



**Summer  
Study Abroad  
2010**

**2010**

**SUMMER  
STUDY  
ABROAD**

**ORIENTATION &  
SAFETY AUDIT  
HANDBOOK**



**RICHMOND**  
School of Continuing Studies™

# Student Safety Abroad

## Why this manual?

This manual is not a “short version” of the Director’s Handbook. Your handbook is your primary source of information and advice concerning your SSA leadership role. What you will find here is an outline of some key safety issues and guidelines of how to conduct a **safety audit** for your program. A safety audit involves you thinking about all aspects of your trip, travel, accommodation, class room activities, social activities, living environment and relationships, and considering where potential hazards might exist. You then need to address these issues directly with the students. Your primary responsibility is to be informed about possible dangers and hazards and then make sure the students are well enough informed to allow them to make safe independent decisions. Especially “after hours”.

The backbone of this manual are the links to the SAEFTI audit checklist. As many of these are in hypertext format, this document is probably best used as an online resource to help you plan **prior to departure**.

## Guidelines for Orientation and Safety Audit

It is a primary role of the summer study abroad director to ensure the safety of students. There is nowhere in the world, even at home in the United States, where we can guarantee a completely safe environment. It is impossible for anyone to predict the future or give guarantees about the course of world events, but while certain risks are inherent in any kind of travel, domestic or international, the University of Richmond must strive to plan and implement safe study abroad programs.

Study abroad programs include international study programs designed and implemented by academic departments for groups of students, or for individual students, to go to foreign countries under the advice of a UR faculty member or academic department to pursue UR academic credit. Academic departments and/or individual faculty members should also be aware of the liability they assume, for themselves and for the institution, by operating study abroad programs.

**The University of Richmond School of Continuing Studies acknowledges the content of this manual is based on published advice provided by the SAFETI Clearing house.**

# Guidelines to Follow for Study Abroad

## Faculty/Administrative Responsibilities

1. Advise students about how to obtain Passports and Visas for travel.

All participants in UR study abroad programs must hold valid passports. Please advise the student that he/she is responsible for obtaining his/her passport and visa. U.S. citizens may apply for passports at most U.S. Post Offices. The 2010 price of a U.S. passport is \$120 (\$95 application fee and \$25 execution fee). If the student already has a passport, have him/her make sure that it is valid for at least six months beyond his/her planned return from the stay abroad. If necessary, advise students to renew his/her passport.

Visas are immigration documents that give permission to enter a country for a specific purpose and for a specified period of time. If the student must obtain a student visa, he/she may apply for the visa at the local consulate in Washington for the country he/she is going to. As a faculty adviser, please share these instructions for obtaining a visa:

- Call the consulate to inquire about the procedures that must be followed to obtain a visa.
- Inform the consular official of your nationality (where your passport is from); there may be different requirements for obtaining a visa based on your nationality.
- To obtain a visa, you usually need to bring your passport and your Letter of Invitation from the host university, along with the visa application. Some countries require additional documentation to issue a visa (health record, birth certificate, etc.). That is why it is very important for you to call ahead to find out exactly what you need to bring with you when you apply for the visa.
- It is recommended that you apply for the visa at least 3-4 weeks prior to your date of departure. Sometimes consulates can “rush” the process and issue visas within 48 hours. However, there may be an extra charge for “rush” service. Visa prices vary. Check with a consular official regarding the cost of the visa.
- Remember to ask for office hours, as well as directions when you call the consulate.

2. Provide Airline/Transportation information.

3. Provide Arrival information.
4. Discuss physical or mental impediments that could hamper the ability for the student to fully participate in the program.
5. Describe what constitutes acceptable behavior and conduct while in the program, and what the consequences are should students violate these standards.

During a student's participation in any UR study abroad program, he/she is responsible not only for his/her own personal conduct, but also for how his/her conduct reflects on UR, the State of Virginia, and the United States of America. The student is, in essence, an "ambassador" of Virginia throughout his/her stay. The student should therefore learn the rules of appropriate conduct in the host country and abide by them.

As the faculty adviser, discuss these examples of some unacceptable behaviors in any country with the student. These behaviors include: cheating or plagiarism in academic work; forgery or misuse of legal documents; physical abuse of property; sale or possession of illegal drugs; engaging in lewd behavior; failure to attend classes to the extent normally required; violation of the rules and regulations of the host university; violation of the laws of the host country; conduct which endangers others; flagrant disregard of local customs, mores or beliefs which might result in offending or antagonizing host country citizens or officials. Serious violations of acceptable behavior may result in disenrollment from the program. Any illegal act by a student participant will result in immediate expulsion from the program without any possibility of financial refund or chance to complete any academic credit requirements.

6. Advise students to read the Department of State Travel Warnings for information about the current political and environmental climate of the country (ies) they will be visiting. This can be found on the world wide web:

<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html)

7. Ensure students have been asked to sign the Consent & Release for Study Abroad and the Permission for Emergency Treatment forms as part of their application.
8. Provide students with a detailed trip itinerary, indicating potential "side trips."

9. Provide students with emergency information that they should have while they are abroad, such as local U.S. Embassy & Consulate addresses and telephone numbers, the names and phone numbers of whom to contact in case of emergency overseas, such as the name and 24-hour phone number of the program director/leader.
10. Advise students to carry photocopies of important documents with them overseas (passport, birth certificate, plane tickets, traveler's checks, International Student ID Card, Driver's license, Social Security card, numbers for lost/stolen credit cards, telephone number to the health insurance carrier, health card).
11. Provide a clear outline of the academic expectations of participants in the program, including information about whether or not any extra field trips are required.
12. Provide detailed information to the students' about their financial responsibilities as participants in the program.
13. Educate yourself about housing information, including information about any household items students might want to bring with them.
14. Discuss "culture shock" and cultural adjustment issues. Recommend culture-specific reading materials to students for review before departure.
15. Provide packing information (what to bring/what weather to expect).
16. Address relevant Medical Requirements and Concerns including discussions about:
  - Mandatory physical health examination prior to departure.
  - Differences in medical services offered in the host country.
  - Required and recommended immunizations prior to travel. Consult the Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/>
  - Food safety issues.
  - Medical insurance coverage (mandatory throughout participation in a study abroad program).
  - Packing and carrying personal medications and medical supplies overseas.

- Viral infections carried by insects and parasites known to be in the host country.
- Know the health risks related to travel in and to the countries to be visited by reading the Center for Disease Control web page at: <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> and the World Health Organization web page at: <http://www.who.org/>
- Some health guides that are available to you:
  - Health Information for International Travel, is available from: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Public Health Service, enter for Disease Control & Prevention, National Center for Infectious Diseases, Division of Quarantine, Atlanta, GA 30333.
  - The International Travel Health Guide is available from: Travel Medicine, Inc., 351 Pleasant Street, Suite 312, Northhampton, MA 01060, phone (413) 584-0381.

17. Inform students of the Laws and Customs of the host country they are traveling to and must remind students that they are subject to the laws of the country they are visiting throughout the duration of their international travels. The State Department provides this kind of information on a web page: [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/tw/tw\\_1764.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html). The Culturgrams published by Brigham Young University, (available from the International Education Office) also provide some useful information. In addition, most countries have offices of tourism in Washington that may be able to send students free brochures and maps that may prove to be quite informative. (Call information to get the telephone number of the Office of Tourism in Washington for the country you will be visiting.)

18. Provide support for participants with Disabilities or Special Needs. The UR International Programs Policies and Procedures are as follows and can be used to guide you in selecting students for your study abroad program:

Students with special needs, such as physically disabled students, or students with learning disabilities, are identified during the selection process. The International Office makes every effort to accommodate such students in cooperation with host institutions abroad. Students with these kinds of special needs are encouraged to identify themselves early in the application process to make adequate planning possible. In some cases, adequate facilities or services for students with specific types of disabilities may not be available at their chosen overseas study centers. For additional information as well as examples of how other universities address such concerns, please refer to the SAFETI Program Audit Checklist at: <http://www.globaled.us/safeti> and review sections on Support

for Participants with Disabilities and Support for Students with Special Needs.

**19. Discuss these Safety Issues with students:**

- In airports, do not leave your luggage unattended and do NOT agree to look after packages or suitcases for individuals you do not know well. If someone approaches you to make such a request, tell security immediately. Take all questions from airport personnel seriously and do not make jokes in response to security questions.
- Carry your passport in a safe place. Some countries require that you carry it with you at all times.
- Don't flash money or documents in public. Be discreet.
- Always keep your resident faculty advisors / group leaders informed of your whereabouts. When you travel independently, give a copy of your itinerary to a friend.
- Have an emergency financial plan. Carry a credit card, for example, to use for emergency purchases.
- Quickly familiarize yourself with the host campus/city layout. Take a tour if one is offered.
- Know where the public telephones are located.
- Meet first-time dates in a public place instead of at your home.
- Walk in well-lighted, populated areas.
- Do not ever leave book bags or packages unattended.
- Be alert; look around you. Walk with confidence.
- Try not to walk with your arms/hands full of heavy packages.
- Jog/exercise with a friend.
- Travel with a companion whenever possible, and familiarize yourself with the public transportation system to avoid appearing like a vulnerable tourist. Travel in daylight hours if you must travel alone.
- Take precautions when walking. Stay near crowded areas. Do not attempt to cross through parks or other large, dark or deserted areas.

- Be careful how late you return home at night. Know when public transportation ceases to operate at night in the host city, and return home before then.
  - Be as inconspicuous in dress and demeanor as possible. Wear moderate colors and conservative clothing. Avoid American logos on your belongings and clothing. Keep the volume of your voice down in public places. Avoid being labeled a “loud and obnoxious American.”
  - Keep away from political demonstrations, particularly those directed toward the United States. If you see a situation developing, resist the temptation to satisfy your curiosity and investigate what is happening. Instead, walk the other way.
20. Discuss Sexual Harassment with students prior to departure. Please see the SAFETI [Audit Checklist](#) and read the section dedicated to Sexual Harassment and Assault under the Personal Safety and Adjustment subheading.
21. Provide Advice to Women Travelers. Women traveling may encounter more difficulties than men. Never travel alone, and try to understand the role of the sexes in the culture in which you are traveling. Observe how the host country’s women dress and act. What may be appropriate and friendly behavior in the U.S. may bring you unwanted attention in another culture. Remember to speak clearly and emphatically if you want to be left alone. Do not wear expensive clothing or jewelry. In many countries it is advisable to avoid wearing clothing that could be considered provocative. In some parts of the world, mere eye contact from a woman is considered flirtation. When you check into a hotel, notice who gets into the elevator with you. If you are uncomfortable, get off the elevator. Have your room key in hand so you won’t have to fumble for it in a dark hallway. ALWAYS lock your door.
- 22. Develop an Emergency Action Plan. Advise students how to handle a crisis if one should arise during the study abroad program period. Go over the Emergency Action Plan with students before departure.**

## SAFETI Audit Checklist

The purpose of the SAFETI Audit Checklist is to provide a list of health and safety and study abroad issues that an institution can use as a guide to look at the current policies and procedures at their institution.

The checklist is linked to Internet Resource Links, which provide background information about each item and samples of policies and procedures from other study abroad

### A. Program Administration

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Program Development
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Advising
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Orientation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Evaluation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Country-Specific Issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Support for Participants with Disabilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Communication
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) Privacy Rights
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) Legal Issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) Conducting a Program Safety Audit
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11) Special Topics: Avian Flu (Bird Flu)

### B. Health and Medical Care

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Screening
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Advising
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Information Resources
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Predeparture Medical Care
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Health Services Abroad
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Food and Drink Safety
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) Mental Health Issues
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) AIDs and Sexually Transmitted Diseases
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) Common Health Concerns
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) Support for Students with Special Needs
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11) Drugs and Alcohol

### C. Insurance Coverage

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Major Medical
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Evacuation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Repatriation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Liability

D. Personal Safety and Adjustment

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Travel and Transportation
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Sexual Harassment and Assault
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Discrimination
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Cultural Adjustment Abroad and Re-Entry
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Behavior, Responsibility, and Student Conduct
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Crime and Violence

E. Crisis and Risk Management

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1) Developing an Emergency Action Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2) Analyzing Risks and Capabilities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3) Eliminating or Limiting High Risk Activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4) Managing Program Sponsored High Risk Activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5) Developing A Campus Crisis Management Team
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6) Checklists for Emergency Action Plan
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7) The Human Factor
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8) During the Crisis:Emergency Action Plan Procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9) Evacuation, Repatriation, and Closing a Program
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10) After the Crisis

# Safety Audit

Some issues to consider

