common illnesses can be avoided or minimized. Those who have food allergies are advised to carefully research the host country to ensure dietary restrictions can be met.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Airfare**. In most cases, faculty and staff are required to secure their own airfare arrangements for travel. Please be certain that you have approval from your Unit Head/Appointing Officer **before** securing your airfare. If you are working with an international partner, wait for confirmation from your host that your dates are acceptable.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Prescription Medications/Eyewear**. If you are taking any prescription medications, it is advisable that you get a letter from your physician stating what the medicine is, how much you will have on your person, and the generic equivalent. Call ISOS to request information about medication restrictions for the host country and any requirements for declaring the medication, if required. If there are any complications regarding restricted/controlled substances, a letter from your doctor will be helpful. For those that wear eye glasses, it is important to being along a second pair and a copy of your prescription.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Credit Cards and money**. Contact your credit card companies prior to departure to let them know you will be out of the country to avoid any complications with unusual transactions. Always remember to use a variety of means for money. Do not rely on any one source (credit card, cash, debit card).

You may be able to purchase the local currency prior to your departure. Depending on the currency used in the host country, many local banks can either order the currency for you or they may have foreign currency on stock. Most of the banks near the Grand Rapids airport stock the most common international currencies. *Note*: you will not likely get the best deal when exchanging currency in advance of your trip. The best way of accessing the local currency is to use your US debit card at an ATM in your host country. Nearly all airports will have either an ATM machine or a currency exchange.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Review Export Control guidelines**. You may be required to obtain a federal export control license prior to international travel depending on where you plan to travel, what you are taking with you, what you will be doing on the trip, and who you will be interacting with. Information is available through the Office of Research Compliance and Integrity. <https://www.gvsu.edu/export/>

\_\_\_\_\_ **Establish Emergency Plans.** We strongly urge GVSU faculty and staff to establish protocol in the event that an emergency arises while abroad. It is as important for loved ones to be able to reach you, as it is for you to reach your loved ones. Leave host country contact information for all of the locations you plan to travel.

\_\_\_\_\_ **US Embassy or Education USA.** If it is possible for you to connect with the U.S. Embassy or Education USA office while you are in the host country, we encourage you to do so. Education USA is responsible for helping foreign nationals learn about the educational opportunities available in the United States. It is important for GVSU to connect with Education USA offices around the world, since they serve as a trusted resource for talented students who apply for degree-seeking studies in the US. Please be prepared to discuss general information about GVSU. If you would like guidance about what you might share, please contact Chris Hendree in Admissions, or Rebecca Morrissey in PIC.

**\_\_\_\_\_ Do your research**. Be sure to know about current affairs taking place in the country you are traveling to. It is also important to research the culture, history, economic situation, health care system, legalities, languages spoken, religion, appropriate greetings, gestures, norms, accessibility, etc. Most of this information can be found with simple web searches and by reading common travel guides. PIC offers a host of different resources to complement your research, including the Lonely Planet Travel Guide series.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Communication back home.** It is important that you establish a plan for how and when you will communicate with loved ones back home. Most places GVSU faculty and staff travel will have access to the internet and international phone lines. Depending on your location, you may find several ways of keeping in contact back home including: finding an internet café to access your email, using your regular cell phone or getting your cell phone unlocked and purchasing a local SIM card. *If you plan to use your cell phone abroad, check with your carrier on the international coverage and rates that will apply.*

\_\_\_\_\_ **Gifts.** Gift giving in other cultures can be a very important courtesy. Consider the appropriateness of your gift. With a small amount of research, you can learn what gifts might be more appropriate due to cultural norms. Generally speaking, GVSU items are great gifts to share. While you do not have to have a gift for everyone you might meet, it is a good idea to share something with the person who assists you with your itinerary.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Keep notes.** It is highly recommended that you spend time writing down information about the people that you meet and the conversations that you have. This is most helpful when writing a report on your activities. Additionally, it is helpful to keep track of who you need to follow-up with in the future.

**Upon your return**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Getting reimbursed.** Use the University’s guidelines for submitting a travel and expenses. When converting the foreign currency to USD, please indicate the rate you are using. If you have questions, please contact your department’s budget administrator.

Currency exchange websites: [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com)

[www.oanda.com](http://www.oanda.com)

\_\_\_\_\_ **Share your experience**. Be sure to talk about your experience with others on-campus. Internationalization efforts Share information, photos and ask how you can be helpful to future applicants.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Follow-up with PIC when visiting a GVSU partner.** In an effort to help PIC track activities at our international partners, you are encouraged to meet with Rebecca Morrissey upon your return to share your experience. This allows PIC to stay informed of collaborations taking place at our partner institutions and helps us connect colleagues at GVSU who may be interested in similar work.