



Short-Term Study Away/Abroad

Student Handbook

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	2
Risks of Study Away/Abroad	3
Limits of Responsibility	3
Program Changes.....	4
Independent Activity	4
Student code of Conduct.....	4
Travel Documents.....	4
Passports	5
Visas	5
Proof of Insurance	5
Prescriptions	5
Confirmation of Vaccination	5
Copies of Travel Documents	5
Student ID Card.....	5
Pre-departure Planning.....	5
Security Issues	5
Local Laws and Customs	6
Legal Documents	6
Credit Cards	6
Non-verbal Communication.....	6
Appendix.....	7
U.S. State Department Travel Abroad Tips for Students: This complete travel guide can be found at:....	7

Introduction

Please use this handbook to make your exploration of travel and study an easier and more productive experience. Information in this handbook is meant to enhance your travel experience by keeping you safe and informed.

About Study Away/Abroad: Welcome to the world of an educational travel opportunity! Not everyone has a chance to travel away/abroad to study, encounter new cultures and meet other human beings in their native lands, and to view other portions of our globe. Those who do, though, come away different from the experience and are often more appreciative of the common elements of human culture, and excited for the other chances to see the world. Studying abroad allows students to earn academic credit while experiencing the adventure and exhilaration of travelling to a new place. PSEO students are not eligible for these opportunities unless accompanied by a parent.

Why study Away/Abroad: We live in a very globalized world and having study abroad experiences gives students an edge in the marketplace. Many companies are multinational and they are looking for individuals who have a worldview, who understand the sensitives regarding culture, heritage, tradition and religion. Many four-year institutions are now requiring a study abroad experience.

Learn More: Are you thinking about taking advantage of a Study Abroad Opportunity? Click on this link for more information: <https://www.bestcolleges.com/resources/study-abroad-guide/>

One of the most important aspects of study abroad programming is the safety of our students and faculty. Minnesota West Community & Technical College prides itself in keeping students and faculty safe during study trips.

While safety can never be guaranteed, the college employs the following safeguards while planning and conducting study abroad courses:

- Minnesota West Community & Technical College provides a 1 to 10 ratio of faculty to students for all travel.
- Before a trip begins, both administration and faculty conduct sessions with students to discuss all aspects of safety during a trip.
- Tour companies provide insurance to ensure necessary action in the event of an emergency where students may need to leave a country unexpectedly and quickly.
- Health insurance coverage is required for all students traveling abroad. This insurance also includes evacuation coverage as well in the event of emergency.
- Telephone lists are provided for all students to contact faculty during a trip. Faculty leading a trip are provided personal cell numbers of administration in the event it is necessary to contact them any hour of the day.
- A buddy system will be used during any free-time outings.
- Records of health incidents during a study abroad course are collected and reported to the Minnesota Office of Higher Education for review.

If you have any questions regarding our practices and procedures regarding keeping students and faculty safe while traveling please contact Safety Administrator Royce Overland at:

Minnesota West Community & Technical College

1593 11th Ave, Granite Falls, MN 56241 **Office: 320-564-5007**

Pay for travel

Tour companies have a variety of methods to pay for a study abroad trip. They allow monthly payments or one lump sum to be paid by the payment deadline.

Please note that when you make an early deposit, the tour price is locked in. Some tour prices will increase if fuel prices increase.

Students may qualify to use financial aid to cover a large percentage of the travel expense. Students should check with the financial aid office to determine what aid they may be eligible for.

*Please ask about any potential scholarship opportunities to assist with paying for the travel.

Risks of Study Away/Abroad

Participation in the Minnesota West Community and Technical College study-abroad programs is voluntary and involves risks not generally found in study on traditional college campuses. These risks include traveling to and within foreign countries or other locations, as well as adjusting to different political, legal, social, and economic conditions, different standards of design, safety, and maintenance of buildings, public places, and conveyances. As a participant, you should make your own investigation of aspects of traveling abroad and be willing to accept the risks.

Limits of Responsibility

While the College and other groups associated with study abroad programs endeavor to provide a safe, enjoyable, and educationally stimulating experience, there are considerations associated with study abroad that are beyond the control of the College and other organizations providing services to the Program. Generally, Minnesota West Community and Technical College:

- Cannot guarantee that cultural values and norms found in the U.S. will be the same in other countries or locations.
- Cannot guarantee or assure the complete safety of participants or eliminate all risks associated with study abroad.
- Cannot monitor or control the activities of all individuals in the Program.
- Cannot prevent individuals from engaging in unsafe or illegal activities.
- Cannot assure legal assistance to participants.

- Cannot assume responsibility for the actions of individuals who are not employed by the college or associated with the College's study abroad program, or for events that are beyond the control of the college or any of its subcontractors.
- Cannot be responsible for situations that arise from a participant's failure to disclose pertinent information.

Program Changes

The college may, at its sole discretion, determine that circumstances within a foreign country may require the cancellation of the Program within that country or location. The College will provide as much advance notice as possible of its intention to cancel the Program in which you participate. If you leave or are expelled from the Program for any reason, there will be no refund of tuition or fees already paid or owed. You accept all responsibility for loss or for additional expenses due to delays or other changes in the means of transportation, other services, or sickness, weather, strikes, computer problems, or other unforeseen causes. If you become sick or injured, you will, at your own expense, seek out, contact, and join the Program group at its next available destination. The College bears no liability for any losses or claims incurred by you in connection with your own early termination from the Program or the College's termination of its participation in the Program due to circumstances beyond its control.

Independent Activity

Although Minnesota West Community and Technical College facilitates this program, please remember that the College, the Faculty Coordinator, or the travel arrangers will not be supervising you at all times. You may have the opportunity to leave the group periodically using the buddy system, subject to the Faculty Coordinator's approval. The expectation is to discuss with the faculty member what you are planning on doing during the independent activity time.

Student Code of Conduct

It is your responsibility to become informed of and to abide by the all laws and social standards for each place you will travel during the Program. Understand that if you are involved in a legal dispute with a foreign national or violate the laws of any country during participation in the Program, you must attend to the matter personally with your own funds. The College does not guarantee any assistance under such circumstances.

Recognize that due to the circumstances of foreign study programs, the procedures for notice, hearing and appeal applicable to student disciplinary proceedings at the College are less formal. If you are sent home or asked to leave the Program, you consent to being sent home at your own expense with no refund of tuition or fees. **By participating in this program, you also agree that you will (a) not buy, sell, or use illegal drugs at any time, (b) not engage in abusive use of alcohol, (c) participate in all classes and scheduled activities unless ill, and (d) abide by the dress and cultural codes suitable in the countries/locations visited.**

Travel Documents

Proper documentation is required for entry to foreign countries and for re-entry into the U.S. Each country has its own special requirements for entry. It is important that you find out what these requirements are and plan in advance. Obtaining documents from embassies or consulates can take from one hour to three months.

Passports

A passport is the document from your home country that confirms your citizenship. You need a current passport that is valid beyond the time your program ends. **Keep your passport with you at all times.** Allow up to six weeks to receive a U.S. passport. It may take longer for non-U.S. citizens to obtain a passport. To obtain a passport:

- Get application form from local Post Office or go online to <http://travel.state.gov>

When you receive your passport, make two photocopies of the data page. Give one to an emergency contact person in the U.S., **provide one to the Faculty Coordinator for the College who will file it with the Office of the Provost**, and pack one separate from the original passport. The photocopy will speed replacement in the event you lose your passport.

Visas

A visa is a document provided by the country where you will be studying which confirms your legitimate status as a foreign student. Not all study abroad programs require visas, but some may. It is your responsibility to obtain a visa if necessary.

Proof of Insurance

You should carry an insurance card or other document verifying that you have travel and health insurance. A copy should be provided to the faculty member and with the Office of the Provost at Minnesota West Community and Technical College.

Prescriptions

If you require prescription medicines while abroad, you will likely need to verify this requirement with a doctor's note. If the country does not recognize American prescriptions, you may need a specially notarized prescription translated into the host country's language. If you are not sure about the legality of carrying certain drugs into or within a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country.

Copies of Travel Documents

Along with your originals, bring a copy of all travel documents and leave a copy of your travel documents with a contact in the U.S. and abroad. Remember to keep copies in a safe place separate from where you keep your original documents.

Student ID Card

Minnesota West Community and Technical College requires that students participating in a study-abroad program have a Student ID Card.

Pre-departure Planning

Security Issues

The Department of State's Consular Information Sheets are available for every country in the world. They describe entry procedures, currency regulations, unusual health conditions, the crime and security situation, political disturbances, areas of instability, special information about driving and road conditions, and drug penalties. They also provide addresses and emergency telephone numbers for U.S. embassies and consulates. In general, the sheets do not give advice. In some dangerous situations, however, the Department of State recommends that Americans delay travel to a particular country. In such a case a Travel Warning is issued for the country.

These documents are available at the 13 regional passport agencies at U.S. embassies and consulates abroad or by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to:

Overseas Citizens Services, Room 4811, Department of State, Washington, DC 20520-4818
Telephone 202-647-5225, Fax 202-647-3000
www.state.travel.gov

Local Laws and Customs

When you leave the U.S., you are subject to the laws of the country where you are. Therefore, before you go, try to learn as much as you can about the laws and customs of your host country. Good resources include your library, your travel agent, and the embassies, consulates or tourist bureaus of the countries you will visit. Also keep track of what is being reported in the media about recent developments in those countries. You will not only have to conform to the laws of the local country, you are also required to obey the codes of conduct for the program participants.

Legal Documents

Have your affairs at home in order. If you leave a current will, insurance documents, and power of attorney with your family or a friend, you can feel secure about traveling and will be prepared for any emergency that may arise. If you have minor children, consider making guardianship arrangements for them.

Credit Cards

Make a note of the credit limit on each credit card that you bring. Make certain not to charge over that amount on your trip. In some countries, Americans have been arrested for innocently exceeding their credit limit. Ask your credit card company how to report the loss of your card from abroad. Remember, 800 numbers do not work from abroad. Ask your credit card company for a number you can call from abroad.

Exchange rates are automatically applied to credit card purchases. Worldwide access to automatic teller machines and cash advances is generally available with credit cards such as VISA, Master Card, and American Express and bankcards such as Plus and Cirrus. However, access to automatic teller machines and other services offered will vary depending on the card and the country or location you are in.

Non-verbal Communication

Non-verbal communication such as body language and hand gestures that may be common and acceptable in the U.S. may be considered offensive in some foreign countries and can even vary by locations. These "signals" are not always obvious. Learn what is appropriate and what isn't.

Appendix

U.S. State Department Travel Abroad Tips for Students: This complete travel guide can be found at:
<http://travel.state.go/studentinfor.html>