

STUDY ABROAD ONLINE PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

All Programs

Welcome to the Study Abroad Online Orientation!

- ◆ This orientation covers all of the topics listed on the tabs above to help prepare you for your program abroad.
- ◆ This orientation will take approximately 30 minutes to review.
- ◆ You will find links throughout the presentation to helpful and informative websites. If you have any questions about the information in this orientation, we encourage you to contact the Study Abroad Office or your program director.
- ◆ The orientation will remain available to you on the study abroad website after completion. It can be a good resource throughout your preparation and even while abroad, so refer back to them as often as you need. You may also wish to print them out for reference away from your computer.

Passport

- ◆ If you don't currently have a valid passport, apply for one **immediately**. The normal processing time is 6-8 weeks, although expedited services are available for an additional fee.
- ◆ If you need a visa for your program, you must have a valid passport before you can apply for a visa.
- ◆ Many countries require that your passport still be valid at least 6 months after you return to the U.S. so be sure to check your expiration date.
- ◆ You can apply for a passport at any major post office or on campus during a Passport Day, there is usually one held during Fall and Spring semester. Applications and instructions may also be found online at the [US Dept. of State website](#).

Passport

- ◆ Make at least three copies of the first page of your passport: two to keep with you and one to leave at home with a parent or designated person. You may also need to submit a copy of your passport to your host institution or program provider.
- ◆ If you lose your passport while abroad, taking a photocopy to the nearest American Embassy makes the process of getting a new passport easier.
- ◆ It is also recommended that your emergency contacts at home have a valid passport of their own prior to your departure in case of an emergency abroad.

Visa

- ◆ A visa is required for many programs. A visa validates your presence, time and purpose while in a country. Without the proper visa documents, you could be denied entrance to your host country. It is your responsibility to comply with the visa requirements of your host country.
- ◆ To find out if you require a visa, check Entry/Exit Requirements for your host country on the U.S. State Department's [Students Abroad website](#).
- ◆ It can take up to three months to obtain a visa and it can be an unpredictable process, so you must plan accordingly and **start the process early!**
- ◆ In most cases, you must submit a valid passport along with your visa application. Many countries also require you to submit your application in person at the nearest consulate.
- ◆ If you plan to travel to other countries while abroad, you should find out each country's visa requirement before you leave the U.S.

Special Notes for Non-U.S. Citizens

- ◆ If you are studying abroad and you are not a U.S. citizen or do not have a U.S. passport, complete the following steps to ensure you obtain a valid visa for your host country and maintain your U.S. immigration status:
 1. Contact the appropriate authorities to determine the visa requirements for all of the countries you plan to visit during your time abroad. You will likely need to contact the consulate or embassy of your destination country, both in your country of citizenship and the in the U.S.
 2. Check your current U.S. visa status with the International Studies Office. This step can help to prevent any immigration issues upon your return to the U.S. **You are responsible for making sure your immigration documents are in order so that you can return to the U.S. and to The Citadel.**
 3. Be sure that The Study Abroad Office, your Citadel Program Director and your on-site coordinator are aware that you are a citizen of a foreign country.



The Visa is Important!

- ◆ How important? If your program requires a visa, and you do not have the appropriate visa, you cannot go! When a visa is required, it's that simple: no visa = no study abroad.
- ◆ Do not take chances with your visa. You are dealing with a foreign government that will not make any allowances or exceptions for you.
- ◆ If the consulate says something is required for your visa application, then you can be assured that IT IS REQUIRED. Do not send incomplete applications, which can cause endless delay and frustration!
- ◆ Make sure to keep copies of **all of the documents** you submit with your visa application. If you mail your application, use a trackable mail method like FedEx, DHL, USPS Express, etc. You want to have a tracking number and proof of delivery for your passport and documents.

Flight Tips

- ◆ Be sure to purchase a flight that arrives in your host country at the time and date specified for your study abroad program.
- ◆ Unless instructed otherwise, you should plan flights that arrive during daylight/business hours as a safety precaution.
- ◆ Some useful online search engines for finding flights are www.kayak.com, www.studentuniverse.com and www.statravel.com.
- ◆ Pay close attention to cancellation and change fees. Some tickets will allow you to change return dates for a small fee. Others do not allow you this option or charge a substantial fee.
- ◆ Student discounts may be available, and student tickets are often more flexible regarding changes.
- ◆ You may want to purchase additional travel insurance, which covers lost or damaged luggage and flight cancellation or delays.

Packing Tips

- ◆ Don't pack more than you can carry! Remember, you will be walking through airports, up and down stairs, and navigating new cities while carrying all of your luggage by yourself. Be sure you can do this comfortably and safely.
- ◆ Pack light! Bring clothes that can be layered as the weather changes. Leave room in your suitcase for bringing back the things you'll buy in your host country.
- ◆ A good carry-on is a small bag or backpack that can also be used for weekend travel.
- ◆ Bring comfortable shoes. In most places, you'll be doing much more walking than you're used to at home. (Ladies, high heels and wet cobblestone do not mix!)
- ◆ If there are specific toiletry products or brands that you can't live without, bring them with you. However, you can usually purchase something similar abroad.
- ◆ Be sure to check the [TSA website](#) for guidelines on what you can and cannot pack in your checked and carry-on luggage (liquids, gels, sharp objects, etc. are often restricted).

Packing Tips

- ◆ Check with your airline about fees and/or limits on checked and carry-on luggage. The number of bags and weight allowed varies by airline and destination.
- ◆ Be sure your carry-on bag contains anything you might need if your flights are canceled or delayed or if your luggage is lost. This includes medications, contact information and arrival instructions for your host country, essential toiletry items, and a change of clothes.
- ◆ You should label each piece of your luggage, both outside and inside, with your U.S. address and your address in your host destination. It is not uncommon for your luggage to arrive later than you do, and labeling makes it easier for your luggage to find you.

Money Matters

- ◆ You will be responsible for personal expenses abroad including toiletries, entertainment and transportation. These expenses will vary depending on your location and your personal spending habits.
- ◆ The estimated total budget for your program can be found on the program's website. As a reminder, the budget includes only program-related expenses and does not include additional funds for personal travel during weekends or breaks, shopping, or leisure activities.
- ◆ Prior to departure, check the current exchange rate in your host country. Keep in mind that exchange rates will likely fluctuate during your time abroad.

Local Currency and ATMs

- ◆ Let your bank know you will be travelling out of the country, where and for how long you will be gone. This will prevent them from disabling your cards when charges from a foreign country appear.
- ◆ Check with your bank to see if there is a affiliated branch in your host country with lower transaction fees.
- ◆ Memorize your 4-digit PIN code in numbers, not letters. Most ATMs outside the U.S. do not have letters on the keypad.
- ◆ It is recommended to exchange about \$100-\$200 into your host country's currency before you leave the U.S. The main branch of most banks can exchange currency, but for some currencies this could take 2-3 weeks. Arriving with local currency ensures that you can easily get a taxi from the airport or buy a meal without having to find an open bank or ATM.
- ◆ The most convenient way to get money once you are abroad is generally an ATM, and the exchange rates are usually better. If your debit card has a Visa/Plus or Mastercard/Cirrus logo on it, you will be able to use most ATMs around the world.

Local Currency and ATMs

- ◆ An ATM in a foreign country will give you local currency. Stay aware of the exchange rate to know how much you are withdrawing from your account in U.S. dollars.
- ◆ Many banks have a daily withdrawal limit. Understand yours, if applicable, in both U.S. dollars and the currency of your host country.
- ◆ Ask your bank in the U.S. about any additional fees you might have to pay to withdraw money abroad. Be careful, because these fees can add up.
- ◆ Give instructions to someone in the U.S. on how to deposit money into the account you plan to access abroad.

Emergency Funds, Credit Cards and Traveler's Checks

- ◆ It is recommended to set aside at least \$500 for unexpected emergencies. If you need access to more money in an emergency, your stateside contact can deposit money into your account or wire you money. Before you leave the U.S., you and your family should decide how they should send you money if you need it, and you should also identify at least one backup method of receiving funds.
- ◆ It is recommended to take a credit card with you for emergencies or large purchases. Credit cards generally have a good exchange rate, although some may charge fees for use abroad. Visa and MasterCard are recognized almost everywhere. American Express is less widely used overseas and Discover is generally unknown outside the U.S.
- ◆ In many countries, it is much less common to use credit cards for small purchases (a coffee, a casual meal, a magazine, etc.). You should plan to use cash for such items.

Emergency Funds, Credit Cards and Traveler's Checks

- ◆ Make two sets of photocopies of the front and back of your credit and debit cards. Leave one set of copies with your stateside contact and keep the other one with you in a safe place. If your cards are lost or stolen, a photocopy will make it easier to cancel and replace them.
- ◆ Before you leave the U.S., be sure to call your bank and credit/debit card company to let them know that you will be traveling abroad. This will prevent them from disabling your cards when charges from a foreign country appear.
- ◆ Although traveler's checks may be useful as emergency funds, they are not recommended as your primary source of funds abroad. They are often inconvenient to exchange and there are typically additional fees. Traveler's checks can usually be exchanged at major airports and at some banks in large cities during limited hours.

Identity Fraud

- ◆ While this type of crime happens in the U.S. also, students accessing funds overseas are at a higher risk.
- ◆ Minimize your chances of becoming a victim:
 - ▣ Always use ATM machines inside secure locations while abroad (i.e. banks, university buildings)
 - ▣ Always shield the keypad while entering your PIN number (simple and effective)
 - ▣ If an ATM machine's interface appears unfamiliar or unusual – DO NOT USE IT!
 - ▣ Know your bank's:
 - Policy on coverage for identity theft/fraudulent charges to your account
 - Contact information in the event you believe your information may be compromised
 - Plan for card cancellation and replacement in the event of an incident while abroad
 - ▣ Check you bank statements regularly while abroad
 - Contact your bank immediately if you have questions about unusual purchases

Your Health Abroad

- ◆ As you prepare for your study abroad program, keep in mind that at times studying abroad can be stressful. This is especially true in light of any health conditions you might currently have and are receiving treatment for here in the U.S. **Be sure to talk to your doctor and other health care professionals about how you will manage your physical and/or mental health conditions while you are abroad.**
- ◆ While your health and safety are your responsibility, The Citadel Study Abroad Office and your on-site coordinators can also assist students in finding additional resources and support services abroad. For more information on the resources available, please talk to the Study Abroad Office.
- ◆ It is important to disclose any physical or mental health conditions, prescription medications, or allergies that may affect your health abroad to your Study Abroad Program Director, program provider, faculty leader, and/or on-site director prior to departure. This information will be kept confidential and is not used as part of any acceptance process.

Vaccinations and Health Precautions

- ◆ The CDC Travelers' Health website is a useful resource for country-specific health recommendations.
- ◆ Please be sure to review all necessary requirements for your travel. Visit your physician prior to leaving and let him/her know where you will be traveling. Be sure that you receive all required immunizations and medical tests.

Medications and Prescriptions

- ◆ If you are currently taking any medications, check with your doctor for recommendations concerning your medications while abroad.
- ◆ U.S. prescriptions cannot be filled at foreign pharmacies, and the same medications may not be available abroad. Be sure to take an adequate supply of prescription and over-the-counter medication with you to last your entire time abroad.
- ◆ If your insurance does not allow you to fill a prescription for the entire length of time you will be abroad, you should talk to your doctor about possible solutions. In some cases, a prescription from your U.S. doctor with the scientific name of the drug clearly indicated, along with a letter of explanation from your doctor, may allow a foreign doctor to write you a local prescription.
- ◆ **All medications should be carried in their original, clearly labeled containers. Always carry prescription and other important medications with you in your carry-on bag in case your checked luggage is delayed or lost.**
- ◆ Additional information, like a letter from your doctor listing your medications and explaining why you need them, may be helpful for foreign medical providers as well as customs agents.

Medications and Prescriptions (cont.)

- ◆ The laws regarding certain medications (injectable drugs, controlled substances, narcotics, etc.) differ from country to country, and some medications may be highly regulated or illegal abroad. You should contact the embassy of the countries you are visiting to get a list of drugs that are illegal or controlled and for direction on what to do if you have such a prescription: [Web sites of Foreign Embassies in the US](#).
- ◆ If you have diabetes, drug or food allergies, or any other physical condition that may require emergency care, you should carry special identification (a tag, bracelet or card) with you at all times. In case of emergency, if you are not able to give this information, the identification will be helpful to the medical providers treating you.
- ◆ If you wear glasses or contacts, take along a copy of your prescription and an extra pair.
- ◆ You should also consider bringing your own over the counter drugs for various ailments, ex. Headaches, colds, coughs, etc.

Seeing a doctor while abroad

- ◆ Visit the medical service provider of your choice, or one recommended by Host Institution/On-site coordinator
- ◆ **Keep all receipts for medical visits!** Be prepared to pay for minor medical appointments and/or prescriptions up to \$500 at the time of treatment and file a claim later.
- ◆ Student should submit a claim form and receipts within 90 days of treatment to the international health insurance company, iNext.
- ◆ If you have a major medical incident (*broken bone, hospitalization, prolonged illness*) or serious emergency **always** contact your program director immediately, or as soon as reasonably possible.

Overseas Health Insurance

- ◆ All students taking part in any international travel connected with The Citadel will be provided international travel insurance through iNext. This includes but is not limited to students who are studying abroad, conducting research, traveling with students organizations, etc. This fee is included in your total program cost.
- ◆ You will be enrolled in this insurance coverage automatically.
- ◆ Some students will be required to purchase another insurance policy required by their program or the host country. Questions about duplicate coverage should be addressed with the Study Abroad Office or your Program Provider.
- ◆ iNext Coverage Information,
<http://www.inext.com/downloads/2016/Basic%20Comp%20250k%2033%20State.pdf>
- ◆ International Student Identification Card: Offers discounts on airfare, ground transportation, hotel accommodations, and admission to tourists sites. It also carries a supplemental insurance policy.
<https://www.myisic.com/>

U.S. Health Insurance

We **STRONGLY** encourage all students to maintain their U.S. health insurance policy while overseas in case:

- ◆ Continuing treatment is required upon return.
- ◆ You are medically evacuated and require admission to a U.S. hospital.
- ◆ A condition that began overseas would be considered a pre-existing medical condition upon return to the U.S. , potentially preventing coverage.

Transfer credit

- ◆ Grades for participation in Citadel affiliate and approved programs will be awarded according to the policies and practices of the sponsoring study abroad institutions and organizations. These grades will then be sent to the Registrar's Office of The Citadel for evaluation. The Citadel will only accept those transfer courses with a grade of "C" or better. Credit hours will be assigned to the grades and these hours will be recorded on the student's transcript. When transferring grades to The Citadel from another institution, only credit hours are recorded on a transcript, not the actual grades
- ◆ You must get your courses approved to receive final acceptance to study abroad
- ◆ Courses abroad- in the event that courses are cancelled while students are abroad, it is the student's responsibility to communicate this information to their home institution as well as work with the host institution or their program representative to ensure all intended courses are completed.
- ◆ Athletes- If student athletes study abroad it is their responsibility to work with their coaches or the athletic department to ensure they are and will remain in compliance with the NCAA regulations during their study abroad program.

◆ Course Registration Abroad

- You will still receive all email and notification from The Citadel while abroad. Please be sure to keep checking your Citadel email.
- You will register for courses via Lesesne Gateway, the same way you would as if you were on campus. It is your responsibility to know when you need to register and which classes you need to take.

<http://www.citadel.edu/root/registrar-important-dates/fall>

- All courses and course information for pre-registration will be available in BANNER.
- You must email your advisor at The Citadel to be advised about course selection prior to pre-registration

◆ Class attendance

- Students enrolled in a study abroad program are required to attend all regularly scheduled classes and fieldtrips.

Safety Basics

- ◆ Although travel to another country is not always dangerous, no matter where you go, you will inevitably stand out as a foreigner or tourist.
- ◆ Some locations abroad may seem safer than the U.S., but a lack of familiarity with the culture, language and location may put you at a higher risk overseas.
- ◆ Crime experienced by students abroad is generally limited to petty theft or pick-pocketing, although violent crimes have affected students abroad.

HOW TO AVOID PETTY THEFT

- Always use the buddy system
- Always be aware of your surroundings.
- Don't walk around with your headphones on.
- Avoid wearing flashy or expensive jewelry.
- Hold your backpack or purse in your lap or in front of you when entering a crowded area.
- Avoid unfamiliar areas after dark –especially don't walk alone at night.

Safe Travel Tips

- ◆ Learn as much of your host country's language as possible before going abroad. Every word helps! You should at least know greetings, how to ask for basic directions, and how to say “please” and “thank you.”
- ◆ Before you leave the U.S., start two folders of information, **one to take abroad, and one to leave with your stateside contact**. Include:
 - ▣ Photocopies of your passport, visa, credit cards, insurance info, travel itinerary, bank info, and other paperwork
 - ▣ Contact information for your Program Director, the Study Abroad Office, your host institution abroad, and your emergency contact abroad
 - ▣ Prescriptions and other health information
- ◆ Make sure that your designated stateside emergency contact is entered in your abroad office account in your User Profile.

Safe Travel Tips

- ◆ Register your travel plans with the [U.S. Department of State](#) before you go. The Department of State can use this information to assist you in case of emergency.
- ◆ Contact your parents or stateside contact as soon as you can after you arrive! Before you leave, establish a specific date and time by which they should expect your call. Keep in mind the time difference, and remember that it will take some time after your flight lands for you to get your luggage, go through customs, and reach your destination.
- ◆ When traveling during your program, leave a detailed itinerary with your program director and stateside contact so that you can be contacted in case of emergency.

Risk Factors

- ◆ Common risk factors for students abroad are listed below. Although some risk factors are unavoidable, reducing or eliminating any of these factors increases your chances of being safe.
 - Being new to the country
 - Being unable to speak the local language
 - Being overwhelmed and stressed
 - Being intoxicated
 - Being alone at night
 - Being alone in an isolated area
 - Being alone in a high crime area
 - Being alone at an ATM while withdrawing money
 - Being ALONE anywhere
 - Being asleep in an unlocked place
 - Being out after local curfew
 - Trusting new acquaintances too quickly
 - Accepting unknown packages from strangers
- ◆ The keys to staying safe abroad are to be aware of risk factors and to **use common sense**, just as in the U.S. Ultimately, you are responsible for the choices you make regarding your safety.

Alcohol

A majority of incidents abroad involve alcohol. For your safety please consider:

- Don't leave drinks unattended.
- Alcohol in other countries can be much stronger (ex. higher alcohol content in beer).
- Know how many drinks you can handle before becoming impaired.
- Drinking to get drunk is not the norm and in many countries and is not culturally acceptable.
- Criminals and predators target people who are visibly impaired for pick pocketing, spiking your drink or even assault.
- Don't leave a friend behind! Always use the buddy system!

Resources: <http://www.citadel.edu/root/cadic>

Fire Safety

Although being trapped in a burning building is rare, thinking ahead and having an exit strategy is essential. Being alert and prepared could save your life in an emergency.

Case In Point:

- ❖ In April 2011, a residential fire in Paris took the lives of four U.S. students who were unable to escape.
- ❖ In January 2013, a night club fire in Rio Grande do Sol, Brazil took the lives of 242 people, many of whom were college-age students.

We encourage students to practice “**situational awareness**”, whether in your dorm room, homestay, classroom, nightclub or a train station. Look around. Observe your environment. **Identify a primary and secondary exit.**

Resource: Fire Safety Foundation

<http://www.firesafetyfoundation.org/>

Espionage

U.S. citizens can be targets of foreign criminal activity. Take a moment to raise your awareness of the possibility of foreign recruitment of U.S. citizens against the U.S. or major U.S. companies. The FBI recently developed a short film titled, "Game of Pawns" to help college students understand the threat and dangers associated with espionage. This is real. American college students have been recruited for espionage purposes. This is a national security concern.

Game of Pawns – A brief overview

- A college student is offered a scholarship as an initial inducement to work for a foreign government.
- The student's activities initially are not illegal or harmful.
- The student becomes more and more dependent on the financial arrangement.
- He is pressured to apply for a position with the CIA by the foreign officials.
- Halfway through the CIA polygraph test the student realizes that he is trapped.
- On his way out of the CIA headquarters he is arrested by the U.S. government for attempted espionage.

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| | Basics | Tips | Risk Factors | Alcohol | Fire Safety | Espionage | Guidelines | |

Espionage *(continued)*

Things to Consider:

1. Something that seems too good to be true usually is.
2. Never accept cash payment for a scholarship.
3. When in doubt, consult with someone you trust.

To view an excerpt of the short film on YouTube
<http://youtu.be/CMI6zVgPmSs>

Full Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEYRLDvJaxo>

Safety Guidelines

Below are a few guidelines that can help you stay safe. Remember, be assertive when confronted with unwanted situations. Don't let anyone push you into taking risks. If you feel unsafe, you probably are. Trust your instincts.

- Familiarize yourself with local laws
- Avoid crowds, protests groups or other potentially volatile situations
- Learn about the cultural norms for men and women in your host country.
- Dress conservatively, as many stereotypes are made based on appearance.
- Be cautious when meeting new people.
- Don't give your address and phone number to strangers or people you just met.
- Ask about the safety of local taxis, and avoid taking a taxi by yourself late at night.
- Don't walk around at night by yourself.
- To avoid unwanted attention, avoid speaking English loudly in public places.
- Limit the amount of expensive jewelry you wear.
- Don't leave your bags unattended anywhere.
- When using a public telephone, stand facing out to see your surroundings.

Safety Guidelines

- ❑ Carry your bag or purse in front of your body.
- ❑ Choose a bag or purse that closes securely (i.e. has a zipper and not a snap).
- ❑ Don't carry your wallet or valuables in your back pockets.
- ❑ Avoid local political demonstrations.
- ❑ Do not participate in illegal drug use.
- ❑ If you have sex, have safe sex. Bring condoms from the U.S. if you are unsure of availability or quality in your host country.
- ❑ Don't hitchhike.
- ❑ Remember that your life is always more important than your possessions.

Although cultural norms can differ greatly in other countries, cultural sensitivity does not take precedence over notions of decency and appropriate behavior.

If you believe that you have been dealt with in an inappropriate manner, either sexually or otherwise, report the incident immediately to any of the following people: Janet Shealy, your program director, on-site coordinator and Study Abroad Office.

- ◆ **Protocol for responding to Sexual Assault or Sexual Harassment while abroad is available at the following link & on the "Students Abroad" tab of our website, <http://citadel.abroadoffice.net/studentsabroad.html>**

CONDUCT

- ◆ Make sure that you understand the rules and regulations of: your program, your foreign institution/your host family AND The Citadel.
- ◆ Study Abroad Contract & Liability Waiver – Inappropriate behavior reported to The Citadel by the program will be dealt with on a case by case basis & students will be subject to The Citadel's disciplinary system upon return. – Students are required to adhere to program providers rules/regulations during semester abroad. If you have questions about this while abroad contact our office.

Additional Resources

- ◆ The U.S. State Department publishes helpful [safety information for US Students Abroad](#)

- ◆ **Learning About your Host Country**

A wealth of information is available online about your host country. Most countries have an official tourism website, and the [U.S. Department of State](#), and [CDC](#) offer country-specific information as well. Travel or ex-pat discussion forums can be helpful as well.

Additional Resources

◆ **Guidebooks**

Purchase a country guidebook prior to departure. Take this book with you and refer to it often. Even if you do not intend to travel, guidebooks cover many important cultural aspects as well as useful practical information. There are also specialty guides for female travelers, first-time travelers, and LGBT travelers.

◆ **Citadel Resources**

1. Citadel study abroad alumni are valuable sources of information, <http://citadel.abroadoffice.net/gallery.html>.
2. You can read student reviews of Independent programs online via the [Abroad101](#) website
3. Contact information for previous program participants can be obtained from your Study Abroad Office.

Thank you for reviewing the Online Pre-Departure Orientation Information

Completing pre-departure orientation is **MANDATORY** for all students studying abroad. If you have any questions after reviewing this information please contact the Study Abroad Office via email studyabroad@citadel.edu.

REMEMBER:

We are an advocate for our students even while you are abroad do not hesitate to contact us at any time. – You are an ambassador of The Citadel and the world will hold you to the high standards of the institution.