



**USC** University of  
Southern California

### **Student Development Programs**

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# Study Abroad Pre-Departure Guide for Spring Admits

2019





Each fall, more than 150 USC spring admits decide to venture abroad to study at The American University of Paris; John Cabot University in Rome, Italy; Richmond, the American International University in London; or Franklin University in Lugano, Switzerland.

This booklet will serve as a reference as you prepare for your semester abroad. It answers many commonly asked questions and provides practical tips for traveling and studying overseas. We encourage you to share this information with your family and keep this with you during your travels.

Study abroad can be transformative and will inevitably shape your USC experience. With proper planning, you will be able to spare yourself needless worry and fully appreciate this opportunity.

We wish you the best in this new adventure and look forward to working with you.



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## Student Responsibilities

In study abroad, as in other settings, participants can considerably affect their own well-being, health and safety through the decisions they make before and during the program — and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

### **PARTICIPANTS SHOULD:**

- Read and carefully consider all materials issued by the study abroad school that relate to safety, health, legal, environmental, political, cultural and religious conditions in host countries.
- Consider their health and other personal circumstances when applying for or accepting a place in a study abroad school program.
- Plan for a safe and healthy study abroad experience by sharing accurate information about physical and mental health issues as necessary with their study abroad school.
- Assume responsibility for all the elements necessary for their personal preparation for the program and participate fully in orientation programs at study abroad schools.
- Obtain and maintain appropriate insurance coverage and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
- Inform parents/guardians/families and any others who may need to know about their participation in the study abroad program. Provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
- Be sensitive to local customs and cultural norms in the host country.
- Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of conduct and emergency procedures of the program. Obey the laws of the host country.
- Be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to staff at the study abroad school or other appropriate individuals.
- Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner.
- Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.
- Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining emergency health and law enforcement services in the host country.
- Follow the study abroad school policies for keeping faculty and staff informed of students' whereabouts and well-being.





## Parent Responsibilities

- Be aware that studying abroad will be a time of great independence and personal growth for your student, in part as a result of assuming some important responsibilities.
- Discuss with your student any of his or her travel plans and activities that may be independent of the study abroad program.
- Keep in touch with your student. But keep in mind that local conditions may prevent him or her from immediately responding to you.
- Be aware that your student, rather than the study abroad school, may most appropriately provide some information.
- Remember time differences when calling or texting your student.



# Academic Expectations

## YOUR STATUS AT USC

While USC is pleased to facilitate study abroad for spring admits, we expect that your chosen study abroad institution will play the primary role in assuring your success in the fall. Each of these universities is an independent institution with its own policies, rules and expectations. Participants in these programs do not officially become USC students until they enroll in spring-semester classes.

## ATTENDANCE POLICIES

You are expected to adhere to the existing attendance policy set forth by your program. In most cases, the attendance policy will be strict. Be prepared to attend classes consistently.

## SELECTING COURSEWORK

In general, your goal should be to make progress toward USC General Education and Lower Division Writing requirements, if applicable coursework is available at your institution.

USC maintains updated Articulation Histories with study abroad schools at <https://arr.usc.edu/services/articulation/histories.html>. Part I lists classes that satisfy USC General Education requirements. Part II displays which courses transfer as specific USC classes, and Part III shows you all classes that will transfer for credit.

As you plan for General Education coursework, you may find several courses unique to the study abroad institution. You are encouraged to explore intellectual pursuits during your studies abroad, as time allows.

It is possible to satisfy some General Education requirements through AP, IB or A-Level exams. To see which categories can be fulfilled by exam credit, visit [arr.usc.edu/transferecredit](https://arr.usc.edu/transferecredit) and click on the Exam Credit link.

## TRANSCRIPTS AND GRADES

At USC, students transferring coursework from outside institutions will have two separate GPAs: a transfer GPA and a USC GPA. USC will keep these separate until it is time to determine academic honors upon graduation.

Your USC transcript will not list actual course grades, but will show the units attempted, units earned, grade points and transfer GPA. If you apply to graduate school, medical school or law school later on, the institutions to which you apply may request a transcript directly from the study abroad school.

Study abroad schools will automatically send USC your official transcripts at the end of the semester.





# Housing Accommodations at Study Abroad Schools

## **PARIS**

The American University of Paris contracts with a third party to provide housing accommodations to students in apartments throughout the city. Most students have a 30-minute, door-to-door commute from their apartments to AUP, via walking and public transportation. Apartments include cooking, serving and eating utensils; bed and bath linens; as well as a washing machine.

## **ROME**

John Cabot University houses USC spring admits in the central and historic Trastevere neighborhood, located within walking distance from the university. Shared apartments have fully equipped kitchens, bed and bath linens and a washing machine. Amenities also include WiFi and 24-hour security. On-call JCU staff and a community of Resident Assistants provide support for students during their stay at JCU. Although not required, meal plans are available for purchase.



## **LONDON**

Richmond, the American International University in London, provides dormitory accommodations. Students live in residence halls in the main building or in surrounding buildings on campus. Room and board includes 18 meals per week.

## **LUGANO**

Franklin University Switzerland offers eight residence halls in a suburban environment around the campus. Study abroad students usually live in triples, doubles or split-double apartments. Although all residence halls have kitchens, and students often cook some of their own meals, Franklin has two dining halls on campus with two to three meals served daily, depending on the day of the week or the break schedule. Each residence hall includes laundry facilities.

## **TRANSITIONING TO USC HOUSING**

Applications for USC housing will be accepted starting at 9:00 a.m. on July 1, 2019. Spring admits who complete their applications in a timely manner are guaranteed placement in USC housing, although not always in freshman buildings. USC Housing notifies students of their assignments in early December.



# Pre-Travel Requirements

## PASSPORTS

If you do not have a current passport that will be valid for six months after the end of your program, you should apply for a new passport immediately. Details can be found at [travel.state.gov/passport](https://travel.state.gov/passport). Allow four to six weeks for delivery.

You will need the following when turning in your application:

- An official copy of your birth certificate OR expired passport, OR a certified copy of your naturalization or citizenship papers. If you do not have a birth certificate with the official seal, write to the county clerk in your county of birth to obtain one.
- A photo I.D. with signature. Examples include a driver's license, California I.D., or military I.D.
- Two identical passport photos, front view, 2" x 2" square, with a white background.
- A processing fee of \$135 for new applications and \$110.00 for renewal. Add \$60.00 to expedite the service. Payment must be made by personal check or exact cash.



## VISAS

Granted by the authorities of your host country, a visa represents official permission for you to enter and remain in that country for a certain amount of time. It usually takes the form of a stamp or sticker placed in your passport.

The documentation and fees required to obtain a visa vary greatly from country to country, and even between different consulates of the same country. Consult your host country's embassy and/or consular website for details and requirements.



Some countries will require a signed medical form, a letter from a physician or certain immunizations. Some require a tax return, bank statements or even background checks.

Some countries will require you to apply as far as three months in advance. Most consulates will keep your passport while they are processing your visa application and may even prohibit you from visiting the country during the visa process. This may force you to alter pre-program overseas travel plans. Please note that for some visas you need to apply in person at the nearest consulate in the U.S. The study abroad school will also advise you on the visa process.

**Note:** Although the United Kingdom does **not** require U.S. citizens to obtain a visa, you will need special documentation to stay there as a student.

***It is ultimately the student's responsibility to obtain the visa. Be sure to follow all the procedures and requirements as outlined by your consulate or embassy.***

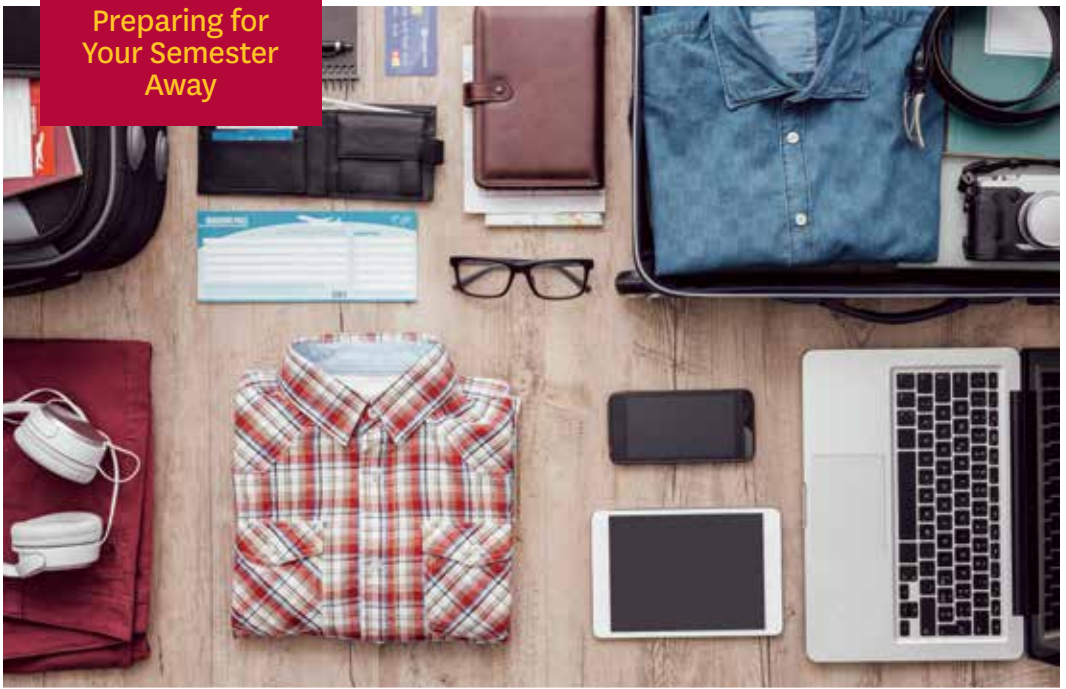
### **VISAS FOR NON-U.S. CITIZENS**

If you are not a U.S. citizen, application procedures will differ from those for U.S. citizens. You should consult the nearest consulate of the country of your citizenship and the nearest consulate of the country where you plan to study. It is important to initiate this process as soon as possible so that you can assemble the proper documents and allow adequate time for lengthy processing. Non-U.S. citizens should also determine if they will need a transit visa for any countries they will travel through on the way to their host country, and if they will need visas to travel to other countries during the semester.

### **INSURANCE**

Your current insurance plan may or may not be valid in the country of your study abroad school. Study abroad schools have varying policies and recommendations regarding health insurance. Check with them for more information about obtaining a valid insurance plan.

## Preparing for Your Semester Away



# Packing for a Semester Abroad



Your study abroad school will provide a suggested packing list specific to your program, but the best advice is to travel light. Do not bring more luggage than you can comfortably carry and/or roll by yourself.

You may find yourself having to walk long distances with your bags.

We also strongly encourage you to:

- Keep two copies of important documents: one for yourself as you travel and one for your family as a backup.
- Pack important medications and documents in your carry-on luggage.
- Check with your airline for carry-on and checked baggage regulations and fees. Baggage allowances may differ for international flights to and from the U.S. and flights between and within other countries. Rules also vary from airline to airline.

## COMMUNICATION

Email is USC's official form of communication with students and will be the easiest, most efficient way to contact us during the fall. Be sure to check your USC email regularly while abroad. Keep in mind the time difference when emailing USC staff.

We encourage you to check in with your family on a regular basis, especially if you travel outside of your host country.

## EMBASSY INFORMATION

We recommend that you keep copies of U.S. Embassy information with you at all times:

### *France*

**U.S. Embassy Paris**  
2 avenue Gabriel  
75008 Paris, France  
Phone: [33] (1)43122222  
Fax: [33] (1)42669783  
<https://fr.usembassy.gov>

### *United Kingdom*

**U.S. Embassy London**  
24 Grosvenor Square  
London, W1A 2LQ  
United Kingdom  
Phone: [44] (0)20 7499-9000  
<https://uk.usembassy.gov>

### *Italy*

**U.S. Embassy Rome**  
via Vittorio Veneto 121  
00187 Roma  
Phone: (+39) 06.46741  
<https://it.usembassy.gov>

### *Switzerland*

**U.S. Embassy Bern**  
Sulgeneckstrasse 19  
CH-3007 Bern, Switzerland  
Tel: 031 357 70 11  
Fax: 031 357 73 20  
<https://ch.usembassy.gov>

## CELL PHONES

Many students opt to purchase cell phones overseas and buy minutes on a prepaid basis, as it is usually the cheapest and simplest option. If you bring your own cell phone, you can usually purchase a new SIM card overseas. Using your phone's Internet service while roaming can be costly. Check with your provider about international service fees. Consult with your study abroad school to see what their study abroad students usually do to ensure cell phone service.

## Preparing for Your Semester Away

### **MONEY AND BANKING**

We suggest that, if possible, you have multiple banking or funding options available to you in case you encounter problems. You should also determine the best way to transfer money in your host country.

ATM/debit cards and credit cards are the most common ways to access funds. Make arrangements with your bank for an ATM card that you can use overseas. Find out what fees they charge for international transactions and withdrawals. Ask your bank if they have a partner institution in your host country that will not charge ATM fees.

We strongly suggest that you bring a credit card with you overseas for emergencies, and to help secure accommodations, flights and other services. Credit cards typically offer the most favorable exchange rates.

In general, Visa and MasterCard are the most widely used overseas.

Major credit card companies charge currency conversion service fees, so ask your credit card company about their fees. Some credit cards, such as airline or hotel rewards cards, waive foreign transaction fees.

Check your statements regularly and find out if your card offers fraud protection. Before going abroad, contact your bank or credit card company to let them know of your overseas travel plans, including the countries you plan to visit and the duration of your stay. This will allow them to place a travel alert on your account so that your card use overseas is not mistaken for identity theft or fraud. Without the travel alert, they may block all transactions if they detect suspicious card activity.



## CALENDAR AND TIMELINE

Study abroad schools follow a semester calendar.

Each school offers an orientation program that ranges from several days to an entire week before the first day of classes, either in late August or early September. Finals will end in early to mid-December. Refer to your study abroad school's academic calendar for specific dates.

USC's Europe Orientation will take place in November. We strongly encourage you to attend this program rather than an On-Campus Orientation event in January. You will have the opportunity to familiarize yourself with the USC campus during Welcome Week, which will begin the week before the first day of classes.



## HOW TO CONTACT US

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