

Your Guide to Traveling Abroad



GW THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH
AND HEALTH SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Thinking About Going Abroad?</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. Travel Advisories and Warnings.....	3
 <u>Before You Go</u>	
2. Required Documents.....	4
3. Document Checklist.....	4
4. Student Checklist.....	5
5. Academic Credit.....	6
<i>Practicum and Other Course Requirements</i>	6
<i>Maintaining Enrollment While Abroad</i>	6
<i>Institutional Review Board</i>	8
<i>Participation Agreement and Consent and Acknowledgment of Risk and Release</i>	8
6. Financial Assistance.....	9
<i>Alternative Education Loans</i>	10
<i>Power of Attorney</i>	10
7. U.S. Passports.....	11
8. Non-U.S. Passport Holders.....	12
9. Visas.....	12
10. Insurance.....	13
<i>Health Insurance General</i>	13
<i>Supplemental Insurance Providers</i>	13
<i>Health Insurance – GW Student Health Insurance</i>	14
<i>Evacuation Services: Medical Emergencies and Political Threats</i>	14
<i>International Student Identity Card</i>	15
11. Account Holds.....	15
12. Immunizations.....	16
13. U.S. Department of State Registration.....	17
14. Travel Recommendations.....	17
<i>Traveling with Medications</i>	17
<i>Suggested Packing List</i>	18
15. Cultural Preparation.....	19
 <u>You've Arrived!</u>	
16. U.S. Embassy Registration.....	20

17. Emergencies Abroad.....20
 The American Citizens Service.....20
18. Changes in Information.....21

Now That You're Back

19. On-Campus Resources.....21

Attachments

- Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Request for Graduate Students
- Power of Attorney Form
- International Student Identity Card: Description of Coverage
- What to Pack (on a Trip of any Length)

In the School of Public Health and Health Services (SPHHS) at The George Washington University, you may choose to fulfill your practicum abroad. As you prepare for your experience, there are a variety of things that you will need to have in place in order to have a safe and enjoyable trip. SPHHS has created this handbook to assist you as you experience the world beyond GW.

THINKING ABOUT GOING ABROAD?

While choosing your destination it is important to consider many different aspects of the culture and environment in which you will be spending time. To ensure your safety, you ***must visit the U.S. Department of State website*** (<http://travel.state.gov/>) to assess the travel advisories and warnings for countries that you are interested in visiting.

You should be familiar with the culture, history, geography, economy, government, and political climate of the country that you intend to visit. The U.S. Department of State publishes *Background Notes* on over 170 countries. These are available on their website: click on the link International Travel then Regional Information.

Finally, you must be aware of the health precautions involved in traveling to certain areas of the world. The SAFETI website (<http://www.globaled.us/peacecorps/introduction.html>) is a clearinghouse for health resources and information in regards to traveling abroad.

(1) Travel Advisories and Warnings

The U.S. Department of State website (<http://travel.state.gov>) provides many resources for people traveling abroad. Click on the link International Travel to access information on specific countries. Some resources that may be useful in researching potential countries are:

- Travel Warnings: Warnings are issued when the State Department recommends that Americans avoid travel to a country, based on all relevant information.

The University ***does not encourage*** students to travel to areas of the world that have Travel Warnings issued by the State Department and ***may not approve such destinations for credit*** (e.g. practicum). In addition, insurance may not be available for such travel. Please meet with your Practicum Director if you have any questions or concerns.

- Public Announcements: These announcements were created to disseminate information about terrorist threats that pose significant risks to the security of U.S. travelers and cannot be countered. They provide fast-breaking information about short-term conditions that may pose risks to travelers.

- Consular Information Sheets (CIS): CIS are available for every country and provide information on the U.S. embassy or consulate in-country, health conditions, minor political disturbances, entry and exit regulations, and safety/security. CIS are not meant to provide advice but rather to present factual information so you can make your own decisions regarding travel.

BEFORE YOU GO

(2) Required Documents

Required of ALL students:

- All Practicum Planning Forms
- Participation Agreement and Consent and Acknowledgment of Risk and Release (see pg. 8)
- Copy of International SOS Registration filed with Practicum Director (see pg. 15)

May be required depending on student and their destination or duration of trip:

- SPHHS Graduate Petition, for Leave of Absence or Continuous Enrollment (see pg. 6)
- Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Request for Graduate Students (see pg. 9)

(3) Document Checklist

- Passport
- Visa
- Ticket
- Copy of itinerary
- Arrival instructions (e.g. name of individual or group meeting you at the airport)
- Emergency contact information – including contacts for Practicum Director
- Insurance contact information (health and travel)
- Credit card cancellation information

(4) Student Checklist

Below is a list of items that you should address before departure. Some are required (e.g. passport) and some are recommended (e.g. ISIC card). Please note that **they are not listed in the order in which you should address them**. This handbook should be read thoroughly so that you are familiar with the time frames involved in each process. Each item below is described in detail in this handbook.

- Check the U.S. Department of State travel advisories and warnings (pg. 3)
Prior to choosing your destination, visit this site and discuss any concerns with your Practicum Director.
- Complete planning requirements for academic course(s), such as the practicum (pg. 6)
*Prior to departure, you must **meet with your Practicum Director, Course Instructor, or Academic Advisor** depending on the academic component of your travels, to discuss your plans.*
- If you will be abroad for more than one semester, register for continuous enrollment (pg. 6)
- Ensure your financial aid is in place, if applicable (pg. 9)
- Apply for or update your passport, if necessary (pg. 11)
At least two months before departure
- Apply for a visa, if necessary (pg. 12)
Time frame varies depending on the country, it may be anywhere from hours to weeks or months
- Check on your existing travel health insurance coverage while abroad and/or enroll in a travel health insurance plan (pg. 13)
- Record your travel plans with GW's International SOS Assistance Program (pg. 14)
- Obtain an International Student Identity Card (ISIC) (pg. 15)
This is not required by GW; however, many students may find this card to be beneficial
- Clear your account of all holds (pg. 15)
- Obtain necessary immunizations (pg. 16)
Time frame varies depending on the inoculation. Some may be obtained right before departure while others require a series of inoculations that may span several months.
- Register with the U.S. Department of State (pg. 17)
You should do this prior to departure on their website.
- Culturally prepare for your experience (pg. 19)

(5) Academic Credit¹

Practicum and Other Course Requirements

Prior to departure, you **must** ensure that you have fulfilled the planning requirements for your practicum and/or other course(s). For example, the practicum planning process requires meetings with your departmental Practicum Director and you will need to plan in advance for the forms which will need to be completed before leaving the country.

In addition, you may need to speak with your program director, course instructor(s) and academic advisor for information related to academic credit and course(s).

Register for your practicum or other coursework to be conducted abroad well in advance of the beginning of the semester in which you will be abroad. This will give you time to check your registration status and clear up any inconsistencies prior to your departure and the semester.

Maintaining Enrollment While Abroad

(1) Students who will be abroad for two semesters:

If you will be abroad for two semesters, you **must** petition for a leave of absence for the period while you are abroad. This requires that you submit the *SPHHS Graduate Petition*. This form is available online from the SPHHS website (<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/>) under Student Resources then Forms.

Once completed, turn this form into:

Student Records
Ross 222
Fax: (202) 994-7893

This petition usually takes 2-3 days to be approved.

Prior to departure, you **must**:

- Designate a proxy (e.g. parent) to register in your place for a leave of absence while you are abroad. This process is similar to regular class registration.
 1. Provide the course number for “Leave of Absence” to your proxy.
 2. Your proxy will need to use the *Registration Transaction Form (RTF)* available online from the SPHHS website (<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/>). Click on Student Resources then Forms.

1 This guidebook was created for SPHHS Graduate Students. If you are an undergraduate student, please refer to the Study Abroad Office for applicable information, especially in regards to academic credit for study abroad.

3. The RTF must be faxed to the Office of the Registrar, during registration, in order to be processed:

Office of the Registrar
Rice Hall, Suite 101
2121 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052
(202) 994-4900

The RTF form usually takes 3-4 days to be approved.

(2) Master's International Program and Students who will be abroad for three or more semesters:

If you will be abroad for three or more semesters, you **must** petition for continuous enrollment for the semesters you are abroad. This requires that you submit the *SPHHS Graduate Petition*. This form is available online from the SPHHS website (<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/>) under Student Resources then Forms.

Once completed, turn this form into:

Student Records
Ross 222
Fax: (202) 994-7893

This petition usually takes 2-3 days to be approved.

Prior to departure, you **must**:

- Designate a proxy (e.g. parent) to register in your place for continuous enrollment for **every** semester that you are abroad. This process is similar to regular class registration. The cost is \$35 per semester to maintain continuous enrollment.
 1. Provide the course number for "Continuous Enrollment" to your proxy.
 2. Your designee will need to use the *Registration Transaction Form (RTF)* available online from the SPHHS website (<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/>). Click on Student Resources then Forms.
 3. The RTF must be faxed to the Office of the Registrar, during registration, in order to be processed:

Office of the Registrar
Rice Hall, Suite 101
2121 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052
(202) 994-4900

The RTF form usually takes 3-4 days to be approved.

Institutional Review Board

If you will be undergoing the IRB process for research that will be conducted while you are abroad, you should allow plenty of time for this process prior to departure. The Office of Human Research suggests *submitting materials 3 months ahead* of when the research is planned to begin.

If you have questions about this process, contact:

Office of Human Research
Ross Hall, Suite 613
(202) 994-2715
ohrib@gwumc.edu
Hours: M-F 8:30AM – 5:30PM

Participation Agreement and Consent and Acknowledgment of Risk and Release

The Participation Agreement outlines the behavioral and academic responsibilities expected of you while abroad, as well as the risks that may be involved in going abroad.

This form *must* be submitted to:

Student Records
Ross 222
Fax: (202) 994-7893

at the *same time that you submit your planning materials for the practicum*. This form is available online from the SPHHS website (<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/>). Click on Student Resources then Forms.

(6) Financial Assistance

You will most likely need personal guidance to manage your account. ***Well in advance*** of your departure, you should visit the financial aid office and speak with a financial aid counselor directly:

Office of Student Financial Assistance
Rice Hall, Suite 310
2121 I Street, NW
Washington, DC 20052
(202) 994-6620 or (800) 222-6242

Financial aid is based upon the total number of credit hours for which you register in a given semester. You will only be eligible to receive institutional and federal aid if you are a half-time or full-time student. Half-time status requires being registered for 5-8 credit hours; if you are registered for 9 credit hours or more you are considered full-time.

If you are registered for fewer than the requisite number of credit hours and you are working on your special project, dissertation, residency, internship, or practicum, or are preparing for a comprehensive exam, you may still qualify for half-time or full-time status. Thus, ***you will be able to receive financial aid even if you are not registered for 5 or more credits.*** The *Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Request for Graduate Students* form is included at the end of this handbook as well as available through the SPHHS website (<http://www.gwumc.edu/sphhs/studentres/forms/>).

This form is not to be used if you are an international student on an F or J visa. Please visit the International Services Office website for the correct form.

The *Half-Time/Full-Time Certification Request for Graduate Students* form requires signoff by the SPHHS Dean's Office. ***Submit this form to the SPHHS Office of Student Records (Ross 222) at least three business days prior to the beginning of the semester*** during which you are in need of aid. The Office of Student Records will obtain Dean's signature and bring the form to the Office of the Registrar for processing.

This form cannot be processed until the first day of classes and will ***require 1-3 business days to process*** in the Office of the Registrar.

After this form is processed, your record will be updated for the Office of Student Financial Assistance. At that time, funds will be posted to your account after approximately one business day.

PLEASE NOTE: Some loans, such as the Federal Stafford Loan must be returned to the government if they have not been claimed three days after the start of classes. Thus, it is

extremely important to complete your form and to submit it to the Office of the Registrar on time. If a loan is returned it may be reissued, however, the time frame for this is variable.

Alternative Education Loans

Alternative Education Loans are private, credit-based consumer loans offered by independent lending agencies. They can be used for any education-related purpose, including transportation. These may help you to bridge the gap in needed funds for traveling abroad. The Office of Student Financial Assistance recommends the following alternative education lenders.

Education Finance Partners

Education Finance Partners was established in 2003 and offer alternative education loans from \$1,000 up to the annual cost of education for students and parents. This loan currently has the lowest interest rate nationwide.

(866) 308-1071
<http://www.educationfinancepartners.com/>

TERI (The Education Resources Institute, Inc.) Loan

TERI has been working with financial aid professionals on issues related to education planning and finance for over 20 years. TERI offers benefits including generous loan limits, multiple repayment options, and competitive rates.

(800) 255-8374
<http://www.teri.org/>

Power of Attorney

The George Washington University recommends that all financial assistance students arrange for a power of attorney while they are out of the country. Some instances when a power of attorney may be necessary are:

- To sign a Stafford loan check.
- To handle issues related to deposit of financial assistance checks or refunds.
- To access information in your student account and/or financial assistance files.

The *Power of Attorney* form is included in this guidebook. If you wish to assign a power of attorney, you should notify the Office of Student Financial Assistance.

Rice Hall, Suite 310
2121 I Street, NW
(202) 994-6620 or (800) 222-6242

(7) U.S. Passports

If you are a U.S. citizen and are leaving the country, you must have a valid U.S. passport. All forms, for a new passport or a renewal, can be obtained online through the U.S. Department of State's website (<http://travel.state.gov/>). Click on the Passport link.

In addition, forms can be obtained at any post office; however, only specific sites can process them. You can view the entire list of passport acceptance facilities on the U.S. Department of State's website (<http://iafdb.travel.state.gov/>).

The cost for a new adult passport is \$97 and the cost for an adult passport renewal is \$67.

It is recommended that you ***apply at least two months in advance***. If you need to obtain a passport sooner than that, you may opt for the expedited service (which takes two weeks). There is an additional fee of \$60 for this service. If you will travel within 14 days and have not yet applied for a passport or renewed your old one, you must make an appointment at the Washington DC Passport Agency to apply. It is located at:

Washington DC Passport Agency
1111 19th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20522-1705

Appointments can ***only*** be made by calling (202) 647-0518 or (877) 487-2778.

Passports are valid for ten years. After receiving your passport, be sure to sign it in ink; otherwise it will not be valid. Use a pencil to fill in the emergency contact information so that information can be readily updated.

Make several photocopies of your passport (the first two pages). Leave some with your family and bring some with you during your travels.

If you have additional questions, please call the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at (877) 4USA-PPT. Operators are available 8:00am – 8:00pm EST, Monday through Friday.

In order to obtain a passport, you ***must*** submit the following:

1. A completed passport application
2. Proof of U.S. citizenship (e.g. birth certificate, naturalization certificate, or previous U.S. passport). ***Only*** original copies will be accepted!
3. Two recent photographs, measuring 2x2 inches. Photos taken in photo booths are NOT acceptable.
4. Identification which provides a picture, physical description, and your signature (e.g. driver's license). A student ID card is not acceptable.
5. The passport fee. Only a check or money order payable to "Passport Services" will be accepted. Be sure your passport is valid for at least six months after your planned return to the U.S.

(8) Non-U.S. Passport Holders

If you have a passport from a country outside of the United States, you must contact the embassy or consulate of your passport country and the embassy or consulate of your destination country to determine any needed documentation for entry, exit, and reentry into the United States.

Requirements for non-U.S. citizens vary greatly both from U.S. citizens and those with passports from other countries.

Please do not assume that requirements will be the same for all passports regardless of the country. Failure to obtain proper documentation can result in deportation, fines, and/or jailing.

(9) Visas

Many countries require visitors to obtain a visa before entering the country. Several months before you plan to depart, contact the consulate for the specific country you plan to visit to find out if a visa is required (http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/brochures/brochures_1229.html).

The time for processing can take *anywhere from several hours to weeks or months*. Be sure to allow plenty of time for processing.

There are various types of visas as well as restrictions (e.g. no employment) and some visas have an associated cost.

Furthermore, if you have a layover or stopover in another country you may be required to get a transit visa during this time. Contact the embassy or consulate of the country where the layover or stopover will take place.

Travisa (www.travisa.com) is a useful resource for U.S. Passport holders to help understand their visa needs as well as to assist in obtaining visas for various countries.

(10) Insurance

Health Insurance – General

Check with your current health insurance plan to determine whether you have coverage for travel outside of the U.S. Many plans may have the same or similar coverage overseas; however, it is important to identify what the policy does and does not cover, how to file a claim, and any gaps or lack of services before you begin your travel.

Usually, you will be responsible for paying all fees at the time of your visit. Requests for reimbursement for medical care received while abroad are usually submitted to your existing health insurance provider or a travel health insurance provider upon return to your home, however this varies depending on the plan.

Supplemental Insurance Providers

If you do not have health insurance or coverage abroad, you should contact a personal line insurance agent to inquire about the various coverage options available in the market. The following are supplemental insurance providers. GW does not endorse any specific insurance plan, those plans below are provided for your information and reference. You should contact the policy provider directly for additional information.

Champion Insurance Advantage, Ltd.
(800) 643-4675
<http://www.champion-ins.com>

Cultural Insurance Services International
(800) 303-8120
<http://www.culturalinsurance.com>

Health Insurance for U.S. Students Studying Abroad
(410) 583-2595
<http://www.studyabroadinsurance.com/GlobalStudyAbroad/index.html>

HTH Worldwide Insurance Service
(800) 242-4178
<http://www.hthstudents.com/index.cfm>

STA Travel Insurance (Plan A w/ Medical Coverage)
(800) 797-2297
<http://www.statravel.com>

Worldwide Assistance
(800) 821-2828
www.worldwideassistance.com

Health Insurance – GW Student Health Insurance

If you have GW's Student Health Insurance with The Chickering Group, which is underwritten by an Aetna, then the coverage while you are abroad is the same as if you are in the U.S. with a few exceptions.

There is no need for a referral when you are out of the country. You must pay for all services received while abroad and will need to submit a claim for reimbursement upon your return home. The reimbursement will be made as an out of network rate. Please contact The Chickering Group directly if you have questions as to this change in rates. They can be reached at (617) 218-8400 or (800) 213-0579.

This policy also includes coverage for emergency travel assistance. You may visit their website to see a complete listing of this coverage and information on how to access it abroad (http://www.chickering.com/stu_conn/travel_assistance.aspx).

Evacuation Services: Medical Emergencies and Political Threats

Registration with International SOS is required of all students who study abroad at the university.

GW's International SOS program provides coverage for medical and political evacuation and for medical repatriation. Medical evacuation and repatriation applies if you are unable to receive care in the local area and will need transport, with medical staff assistance, to facilities that can better address your needs. Political evacuation coverage applies if you are caught in an area that has become dangerous due to a political situation.

The coverage provides worldwide evacuation services, including full-scale evacuation by private air ambulance, and telephone advice and referrals. International SOS is ***not health insurance*** – it covers transport costs, not medical care costs.

If you are traveling abroad as part of your coursework, then it is considered University-related travel. As such, you are covered free of charge by the International SOS program. If you want to extend your stay for personal travel, you may purchase an extension to the coverage at a reduced rate, but at your own expense.

To access SOS coverage while traveling or studying abroad, the Office of Risk Management (ORM) requires general information concerning your travel plans. Prior to departure, you ***must*** login to the Assistance Abroad Portal and fill out your Personal Travel Record at the following website: <http://www.gwu.edu/~riskmgnt/travelinsurance.cfm>.

International SOS will not assist or arrange for evacuations if you do not record your travel prior to departure. A copy of your registration must be submitted to your Practicum Director.

International Student Identity Card (ISIC) Card

The ISIC card provides minimal coverage for emergency evacuation, health related expenses, and travel delays while traveling abroad. The insurance benefits summary can be found in the Travel Insurance section on the ISIC website (www.myisic.com) under the heading Travel.

In addition, the ISIC card gives you access to over 33,000 discounts in over 100 countries, as well as discount student airfares, travel products, international recognition of your student status, and a 24-hour Help Line emergency service. The emergency line is +1 (713) 267-2525.

The card is valid for one year.

You may apply for the card in-person at the STA Travel office. You must bring a copy of your GWorld card and a passport-sized photo. You may bring this photo with you or your picture can be taken at the office for an additional \$3. The card is \$22.

STA Travel
Marvin Center, Ground Floor (Basement)
800 21st Street, NW
(202) 994-7800

(11) Account Holds

Check any holds on your account through the GWEB system. It is important to ensure that there are no holds on your account, especially if you plan to register for the next semester while you are abroad. You are responsible for clearing your account of any holds (e.g., student accounts balance of \$500 or more, advising holds). If you need further assistance, contact:

Office of Student Accounts
Academic Center, Room T-102
801 22nd Street, NW
(202) 994-7350

(12) Immunizations

It is *extremely important* that you receive all required vaccinations prior to departure. In some instances, entry requirements are such that you cannot gain entry without documentation of certain vaccinations (e.g. yellow fever). Discuss all immunizations, required and recommended, with your healthcare provider.

To find out what vaccinations are required and recommended, visit the CDC's Traveler's Health website (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>) for more information. The link Destinations provides specific information on all regions of the world.

Some immunizations may be obtained right before departure while others require a series of inoculations that can span multiple months. It is important to visit CDC's website early in your planning process.

GW's Student Health Service (SHS) provides some travel inoculations. It is highly recommended that you bring a copy of your previous immunizations, including dates when they were received.

A detachable, yellow *International Certificate of Vaccination* card is provided with your passport. This is an effective means of tracking your immunizations and personal health history. Some countries require this certificate as proof of a vaccination prior to entering the country (e.g. yellow fever). This card is also available from the World Health Organization: (202) 861-3200.

Speak with a clinician prior to your appointment to discuss the necessary immunizations for your destination country.

Student Health Service
2141 K Street, NW Suite 501
(202) 994-6827

Walk-in hours for immunizations are:

Tuesdays and Wednesdays: 9AM – 1PM and 2 – 4PM

A listing of inoculation hours and costs is available on SHS' website (<http://gwired.gwu.edu/shs>) under Immunization Requirement and Vaccine Hours & Costs.

Student Health Service does not administer the Yellow Fever and Rabies vaccinations. They recommend that you contact the Traveler's Health Clinic to have your questions answered or to schedule an appointment.

Traveler's Health Clinic
2141 K Street, NW Suite 408
(202) 466-8109

(13) U.S. Department of State Registration

Prior to departure, you should register your trip with the U.S. embassy or consulate in the destination country. This registration is a free service provided by the U.S. Government to ensure that U.S. citizens traveling to, or living in, a foreign country can gain assistance from the Department of State in the case of an emergency.

To register, go to: <http://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/>. Even though you can register prior to departure, it is important to visit the U.S. embassy or consulate upon arrival.

If your family needs to reach you in case of an emergency, they can pass a message to you through the Office of Overseas Citizens Services by calling (202) 647-5225.

(14) Travel Recommendations

Reconfirm all your airline reservations at least 72 hours prior to departure.

If you have connecting flights, be sure to allow plenty of time to make your connection. A minimum of three hours between flights is recommended. Refer to the section on *Visas*, for more information on transit visa requirements. You may require one even if you only have a layover or stopover.

Jet lag may be something you experience during the first few days after you arrive. Feelings of fatigue, disorientation, depression, and/or homesickness are common and these symptoms are completely normal. It may take several days before you adjust to the new time zone and surroundings. Try to relax and take it easy during the first few days. Avoid alcohol and drink plenty of *safe* water to help ease the effects.

Traveling with Medications

Bring legible copies of any medical prescriptions you are taking. Your health care provider should also include a signed and dated statement indicating the major health problems and dosage of such medications to provide to authorities in case of an emergency or if you need this documentation when entering the country.

All medications and medical supplies should be carried in original labeled containers to facilitate admission and inspection at foreign ports of entry.

Suggested Packing List

Below are some suggested items that you may find helpful to bring . . .

- Alarm clock (battery operated)
- Batteries
- Binoculars
- Camera
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Contraceptives/Condoms
- Copy of driver's license, passport, and credit card information (in case they get lost or stolen)
- Daypack/backpack
- Decongestant products (for colds/flu)
- Film (stock up...film can be VERY expensive overseas)
- Flashlight and batteries
- First Aid Kit: antibacterial ointment, anti-diarrhea and upset stomach remedies, band-aids, pain relievers, etc.
- Insect repellent
- Journal
- Luggage locks
- Reading materials
- Sewing kit
- Sunscreen
- Toiletries
- Towel
- Travel pouch (to hold money, credit cards, and traveler's checks)
- Water bottle
- Ziploc bags

Also, check out the *What to Pack (on a Trip of any Length)* as it includes a list of many more suggestions. This is included at the end of this handbook.

(15) Cultural Preparation

Below is a list of basic questions about your host country and culture. This list is not all-inclusive and you may have more questions that you want answered as you go through these. We strongly encourage you to investigate as many of these topics as you can. You will find this to be extremely beneficial when you arrive in-country.

1. How do people organize their daily activities? What is the normal meal schedule? Is there a daytime rest period?
2. What kinds of health services are available? Where are they located?
3. What is the normal work schedule? Is it important to be on time?
4. What foods are most popular and how are they prepared? Who sits down together for meals? Who is served first?
5. What things are taboo in this society?
6. Is the price asked for merchandise fixed or are the customers expected to bargain? How is the bargaining conducted?
7. What is the predominate religion? Is it a state religion? Are they tolerant of other religions?
8. Are other languages spoken besides the dominant language?
9. What is your host country's attitude toward trash? The environment? Conservation of resources?
10. What are the important holidays? How is each observed?
11. What kind of local transportation is available?
12. What is the history of the relationship between this country and the United States?

YOU'VE ARRIVED!

(16) U.S. Embassy Registration

Once you arrive in-country, it is important to register with the U.S. embassy. Bring your passport with you to gain entrance into the embassy.

If your passport becomes lost or stolen, there will be evidence for a replacement readily on file. Embassies will either photocopy your passport or store necessary information from the passport in a database (e.g. passport number).

PLEASE NOTE: Some countries require non-citizens to carry their passport or other documents, such as a visa, on them at all times. Sometimes a photocopy can suffice. Check with the embassy or consulate for more information on what items you should carry.

(17) Emergencies Abroad

For emergencies abroad, there are several resources to assist you. You may use both the public services of The American Citizens Service (ACS) or International SOS (refer to the *Evacuation Services: Medical Emergencies and Political Threats* section of this guidebook).

The American Citizens Service (ACS)

The ACS is an agency within each U.S. Embassy that serves to help Americans abroad in the following situations:

- *Passport replacements:* you can have your passport replaced usually within 24 hours. This can be accomplished even faster if you have a photocopy of your original passport and extra passport photos. Always be sure to have photocopies of the first two pages of your passport both with you and at home so that they can be faxed to you in case of an emergency.
- *Financial assistance:* ACS can help transfer funds abroad in the event of an emergency.
- *Medical assistance:* ACS can provide information on local doctors, dentists, mental health specialists, hospitals and clinics.
- *Serious illness/injury:* ACS can inform your family if you are seriously injured or are seriously ill; they may also assist in arranging your return (at your expense) to the United States.
- *Death:* ACS can notify next-of-kin and assist with burial or return of remains.
- *Disaster/evacuation:* ACS can provide a wide array of services in the event of a natural disaster or civil unrest, including help with evacuation.

- *Arrest*: Contact the ACS immediately if you are arrested overseas. It **cannot** have you released, but it can provide a list of local lawyers you may contact. A consular official will also visit you in jail and inform you about the laws and contact your family.

For more information, contact the U.S. Department of State at (202) 647-5225 or visit their website at <http://travel.state.gov>.

In an emergency situation after hours, call (202) 647-4000 and ask for the Duty Officer.

(18) Changes in Information

Any changes in your contact information while abroad (e.g., address, phone, e-mail) **must** be communicated to your Practicum Director immediately.

NOW THAT YOU'RE BACK

Upon your return, you may experience a different form of culture shock. It is normal to feel a little different when you come back; you will have new perspectives about your life and surroundings in the U.S. This is a great time for reflection on what you have just experienced. Some questions you may want to consider are:

- What was the most important thing you learned professionally while abroad?
- What was the most important thing you learned about yourself while abroad?
- Did your personal goals change while abroad?
- How did your expectations differ from your actual experiences?

(19) On-Campus Resources

Various offices on-campus are here to assist with any questions or concerns you may have now that you are back and can provide suggestions on how to make it through this transitional period.

International Medicine Programs
Ross Hall, Suite 708
2300 I Street, NW
(202) 994-2796

Office for Study Abroad
812 20th Street, NW
(202) 994-1649

Student Health Service
2141 K Street, NW Suite 501
(202) 994-6827

University Counseling Center
2033 K Street, NW Suite 330
(202) 994-5300