

Checklist and Pre-Departure Considerations for International Student Group Abroad Leaders

Section I: Checklist for Study Abroad Programs Office

Below are the chronological steps that a Student Group Abroad Trip Leader should follow before conducting an international trip. The Study Abroad Programs Office (SAPO) Advisor will assist you in this process.

6 months - 1 year prior to departure	<input type="checkbox"/> Begin Student Group Abroad Registration in the <i>Aggies Abroad Portal</i>
3 - 6 months prior to departure	<p>If the trip is being coordinated by a:</p> <input type="checkbox"/> Student Organization: Complete a <i>Pre-Event Planning Form</i> and submit to Student Activities for approval. Please note that a link to this form will be provided as part of the registration process.
	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete the Application Phase of the Online Registration that includes some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Trip Name, Dates, Leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> List of Participants <input type="checkbox"/> Acknowledgement Forms <input type="checkbox"/> Funding and financial aid resources for students <input type="checkbox"/> University Rules and Standard Administrative Procedures <input type="checkbox"/> On-Site Emergency Form <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Departure Training information for Trip Leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> CISI Enrollment Info for Trip Leader(s) <input type="checkbox"/> Bacterial Meningitis Vaccination (Only for groups staying at Texas A&M Overseas Centers – see next page “Health and Medical Considerations” for more information.)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Once the SAPO Advisor receives all completed items in the Application Phase of the Registration, s/he will establish the trip in the Study Abroad Programs Office's Aggies Abroad online system, and send registration instructions for students. You must forward these instructions to all trip participants. Participants <u>must</u> complete the registration process by the date indicated by the SAPO Advisor in order to allow ample time for insurance enrollment. <input type="checkbox"/> The SAPO Advisor will provide you with the registration deadline.
	<p>The SAPO Advisor will change the Trip Registration application to “Approved” once all items are completed.</p>
1 - 2 months prior to departure	<input type="checkbox"/> SAPO Advisor will facilitate the CISI insurance enrollment. S/he will send an electronic version of each participant's CISI insurance card once available. Payment of \$45 Field Trip Fee (one option will apply) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> If the department coordinating the trip will be paying the \$45 fee on behalf of the participants, the SAPO Advisor will send an invoice for the total amount owed along with a payment deadline and instructions. <input type="checkbox"/> If the student participants will be responsible for paying the \$45 field trip fee, the SAPO Advisor will post the fee to their individual TAMU fiscal accounts. Remind them that they must pay this. <input type="checkbox"/> If the student organization coordinating the trip will be paying the \$45 field trip fee on behalf of the members, SAPO Advisor will send an invoice for the total amount owed along with a payment deadline and instructions.
2 - 4 weeks prior to departure	<p>Send the following to the SAPO Advisor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Any updates/changes to detailed trip itinerary of daily schedule while abroad <input type="checkbox"/> Any updates/changes to emergency contact information <input type="checkbox"/> Completed Travel & Leave/Travel Requests for all Graduate/Teaching Assistants and Faculty/Staff leaders, if not already submitted
1 week prior to departure	<p>SAPO Advisor will send an exit packet, to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CISI insurance card for each participant <input type="checkbox"/> A copy of each participant's Medical Consent and medical information <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency contact information for each participant <input type="checkbox"/> Additional resources and reference materials

Section II: Pre-Departure Considerations

Below are some basic pre-departure considerations and recommended information to collect from participants. The list is not exhaustive of all that could be covered during the pre-departure planning.

Student Group Abroad Logistics

The Study Abroad Programs Office can provide advice and recommendations upon request. However, it is expected that the Student Group Abroad Leader will coordinate or assist in coordinating the following:

- Trip location(s) and dates
- Number of participants and support staff needed
- In-country arrangements, including lodging accommodations, transportation, cultural and educational activities, etc.
- Bus, flight or transportation arrangements to/from the destination
- Budget and cost of trip, including the charge and collection of funds from participants, if applicable
- Payment of all trip-related expenses (e.g. hotels, airfare, and other vendors)

Passports

- Ensure that students who do not have a passport or who have an expired passport apply for one at least 3 months prior to departure. More information on the passport application process, fees, and processing time can be found at: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html. The Study Abroad Office also [helps with passport issuance](#).
- Ensure that all participants' passports will be valid for the required length of time after the trip's end. Each country has different validity requirements. For country-specific requirements, visit: http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html.
- We ask that you collect color copies (scanned or hard copies) of each participant's passport (photograph and information pages) to provide to the SAPO Advisor. Students are advised to carry a color copies of their passports.

Visa Requirement

- A visa might be required by the host country(-ies). For more information on country-specific entry and exit requirements, visit: http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html.
- If required, contact the appropriate Consulate to begin the visa application process
- Students who do not have a U.S. passport may need a visa to enter the destination country, or re-enter the United States upon return from the trip. Students carrying a passport from another country are required to check their visa status with International Student Services (ISS) prior to going abroad. These students should complete an International Student Status Check Form, which will be available through the Study Abroad online registration system, and meet with an ISS advisor for review and approval of international travel.

International Students & Non-U.S. Citizens

- Verify whether or not any will be participating in your trip.
- If so, determine which documentation (e.g. passport, Permanent Resident or Green Card, visa) the participant needs to enter/exit the destination country, as well as re-enter the U.S. upon conclusion of the trip. Refer to the above **Visa Requirements** section for more information.

Research International Travel and Security Information

- Determine appropriate carry-on and checked baggage allowance. More information can be found on your airline carrier's website or at: <http://tsa.gov>.
- Recommended airport check-in time: 3 hours prior to departure (for international flights); 2 hours prior to departure (domestic flights).

Health and Medical Considerations

- **Vaccinations**—might be required. See the Center for Disease Control's website (<http://cdc.gov>) for country-specific vaccination requirements. **IMPORTANT: For those groups staying at one of the A&M Overseas Centers (Santa Chiara, Soltis Center, or Santa Clara) must provide proof of bacterial meningitis vaccinations for all student participants per University regulations.**
- **Prescription Medications**—should be transported in its original container with the prescription attached. Remind participants to bring a sufficient supply.
- **CISI Medical Insurance**—for more information regarding Texas A&M's policy with CISI, including coverage limits, see <http://studyabroad.tamu.edu/?go=insurance>. All participants will be enrolled in CISI for the duration of the trip.
- **Doctors and Medical Facilities**—for information regarding doctors and medical facilities worldwide, consult the CISI website, or the Study Abroad Programs Office.

Health and Medical Considerations (continued)

- **Medical Consent Form**—This form will be sent to you, along with distribution instructions, by the SAPO Advisor. The form collects information about allergies, medications and medical conditions that the student might have. Should a participant need medical assistance and is incapacitated, this form can be given to the assisting doctor or medical personnel. Student Group Abroad Leaders should travel with a copy of the documents. The documents must be destroyed upon completion of the trip.

Pre-Departure Preparation and Orientations

- In addition to the pre-departure orientation, “Travel Wise,” that the Study Abroad Program Office provides, Student Group Abroad Leaders should provide *at least one* orientation specific to their trip for all student participants. Suggested pre-departure orientation topics include, but are not limited to:
 - Behavior and expectations (pre-departure and while abroad)
 - Budget and financial information
 - Cultural and country-specific information
 - Health and safety advice
 - Travel and packing guidance

Copies of Documents

- Encourage participants to make copies of all important documents (e.g. passport, visa, airline tickets, credit cards, etc.). Have them leave 1 copy with a trusted family member/friend in the U.S., and take 1-2 copies with them abroad.
- Should be stored securely while abroad

Register with the U.S. Embassy or Consulate

- This can be done online at: <https://travelregistration.state.gov/ibrs/ui/>
- Group or individual registration is available

Destination Considerations

- Purchase a good map of each city and town the trip will be visiting
- Arrange a cell phone for while abroad, if necessary
- Determine rendezvous locations, dates and times if group will not always travel together

Final Trip Preparations

- Confirm all in-country logistics, including accommodation reservations, transportation, museum appointments, etc.
- Finalize and distribute a final copy of the trip itinerary, emergency contact information, etc. to all participants
- Confirm that participants requiring special documentation (e.g. visa) are prepared for international travel
- Verify that all participants have submitted required materials (e.g. copies of important documents, Medical Consent Form, etc.)
- Verify **Destination Considerations**

Final Check for U.S. Department of State Travel Announcements

- For information regarding Travel Warnings, visit: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html.
- For information regarding Travel Alerts, visit: http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/pa/pa_1766.html.
- For other news involving international travel for U.S. citizens, visit: http://travel.state.gov/news/news_1735.html.

Questions?

Contact the SAPO Advisor:

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