



# OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

Follow us on social  
media:

Instagram  
[@uhdstudyabroad](#)

Facebook  
[@UHD Office of  
Study Abroad](#)

Twitter  
[@UHDStudyAbroad](#)

**UHD**  
University of Houston-Downtown.  
Office of Study Abroad

**Table of Contents**

**WELCOME.....2**

**CONTACT OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD.....3**

**STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS OFFERED .....4**

**EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION .....5**

**PRE-DEPARTURE DOCUMENTS.....6**

**FINANCING YOUR STUDY ABROAD.....8**

**ACADEMIC PREPARATION .....13**

**HEALTH AND SAFETY ABROAD .....15**

**INSURANCE.....16**

**CODE OF CONDUCT: TITLE IX.....19**

**STUDY ABROAD PROJECT .....21**

**STUDY ABROAD ACTIVITIES .....22**

**PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP .....25**

**WELCOME HOME.....28**



# WELCOME

Dear UHD student,  
Congratulations on making the decision to study abroad!

You are about to embark on one of the most exciting, challenging and rewarding experiences in your lifetime!

Studying abroad is one of the most beneficial experiences for a college student. In addition to expanding your worldview and gaining an appreciation and understanding of new cultures, you will also develop valuable and transferrable skills. Studying abroad is a great opportunity for you to gain independence, learn self-reliance, and enhance your job prospects, all of which will help you navigate your life as a global citizen. Preparing for your study abroad program can be somewhat overwhelming, so we have prepared this handbook to assist you. Please use this handbook as a reference tool before, during, and after your time abroad.

Please know that the study abroad office is available to assist you throughout your study abroad experience.

We are proud to send our Gators abroad and look forward to the global experiences and perspectives you will bring back to campus when you return.

*“Once you study abroad, you will return with a different outlook on life”*

Sincerely,

Ali Maghoo  
Associate Director of Office of Study Abroad  
One Main Street, S345  
Houston, TX 77002-1001  
Office: (713) 221-8250  
[studyabroad@uhd.edu](mailto:studyabroad@uhd.edu)



# CONTACT OFFICE OF STUDY ABROAD

## UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON – DOWNTOWN CONTACT INFORMATION

### Office of Study Abroad

Main Phone Line: 713 221-8250

Email: [studyabroad@uhd.edu](mailto:studyabroad@uhd.edu)

Address:

Office of Study Abroad

One Main Street, S345

Houston, TX 77002-1001

Monday-Friday 8am-5pm

### Ali Maghoo

Associate Director of Office of Study Abroad

713 221-8250

[studyabroad@uhd.edu](mailto:studyabroad@uhd.edu)

### Social Media

Facebook: @UHD Office of Study Abroad

Instagram: @uhdstudyabroad

Twitter: @UHDstudyabroad



# STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS OFFERED

There are a number of options to consider when studying abroad with UHD:

- **Faculty-led trip**

- 12 – 14 days' trip where students are enrolled in a particular subject course and must embark on the trip abroad as part of the course.

- **Exchange with partner institutions**

- Students study abroad for a semester, year, or summer abroad at one of UHD's exchange partner institutions.
- Students pay UHD tuition and may use their financial aid package when participating in these programs.
- Exchange colleges are in France, Finland, Taiwan and Spain.

- **External Providers**

- UHD has a number of affiliated study abroad programs providers where the student can study or intern in a variety of countries either for a semester, winter or summer break. Financial aid may transfer and scholarships are offered by the providers.

- **Internships Abroad**

- An opportunity to work overseas with multinational companies to gain valuable work experience, increase your employability either in the United States or worldwide.
- UHD have a number of affiliated providers that can help you to facilitate this option.

# EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION

## **Office of Study Abroad**

Monday through Friday 8:00am-5:00pm  
(713) 221 - 8250

## **University of Houston- Downtown Police Department**

Campus Police Department  
University of Houston-Downtown  
One Main Street, Suite N118  
Houston, Texas 77002

## **On-Campus Emergency:**

**713-221-8911**

## **On-Campus Non-Emergency:**

**713 221-8065**

## **Office of Overseas Citizens Services (U.S Department of State):**

**1.888.407.4747 (from within the U.S)**

**1.205.501.4444 (from outside the U.S)**

## **U.S Department of State – Bureau of Consular Affairs**

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>

## **Emergencies**

In the case of an emergency, students are advised to contact the institution or local police department for any situation or condition that jeopardizes and safety or well-being.

In the event of any political, social or natural emergencies, the Office of Study Abroad will be in close contact with the on-site staff and/or US program provider.

# PRE-DEPARTURE DOCUMENTS

## Pre-Departure

The Office of Study Abroad requires that all students participating in a study abroad program attend a Pre-Departure orientation session. Sessions will be offered at different times each semester to accommodate students' schedules and will also be offered via Zoom.

The sessions will cover essential information concerning your upcoming trip, including: international insurance coverage; academic policies and procedures; health and safety; culture shock; finances; packing, etc.

## Documents:

Now that you are officially accepted into your study abroad program, it is time to begin finalizing all of your preparations.

Please note that you must have a passport to travel abroad and many study abroad destinations may require a student visa.

## PASSPORT

**You must have a valid passport to travel abroad and to apply for a visa.**

- If you DON'T have a passport apply for one as soon as possible
- If you DO have a passport, verify that it is valid for at least 6 months after the end of your program
- US Citizens: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.html>
- Non-US Citizens/International Students: Visit the Embassy website of your home country to find out your specific requirements

## VISAS

- You may need an entry visa or other travel documents to study in your host country.
- It is YOUR responsibility to verify the visa requirements of your host country and to obtain the correct student visa. However, you can seek clarification from the Office of Study Abroad on any required visas for your trip
- Non-US Citizens: You may have different requirements than US Citizens – check with your local embassy/consulate
- Visit the Consular and/or Embassy website of your host country to find specific visa information.
- Check with the U.S Department of State to see if your destination country requires a visa: <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel.html>

## TIPS FOR VISAS:

- Please be sure to read all information from your host university with regards to instructions on how to obtain a visa.
- The timeline to obtain a student visa varies from country to country.
- Please be sure that you plan accordingly and allow plenty of time to finalize your visa and passport paperwork prior to departure.
- For some countries, if your stay is less than 90 days, you will not need a visa.
- You must obtain your visa before you leave the United States.
- Some consulates may require that you apply for the visa in person. You may be required to purchase a visa or drive/fly to retrieve your visa (or hire an agency on your behalf to assist with your visa). Other students may only need to mail in an application.
- If you are required to apply in person, schedule your appointment with the embassy/consulate as soon as possible. Consulates have limited availability and appointment times book quickly. The earlier you confirm your appointment, the easier the process.
- Make sure that you read which documents are required for your visa application.
- Some visa applications require you to submit your actual passport with the application. Plan accordingly and do not submit your passport and visa application if you have any upcoming international travel scheduled (family vacation, etc.) and will need your passport before you leave to study abroad.

## COMMON VISA REQUIREMENTS: (Please check the specific requirements of your host country)

- Valid passport (valid for 6 months after departure date from host country).
- Completed visa application form.
- Two passport size photos.
- Payment of required fees.
- In some cases, additional identification such as a driver's license, birth certificate, or bank statement showing that you have the necessary funds to complete your journey.  
Some countries require a copy of your travel ticket.
- Acceptance letter from host institution abroad.





# FINANCING YOUR STUDY ABROAD

Students studying abroad during the academic year on a program approved by UHD remain eligible for financial aid.

## USING FINANCIAL AID FOR STUDY ABROAD

- To use financial aid for studies / internship abroad, you must visit the financial aid office located in S350.
- You can apply to any federal, state, or institutional aid awarded to support your study abroad costs, but you cannot use tuition waivers or work-study awards.
- Private scholarships are generally applicable to study abroad, but you must verify the conditions of your award with the scholarship administrator or donor directly.
- Students may also be eligible to receive grants, loans, or work assistance without regard to whether the study abroad program is required as a part of the student's degree.
- You are not guaranteed to be eligible for enough federal financial aid to pay all costs associated with your study abroad program so it is important to discuss alternate funding sources with FAS (Scholarships,

## **WHAT TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID ARE AVAILABLE?**

- Federal and state governments, foundations, private and public organizations are primary sources of financial aid. Federal aid can consist of loans, grants, scholarships, or work-study.
- Apply for financial aid for your time abroad by completing your FAFSA application. This can be found here: <https://studentaid.ed.gov/>
- Be sure to check with your financial aid office and Office of Study Abroad or about whether your financial aid can apply to study abroad.
- If you already receive aid, you may qualify for additional funding to offset the extra costs, which may be associated with studying abroad.
- Visit the Office of Study Abroad and complete a consortium agreement form <https://www.uhd.edu/academics/international/Documents/consortium-agreement-form.pdf>.
- Students may also be eligible to receive grants, loans, or work assistance without regard to whether the study abroad program is required as a part of the student's degree.

## HOW DO I MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE FINANCIAL AID APPLIED TO A STUDY ABROAD PROGRAM?

Upon application to a study abroad program, you should also contact UHD financial aid office to see if there are special application processes or policies required in receiving financial aid for study abroad.

- Complete the study abroad Financial Aid worksheet to help estimate the overall costs.
- The Office of Study Abroad may provide the financial aid office with costs or a budget for your study abroad program that will facilitate the disbursement of aid when you leave the country.
- You may also need to check with the Office of Study Abroad on how they can contact you or to make financial aid disbursement arrangements. Be sure to check with all offices, weeks before your plans are finalized.
- Keep records and copies of all forms submitted and submission dates, as well as all personal contacts made. Those records will help you avoid confusion as well as clarify issues that might arise.

## HOW MANY CREDITS DO I NEED TO RECEIVE FINANCIAL AID (INCLUDING LOANS) FOR STUDY ABROAD?

Students should enroll in full-time credits in order to receive their full amount of awarded aid. However, some aid will be reduced depending on the number of credits a student is enrolled.

- The credit level required for Direct Subsidized/Unsubsidized loan eligibility for all semesters is half-time.
- Undergraduates, half-time for semester study is normally 6-9 credits.
- For graduates, half-time for semester student is normally 5-6 credits.
- Check with UHD registers office (S330) regarding what constitutes half-time.
- For scholarships and grants, you need to maintain the enrollment level required for each aid program listed on your financial aid award letter.

### **Deadlines to submit Financial Aid Materials:**

If you plan to use financial aid to pay for your study abroad program, ALL documentation must be submitted to the financial aid office S350 no later than the deadlines below. **Note: Students who withdraw from programs after paying a deposit, are subject to the program provider's refund policies.**

<b>Fall Semester</b>	<b>July 1</b>
<b>Spring Semester</b>	<b>November 1</b>
<b>Summer</b>	<b>April 15</b>

## WHAT TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID ARE AVAILABLE?

Federal and state governments, foundations, private and public organizations are primary sources of financial aid. Federal aid can consist of loans, grants, scholarships, or work-study.

## TYPES OF FINANCIAL AID

### Grants and Scholarships

- **Federal Pell Grant** is awarded to low income undergraduate students. Part-time enrollment reduces eligibility.
- **Federal Supplemental Educational Grant (SEOG)** is awarded to exceptionally disadvantaged undergraduate students. Must be enrolled at least half-time.
- **Benjamin A. Gilman Scholarship Program** is sponsored by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs at the U.S. Department of State and is administered by the Institute of International Education (IIE). This scholarship program is only open to undergraduate Federal Pell Grant recipients who intend to study abroad for a semester, summer or year-long program.
- **The National Security Education Program (NSEP)** and the Fulbright Program funded by the Federal government have grants and fellowships for undergraduate and graduate students for study and research overseas. Students should be aware that government organizations in other countries such as the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) offer funding opportunities.
- **Foreign Language & Area Studies (FLAS)** Fellowship program funded by the U.S. Department of Education provides study abroad funding to undergraduate and graduate students who are pursuing foreign language and area studies. The Critical Language Scholarship Program, a program of the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, funds intensive summer language institutes in thirteen critical foreign languages.
- There are many more scholarship options available to you, including some specific to locations and programs. Explore the opportunities below and discuss your options with the Office of Study abroad
- <https://www.uhd.edu/academics/international/Pages/international-scholarships.aspx>

### UHD Study Abroad Travel Award Scholarship

- **Students must meet all of the following minimum requirements:**
- Student must have a minimum 2.5 GPA at UHD (3.0 for graduate students).
- Students must have completed 12 hours at UHD **at time of application** (9 hours for graduate students).
- Students must be enrolled at UHD for a minimum of three hours for the term abroad.
- Students must receive academic credit for the study abroad course or program.
- Students who are traveling to a country or where there is a US State Department travel warning are not eligible to receive the award. Regions within travel warning countries that are specifically noted as note being subject to the warning will be considered.
- Students who require a visa for travel must show proof of timely visa application prior to the award disbursement.

- Students must clear any holds on their student accounts prior to award disbursement.
- International students may not use the travel award to travel to their home country.
- Students must participate in a UHD-approved program.

## Loans

The U.S. Department of Education's student loan program is called the **William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan (Direct Loan) Program**. The Direct Loan Program has three primary loans available and the U.S. Department of Education is the lender:

- Direct Subsidized Loan: Available to students who demonstrate financial need. The Federal government pays interest on the loans as long as the student is enrolled half-time. Repayment and interest begins after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half time.
- Direct Unsubsidized Loan: Available to students regardless of need but interest is charged to the students while in school. A student may choose to make the interest-only payments on the unsubsidized loan or allow the interest to be added to the loan principal and then pay both principal and interest after leaving school.

Direct PLUS Loan: Available to graduate students and parents of dependent undergraduate students. Interest accrues while students are in school. For graduate students, repayment begins 6 months after you graduate, leave school, or drop below half time. For undergraduates, parents must begin repayment once the loan is fully disbursed.

The following online sources are useful for students who wish to learn more about financial aid and funding for study abroad?

- The Financial Aid Page provides information on how to apply for Federal Student Aid and the different types of grants and scholarships.
- The Office of Study Abroad webpage -<https://www.uhd.edu/academics/international/Pages/international-scholarships.aspx>
- UHD Scholarships and Financial Aid Office [uhd.edu/financial](http://uhd.edu/financial)
- Fast Web provides a free customized list of financial aid sources, including private sector scholarships, fellowships, grants, and loans.
- The College Board Scholarship Search and P.L.A.T.O. Scholarship Search engines are for other sources of grant information.
- Study Abroad Funding, a study abroad scholarship search engine, is maintained by the Institute of International Education.

Resource for how to use Financial Aid to Fund Study Abroad:

[https://www.nafsa.org/About\\_Us/About\\_International\\_Education/For\\_Students/Financial\\_Aid\\_for\\_Study\\_Abroad\\_An\\_Undergraduate\\_Student\\_s\\_Resource/](https://www.nafsa.org/About_Us/About_International_Education/For_Students/Financial_Aid_for_Study_Abroad_An_Undergraduate_Student_s_Resource/).

## **WHEN ABROAD HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE YOU LEAVE, AND DURING YOUR STAY:**

### **Contact Your Bank**

Let your bank know that you will be out of the country and inform them of the countries you will visit and the duration of your stay. Having your card shut off to protect you from fraud is one of the most common and frustrating experiences for students abroad, so make sure to contact your bank before your leave.

### **Consider International Transaction Fees**

International transaction fees may apply to your card transactions. If your bank charges you a flat rate fee, it may be important to take out large sums of money at a time in order to save rates on those fees. If you are not comfortable carrying around large amounts of money, depending on your stay abroad consider finding a bank that charges a lower rate – many credit unions offer a lower percentage fee for each transaction. Be sure to check and see if your bank has partner banks in your host country, where the fees may not exist at all. For students going abroad for a semester or longer, it may be more cost effective to open a bank account with a local branch in the country you are visiting.

### **Make a Copy of Your Debit and Credit Card**

Keep a copy of your debit card and/or credit card scanned and emailed securely to yourself and to someone that you trust. Trust me you'll be glad you did if you lose your card or it gets stolen (watch out for pickpockets). On that note, make sure that you email the international phone number for your debit or credit card company to yourself as well so that you can call your bank in case of an emergency.

### **Know the Exchange Rate**

You don't want to lose money, so make sure you check the exchange rate on a regular basis. Rates can change even hourly, so check the internet to make sure you are using the correct ratio.

### **Money Exchange**

It is recommended that students change some money into the local currency before they leave. Airports tend to offer the worst exchange rates. Students should also use reputable money exchange bureaus both at home and in the host country, and avoid the black market.

# ACADEMIC PREPARATION

Studying abroad is a great opportunity for students for personal, professional and academic development. Prior to departure, it is required that students meet with their academic advisor to determine courses taken abroad will continue to make progress toward your degree and to ensure credits will transfer.

Complete the course approval form and have it signed before uploading to Abroadnet.

**All courses you intend to study need to be approved by your academic adviser before you go abroad!**

Below are the contact details for the academic advisors in each college within UHD:

## Academic Advising Contacts

**College of Humanities & Social Sciences:**

**Main Building, Room 1001-South**

**713-221-8460**

[chss\\_advising@uhd.edu](mailto:chss_advising@uhd.edu)

**College of Public Service:**

**1002 Commerce Street Suite 420**

**713-221-8906**

[esparzaa@uhd.edu](mailto:esparzaa@uhd.edu)

**College of Sciences & Tech:**

**Main Building, Room 724-North**

**713-221-5001**

[CSTadvising@uhd.edu](mailto:CSTadvising@uhd.edu)

**Marilyn Davies College of Business:**

**Shea Building, Suite B101**

**320 N. Main St.**

**713-221-8675**

[roblesb@uhd.edu](mailto:roblesb@uhd.edu)

## Internship abroad

- Students need to meet with academic advisor to complete field experience form. The Field experience form must be approved by field experience academic chairs.
- UHD College of Business Field Experience Form: [https://www.uhd.edu/academics/business/centers-institutes/career-center/Documents/fe\\_application.pdf](https://www.uhd.edu/academics/business/centers-institutes/career-center/Documents/fe_application.pdf)
- UHD other colleges : [https://www.uhd.edu/student-resources/career/Documents/fe\\_application.pdf](https://www.uhd.edu/student-resources/career/Documents/fe_application.pdf)

## Course Approval Process

- Students may apply to enroll in any faculty-led program course(s) for which they have the necessary pre-requisites.
- Check in with your academic advisor before and during the program to discuss how the courses earned will fit in with your degree program(s).
- If you haven't located it already, check with The Office of Study Abroad to access course information from your host university
- To obtain course approval, complete a course approval form – this can be found on the UHD study abroad portal – download and complete the form.
- Submit the course approval form, along with course syllabi, to your academic advisor. Please contact the Office of Study Abroad if you need help obtaining the course syllabi
- Allow at least 4-8 weeks for this step to ensure all required steps are completed

# HEALTH AND SAFETY ABROAD

Health and safety are primary concerns for students studying abroad or participating on faculty led trips. The following information provides important details about travel insurance, general health information, safety and security tips.

Whilst studying abroad, all UHD students are still expected to abide by the UHD student code of conduct. Failure to comply with this can result in students being sent home from faculty, study abroad trips, internships and external trips. Find the UHD student handbook here: : <https://www.uhd.edu/student-resources/handbook/Documents/20182019.pdf>

**UHD Office of Study Abroad strongly recommends every student purchases travel insurance before studying abroad, interning abroad or participating on a faculty led trip for the following reasons:**

- In case you have to cancel your trip prior to departure date due to an emergency
- You miss your connecting flight/s
- Your flight is cancelled
- Natural disaster affects your destination country
- You become sick or injured on your trip
- Your baggage is delayed or lost
- Your personal belongings are stolen
- You lose your passport
- You require emergency assistance
- You have to be evacuated due to a natural disaster
- Miss your flight due to traffic congestion or incident on your way to the airport

**Below are links to recommended insurance providers, however UHD does not endorse any of these providers. Find a provider who fits your needs best.**

<https://www.betins.com/>

<https://www.studenthealthusa.com/>

<https://www.culturalinsurance.com/>

<https://www.geobluetravelinsurance.com/index.cfm>

[https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/student-health-insurance/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMIwqfU\\_tzk4gIVBr3sCh0fRgMMEAYASAAEgI52\\_D\\_BwE](https://www.internationalstudentinsurance.com/student-health-insurance/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMIwqfU_tzk4gIVBr3sCh0fRgMMEAYASAAEgI52_D_BwE)



[https://www.isoa.org/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMI1JPqp93k4gIVRtbACh3wRQBZEAAYASAAEgJlffD\\_BwE](https://www.isoa.org/?gclid=EA1aIQobChMI1JPqp93k4gIVRtbACh3wRQBZEAAYASAAEgJlffD_BwE)

<https://www.lewermark.com/>

<https://www.pghstudent.com/>

<https://www.psiservice.com/>

<https://www.smcovered.com/>

## FACULTY LED TRIPS

## INSURANCE

- The University of Houston System provides a blanket policy with AIG/Travel Guard for all students who travel on a UHD faculty led approved program.
- The policy covers medical and security evacuation and medical/travel assistance. Additionally, UHD provides its students with medical insurance that will cover up to \$25,000 in medical costs while abroad.
- This coverage is applicable during the program dates. If students choose to travel during a break in the program, the coverage will remain in effect; however, it is not valid before or after the official program dates.
- For serious incidents (requiring inpatient hospitalization) UHD will contact AIG/Travel Guard to inform them of the situation and ensure that the student is receiving appropriate care.

## UHD STUDY ABROAD PROVIDERS

- Check with the study abroad provider if insurance is included in the package.
- On-site program personnel have relationships with their insurance companies and are in a better position to serve as liaison in an emergency situation.

## EXCHANGE PARTNERS, FACULTY-LED TRIPS AND INTERNSHIPS

- Every student is required to purchase travel insurance before departure. Check out the links above to find the provider who matches your needs.

## HEALTH INFORMATION

Before leaving for a study abroad trip, all students should ensure they have a general physical done by their primary care provider and to check that all routine immunizations/vaccinations are up-to-date.

### **Primary Health Care**

Develop a plan with your physician on how you will maintain your health while traveling. This is especially important if you have any ongoing health issues that may require attention whilst abroad. If you are on any prescription medications, your plan should include ensuring that you have a supply to last the duration of your time abroad. You may request that your physician or pharmacist write a letter describing your medications, their dosage, and a generic name for them and the condition that they treat. This letter could be very useful, in case of an emergency or going through customs.

### **Travel Clinic/Physician**

It is highly recommended that you schedule a visit to a travel clinic. A travel clinic will focus on immunizations and other health recommendations specific to the country, region and type of program you will be participating in.

It is important to note that some vaccines are given as a series and some require a time interval before departure in order to be effective.

### **Over-the Counter Medications**

Listed below are a variety of over-the-counter medications that you may wish to consider taking with you on your travels. They may be more difficult to find in your final destination:

- Painkillers – aspirin, ibuprofen, acetaminophen
- Anti-diarrhea medication
- Antacids/digestion medication
- Motion/travel sickness pills
- Allergy medication/antihistamine (some medications, such as those containing pseudoephedrine may be considered an illegal controlled substance in your final destination; be sure to understand the laws and regulations of your host country, prior to departure)
- Decongestant/flu medication

## **SAFETY ABROAD**

Throughout your study abroad experience, you can have a major impact on your own health and safety through the decisions you make before and during your program and by your day-to-day choices and behaviors.

It is extremely important to apply the same common sense while traveling overseas, as you would at home.

Here are some tips to keep you safe at all times:

- Remain in regular contact with your family, friends, and contacts at both your home and host university. Inform others of your plans.

- Stay informed about current events and developing situations while you are away.
- Create and carry a list of emergency phone numbers with you at all times. Know how to contact a hospital, university staff member and the police in the country in which you are traveling.
- Carry the hotel or university business card to show taxi drivers.
- Learn and pay attention to your local laws and customs.
- Go out in groups if you can, instead of going alone.
- Avoid poorly lit places and walking alone. Stick to well-traveled streets
- Inform your peers of where you are and an estimated time of when you will return home.
- Use reputable taxis and transportation services.
- Don't carry large amounts of cash.
- Be aware that dating norms and gender roles may be different in your host culture.
- Practice safe sex.
- Be careful at ATM's when withdrawing money.
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Do not leave your bags unattended.

**Please be aware that your safety is ultimately your responsibility.**

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG SAFETY

Drug possession and abuse abroad can subject you to harsh criminal proceedings and severe punishments. In some cases, drugs that are legal in the U.S. are illegal in other countries, and aspects of the U.S. legal system are not followed. Although it is true that in some countries laws concerning drug use and possession are less restrictive than in the United States, in many countries they are more severe. Students are advised to avoid drug possession and use altogether.

### ALCOHOL

Students who are of legal age and choose to consume alcohol should do so with the knowledge that, like in your home country, they remain responsible for their actions at all times and are expected to drink responsibly. The problems associated with alcohol can become more acute when students are in countries with lower minimum drinking ages than in the US and are drinking for the first time. Students are therefore advised to drink alcohol sparingly and be aware that drinking may increase your vulnerability to crime. If you are going to drink, drink responsibly, and look out for the safety of your fellow students.

It is important that students know the laws in both a legal and culture sense regarding alcohol consumption. Be aware of the customs of the country. Intoxication is considered offensive in many cultures and even illegal in some.

# CODE OF CONDUCT: TITLE IX

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

### Sexual Misconduct Policy

- UHD is committed to maintaining and strengthening an educational and working environment where students, faculty, staff and visitors are free from sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual misconduct, a form of sex discrimination, is antithetical to the standards and ideals of the university. The university will take appropriate action in an effort to eliminate sexual misconduct from happening, prevent its recurrence and address its effects. Consistent with its commitment to addressing sex discrimination and harassment, UHD complies with the Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities, and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (“Title VII”), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment. Sexual misconduct constitutes a form of sex discrimination prohibited by Title IX and Title VII.
- In accordance with the University of Houston System’s Sexual Misconduct Policy (SAM 01/D/08), Sexual Misconduct is a broad term encompassing a range of non-consensual sexual activity or unwelcome behavior of a sexual nature. The term includes sexual assault; sexual exploitation; sexual intimidation; sexual harassment; domestic violence; dating violence and stalking. Sexual misconduct can be committed by men or women, strangers or acquaintances and can occur between people of the same or opposite sex.
- The Sexual Misconduct Policy defines and describes prohibited sexual conduct and establishes a procedural mechanism for processing complaints of sexual misconduct. Harassment based on sex is a violation of University policy and the law. Sexual harassment by a public official may also be a criminal offense.
- ***What is Sexual Assault?***  
Sexual assault is any form of non-consensual sexual activity. Sexual assault represents a continuum of conduct from forcible rape to non-physical forms of pressure that compel individuals to engage in sexual activity against their will.
- To view the legal definition of sexual assault in Texas, please refer to the Texas Penal Code (<https://statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/PE/htm/PE.22.htm#22.011> hyper link).
- Although what you might perceive as sexual harassment in the U.S may be considered socially acceptable in another country, cross-cultural sensitivity does not mean you have to relax or adjust personal boundaries in this regard. If you feel you have been a victim of sexual harassment, you should immediately inform your main on-site contact.

- For further information or to file a sexual misconduct complaint please contact:
- **Erika Harrison, Title IX Equity and Diversity Officer at [harrisone@uhd.edu](mailto:harrisone@uhd.edu) or via phone at (713) 221-5771.**

# STUDY ABROAD PROJECT

If you are a student who received a UHD study abroad travel award, as per part of the agreement, you are required to create a short project. The short project must be completed within 4 weeks of returning to the United States and submitted to the Office of Study Abroad. These projects will be used on our social media platforms and website, to promote your experience to other students, faculty and staff.

The project can be presented in a variety of forms including, but not limited to:

- A PowerPoint presentation – prezi.com - <https://prezi.com/>
- An electronic video blog/vlog- any videos you took from trip collated together, or record yourself sharing your experiences – E.g. <http://studyabroad.berkeley.edu/stories/video>
- An electronic story board- <https://www.canva.com/create/storyboards/>
- An electronic photo albums documenting your experience - <http://fliphtml5.com/>

As per UHD policy, if this is not submitted by the date provided to you by the Office of Study Abroad, a hold may be placed on your student account. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss your ideas about the project, please do not hesitate to contact us by phone or email at the Office of Study Abroad.

Please stop by the Office of Study Abroad, or go on our website to look at past student study abroad projects.



# STUDY ABROAD ACTIVITIES

## **THINGS STUDENTS CAN DO FOR FUN WHILST ABROAD:**

While studying abroad will undoubtedly be fun and exciting, it can also be stressful and overwhelming at times. The workload, coupled with adjusting to living/traveling by yourself in a foreign country can be tough. Therefore, it's important to make an effort to ensure that you still make time for having fun and enjoying the whole experience while you're there.

One of the best parts about studying in a foreign country is the number of different people you'll get the chance to meet. To make your study abroad experience memorable and enjoyable, step out of your comfort zone and meet new people! The friends you make during your study abroad experience will stay with you for the rest of your life. It's also great to have a good group of friends with whom you can hang out and explore the city you're living in.

## **TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Make sure you don't forget to document your travel experiences for memory keeping purposes, and to share with friends and family back home. You can use your professional cameras, Go Pros, video cameras, and smartphones. However, it is also important to remember to be respectful of the places and people you are photographing. Always ask permission to take photos in any sacred or religious sites, when taking photos of people and be aware of any restrictions on photographing and filming.

The Office of Study Abroad is constantly updating social media platforms to share your study abroad experiences with other students, family members, faculty and staff members. Please feel free to tag us in your social media posts so that we can share these amazing experiences, and to promote the Office of Study Abroad programs. Our social media platform usernames can be found at the front of this handbook in the contact information section.

## **IDEAS FOR STUDENTS TO DO IN THEIR FREE TIME:**

- Write a journal.
- Try new cuisines.
- Use review websites such as Trip Advisor; Google Reviews; Yelp, to find out what the top attractions are in your city or the best restaurants/bars to go to/the best nightlife.
- Join a student club/society.
- Learn a new language.
- Connect with the locals by attending functions and events.
- Visit tourist attractions.

## **CULTURE SHOCK:**

- Most students abroad experience some degree of culture shock.
- Culture shock refers to the stresses and strains associated with adapting to life in a new culture.
- Symptoms may include: frustration, mental fatigue, disorientation about how to work with and relate to others, boredom, lack of motivation and physical discomfort.
- Please be aware of these symptoms and contact family, friends, Office of Study Abroad, or UHD counselling service to speak with someone. You can also contact your host institution's counselling services.

## **SOME STRATEGIES AND TIPS FOR DEALING WITH CULTURE SHOCK:**

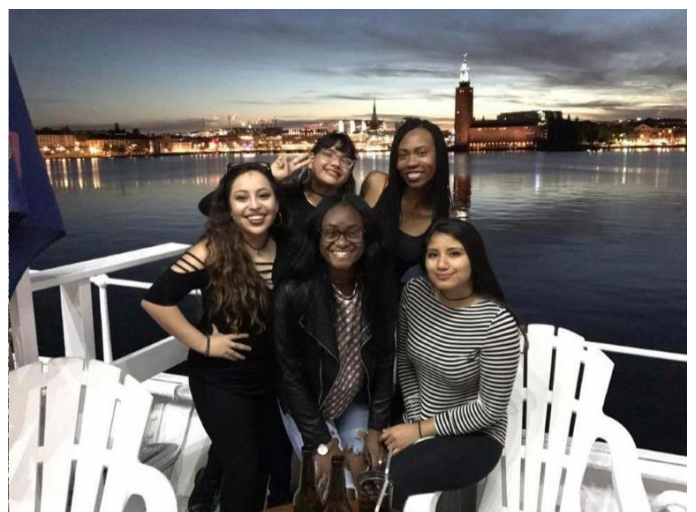
1. Research your host/visiting country - read through travel forums or guidebooks. Speak to students/staff/friends who have been there.
2. Speak to the Office of Study Abroad - ask us what other students have experienced and what solutions they used.
3. Set learning goals for your study abroad trip - make sure you have goals for your study abroad trip, which could include learning a few phrases in the host country language, trying different foods, visiting museums etc.
4. Write down what you enjoy when you first arrive, and look back later - write down all the things you love about your new host country.
5. Talk to other students about how you feel - You'll likely know other students who are studying abroad with you. Talk to them about how they feel about your host culture and any strategies they've used to cope with cultural differences.



7. Push yourself to make local friends - You will learn even more if you make local friends. They're experts in their own culture and will be able to explain all the crazy little questions you have.

8. Get involved with the local community - Part of your feelings of culture shock may be because you feel like too much of an outsider, get involved in the local/student communities as much as possible. If you went to church at home, go to church there. If you volunteered at home, find a volunteer project in your host city. Join a sports team, go to major festivals, and make this new home a home!

9. Make an effort to learn the local language - Even if your program is in English, make an effort to learn a few basic phrases or more, in the local language. It's not just a way to understand more of the culture, but also to make friends and ultimately feel more included.



# PACKING FOR YOUR TRIP

As a rule, and probably the most important rule when packing...It's better to under-pack than to over-pack Consider how heavy your bags will feel after an 8+ hour flight, train connections, and a bus or car ride? And you have to take a flight of stairs, because there's no elevator available. Bet you'll wish you had only brought the necessities.

## PACKING TIPS

Before you get excited and start packing 20+ pairs of shoes for your trip...

- It is important to know what you can take in your carry-on, what you need to check before you finish packing, and what you can't take at all.
- The TSA has an updated list online. You also need to check what items are prohibited to bring into your host country by checking your host country's customs website. (Hyperlink on TSA): <https://www.tsa.gov/travel/travel-tips/travel-checklist>.
- Be aware of the size and weight of both your checked and carry-on luggage. Make sure you are aware of the weight restrictions and charges if your bags are over the weight limit.
- While you're packing your clothes and other necessities remember to leave room for souvenirs.

We have provided basic packing check list's which is not extensive:

### Carry-on:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport and any necessary visas   | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact information and address of host program and host family (if applicable) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Boarding pass/tickets  | <input type="checkbox"/> US and foreign currency   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera   | <input type="checkbox"/> Medication  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laptop, iPad, iPod, and any other small electronic devices   | <input type="checkbox"/> Cell phone and charger  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Any valuables  | <input type="checkbox"/> In-flight entertainment: books, magazines, etc.                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Credit and debit cards   | <input type="checkbox"/> I.D   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Copies of important documents including travel itinerary, emergency contact information, international health insurance card | <input type="checkbox"/> Food/snacks   |

### Checked-luggage:

- Clothing – everyday (Culturally Sensitive if required)
- Swimsuit (if appropriate for destination, or any subsequent travel destinations)
- Converters
- Backpack/bag
- Business casual clothing
- Sunglasses
- Plug Adapters
- Shoes

### For Women:

- Skirts/Pants
- Shorts
- Underwear
- Hat
- Blouses/button front/ polo's
- Makeup
- Casual dress
- Jeans
- Sneakers
- Lightweight jacket/ wind breaker
- Refillable travel bottles (shampoo, conditioner, face soap)
- Birth control for the length of your trip (if you take it)

### For Men:

- Shorts
- Khakis/Pants
- Dress shirt/ Polo's
- Sneakers
- Hat
- Jeans
- T-shirts
- Boxers
- Socks
- Shoes
- Lightweight jacket/ wind breaker
- Sweater

## Toiletries (Men and Women)

- Sunscreen
- Lotion
- Soap
- Razor
- Comb and/or brush
- Tampons/sanitary pads
- Bug spray
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste, toothbrush and floss
- Cosmetics
- Hair Products
- Contraceptives/birth control

## WHAT TO LEAVE BEHIND...

- Copies of important documents, including passport, visa (s), tickets, debit/credit card (s), and insurance information.
- Leave behind contact information, including your in-country phone number, the UHD Office of Study Abroad, the local embassy, and the provider program information with family/friends.
- Any TSA prohibited items.
- Items that are illegal in your host country.
- Illegal drugs and weapons.



# WELCOME HOME

Returning home from a trip abroad can be one of the most exciting and challenging aspects of your program. We hope you had a productive, fun and safe trip abroad. The following section addresses topics on reintegrating your experiences back into life on campus at UHD and beyond.

## WHEN YOU RETURN

### Things to do on return to the US:

- BEFORE returning to the US, ensure all transcripts from host university are forwarded to UHD registrar's office.
- Submit study abroad project within 4 weeks of returning.
- Please fill out the Study Abroad Feedback Survey which is provided for you – it is compulsory for all students returning from study abroad to complete this as per part of the signed agreement.
- Share your experiences/pictures/videos/memories with us on our social media platforms (the handles can be found at front of handbook).
- Register for classes.
- **STAY INVOLVED!** There are opportunities to study abroad again – don't limit yourself to just one time, even after graduation. The best way to stay involved is to go again! Keep up to date with Office of Study Abroad events that take place throughout each semester, and don't forget to follow us on social media to ensure you are always kept in the loop!

