

Preparing for Off- Campus Study

I have been accepted to study Off Campus. What should I do next?:



Remember!

Participation on the program is not guaranteed. You must:

- Submit all required documents to CIIS as indicated in your Studio Abroad file- including applications for Additional Financial Aid and/or Air Fare Assistance where applicable. (see list of [funding options](#) and [estimated "non-covered" costs](#))
- Secure a passport valid at least 3 months beyond the end date of your program.
- Make sure that you have medical insurance with worldwide coverage*.
- Complete all health related requirements, including [immunizations](#).
- Attend all orientation meetings.
- Maintain the academic and disciplinary record on which your acceptance was based.
- Read the program handbook
- Select courses on your program: For SLU programs complete and submit the registration form to CIIS. For other programs: Complete the host institution's registration process and the Transfer Credit, if applicable, and submit this to CIIS.
- Carefully complete all applicable visa processes in a timely manner.

*Some programs will require you to enroll in their national insurance plan or a study abroad policy in order to obtain a visa.

What Other preparations should I make before leaving campus/the US

Before Leaving Campus

- Apply for Additional Financial Aid or Air Fare Assistance by the stated deadline. (if applicable)
- Talk to your advisor
- Obtain accommodations letter from Disability and Accessibility Services if applicable.
- Visit the IT Department to safeguard your computer while abroad and install the VPN program to access the campus network.**

Before leaving the US

- Book Flights – according to the date & time of expected arrival and end date of your program.
- Visit your Doctor and Dentist for check-ups
- Secure Prescriptions for medication to last throughout the program (there are restrictions on mailing medications and you may not be able to obtain your medication in your host country.)
- Secure an extra pair of glasses/contacts
- Check the [State Department's site](#) for information about your host culture and register your trip with the [US State Department's STEP program](#).

How should I prepare myself for the experience?

Inform yourself about your host culture before you go:

Read current newspaper or magazine articles on line, talk to others who have been there, listen to news stories. This will enable you to engage with your hosts more easily upon arrival.

Can you answer some basic questions such as:

- What is the current population?
- How many prominent people in the host country can you name?
- What is the most pressing social issue?
- What is the history of the relationship between this country and the US?

Staying Healthy

Off-campus programs can be a time of significant change and reflection and this may be stressful for some. At the same time, study abroad programs cannot provide the same level of support that you have on campus in the areas of counseling or advising. If you have a **health concern, stress, eating disorder, emotional challenge**, or any issue which could be exacerbated by great distance from home and immersion in a different culture, please discuss your situation with your physician, counselor or therapist to develop a plan for how to manage best in this new situation. Staff in CIIS is happy to be a partner in such discussions. Note that your physician may not be fully aware of the conditions on the study abroad program, one good reason to consult with this office.

Monitor your emotional and physical health.

Practice good self-care: eat well, get adequate rest, and exercise. New foods may be difficult for you to digest at first. In certain parts of the world, you will need to be cautious of raw foods, untreated water (and ice), or unpasteurized dairy products. Consider vitamin supplements if you feel you aren't getting the necessary nutrition to stay healthy.

If you deal with mental health issues, they will not go away and may intensify in an off-campus setting. Do not make drastic changes in your medication directly prior to the program. Do not stop taking your medication and remember to take a sufficient supply with you to last throughout the program as all medications may not be available in other countries. Working with a professional before you depart may aid in developing new coping skills or strengthening the skills you have to minimize issues while on the program.

Academics

- St. Lawrence University values the education that takes place on off-campus study. SLU programs require your active participation in the academic courses in order to be successful on the program. Credit for programs designated as SLU or affiliated/partner off-campus programs, is residence credit and grades earned are computed in the gpa. Participation in a SLU or affiliated/partner program counts towards the residence requirement.
- You are permitted to take a course pass-fail on off-campus programs following the on campus guidelines including:

The Pass/Fail option may be chosen for one course in any semester for course units taken to satisfy distribution requirements or any elective semester units outside the major or minor. The Pass/Fail option requires the written consent of the instructor, and notification of the Registrar's Office, within the first 25 days after classes begin. A student must attain a minimum of a 1.0 grade to receive a Pass for the course. Students should be aware that **grades of 0.0 (F) are calculated in the grade point average**. Although the P grade is not calculated in the grade point average, P grades may place students at a competitive disadvantage when they apply for admission to some graduate or professional schools.

- The cross-cultural learning that takes place in a new environment extends to the classroom setting as well. You will need to be flexible to adjust to the expectations of classroom culture in the host setting. For example, you may not be provided with a detailed syllabus, your work may be assessed infrequently, your classes may be larger lecture-style courses, you may be expected to keep up on your own, and/or it may not be as appropriate as on SLU's campus to interrupt the professor to ask questions.

Required Course Load

You are expected to take a full course load while participating on an off-campus program. For those of you participating on a SLU partner program, please refer to the chart below to verify the number of courses in which you are required to enroll.

Australia	Four courses/subjects (the equivalent of 12 credit points) including a required course focused on the peoples and cultures of Australia.
Czech Republic	A minimum of 15 credits, including the mandatory language course.
China	A minimum of 15 credits, including the mandatory language course.
Costa Rica	A minimum of 15 credits.
Denmark	15 credits required; typically 5 courses, including the mandatory language course.
Italy - Cortona	15 credits required. Please note: Studio courses and the required Art History course count as 1 SLU unit while other courses transfer in at .83 units. It may be necessary to enroll in more than four courses depending on the courses you select.
Italy – LdM	15 credits required. Please note: The courses offered at LdM vary in credit – make sure your courses total 15 credits.
Japan	A minimum of 15 credits.
Jordan	A minimum of 15 credits including Arabic language.
New Zealand	72 points at the University of Otago including a required course focused on the peoples and cultures of New Zealand.
Thailand	A minimum of 15 credits. This will include three required courses (9 credits) and 2 elective courses (6 credits.)
Trinidad	Five courses including three required course and two electives at the University of the West Indies.

Cultural Sensitivity

When you travel abroad, you are in some ways a cultural ambassador. It is crucial to realize this and act accordingly. Developing cultural sensitivity can allow you to gain entry into and acceptance within the host culture. You should not, however, submit to behaviors that make you feel unsafe.

- Try to listen to their perspective and engage in the conversation without being overly defensive.
- If you are traveling to a country where another language is spoken, make an effort to learn it. A little effort on your part will go a long way.
- Use common sense, be considerate and respectful of your host family.
- Integrate into the local community.
- Dress and behave according to local customs.
- Maintain a level of formality with people unknown to you. Informality can be perceived as a “come-on” at worst or a lack of respect at best.

Living in a host family

- ▶ Do not expect things to be like they are at home. **You** will need to adapt.
- ▶ Spend time getting to know the family. Make an effort to join in family activities.
- ▶ Be considerate and respectful of your host family. Do not use the phone, laundry, TV, etc. without permission.
- ▶ Be energy conscious—be conservative in your use of hot water and electricity.
- ▶ Abide by family rules, curfews, standards of dress, etc. When in doubt, ask.
- ▶ Use your language skills and demonstrate an interest in the culture.
- ▶ Do not be overly critical of the host culture.
- ▶ Have realistic expectations.
- ▶ Offer to help with household chores, even if they don't accept your offer.
- ▶ Do Not bring uninvited guests into the home.

Cultural Adaptation/Stress

- An intercultural experience can be a powerful teacher that forces you to look at yourself and others in new ways. Most travelers have some expectation about differences in the host culture; what is sometimes shocking is the realization of how your own culture has shaped you.
- Take time to imagine what it will feel like for you to live in the host culture. Anticipate what may feel uncomfortable for you. Think about how you deal with stress and whether or not this will be possible in the new culture.
- While in the host culture, observe, listen and describe rather than look for examples that validate your preconceived notions; do not interpret or judge before you are sure you have observed and listened carefully.
- It can be exhausting to be aware and observe what is happening around you and this may be stressful for some. It is therefore important for you to monitor your emotional and physical health. Eat and sleep well, get exercise, etc. Try to be objective, but recognize that you can never entirely succeed. The filter of your own culture will always affect what you see.

Tips to help with culture shock:

- Keep busy and set goals – regardless of how small they might be.
- Settle in the room or residence – make it 'home'
- Write a journal – it will put things into perspective.
- Share feelings with other students or advisors or host families – sometimes just talking things through will help you feel better.
- Improve language abilities by practicing with friends and neighbors
- Get involved in an activity that you enjoy and that helps you meet people
- Participate in sports/recreational activities – it is a good way to work out frustration, relieve stress, and meet new people.

Safety

The selection of locations for and the continuation of all off-campus study programs is based on, among other factors, the availability of a safe environment for students. Unforeseen circumstances may cause an interruption in or termination of a program. Should that happen, CIIS will attempt to make alternative arrangements to accommodate affected students, but suitable alternative arrangements cannot be guaranteed.

Safety depends on a partnership between the program and its participants. It is important to heed all advice, warnings, and alerts put out by the Department of State and the Director of your program.

Please see the SLU Safety and Security Advice at:

<https://www.stlawu.edu/sites/default/files/resource/safetyandsecurityabroad1.pdf>

Safety cont.

- Register your trip with the US Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP).
- Travel in small groups or at least with another person.
- Keep cash with you. This may allow you to remove yourself from uncomfortable situations (ie taking a taxi, changing hotels, etc.) but do not carry large amounts of cash.
- Keep cash and credit cards in separate locations.
- Carry a cell phone --that is charged, has available minutes and is turned on --with you at all times.
- Stay sober and alert and Do Not Use Drugs. There is very little that anyone, including the State Department, can do for you if you are caught with drugs.
- Use common sense. Do not 'stand out' in a crowd. Do Not give your address and/or phone number to casual acquaintances or share with them detailed information about group activities.
- When travelling away from the program site you must provide the Program Director with your travel itinerary and contact information.

Conduct

- **Behavioral Expectations** with regards to student-to-student relationships, class attendance and academic honesty may be more demanding and stricter in off-campus settings than they are on campus. It is very important to follow the instructions of your program director.
- **Obey local laws.** You are subject to the laws of the country in which you are traveling. If you break them, you will be accountable for your actions. Ignorance of the law is not an excuse. The legal process and the rights accorded to the person suspected of crime may differ significantly from those in the US. In many circumstances there is very little anyone, including the State Department, can do to assist you. The State Department web site http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1765.html has useful safety and general information about the countries you will visit.
- **Disciplinary Sanctions**

For off-campus programs, the Associate Dean of International and Intercultural studies, in consultation with the program director/administrator, has the authority to make immediate decisions on all disciplinary issues, academic and social. The Associate Dean may also assign disciplinary sanctions for a period of time that may extend beyond the period of the program and be upheld on campus. (For more detailed information, please refer to the SLU Student Handbook.)

Sexual Misconduct

For students on St. Lawrence University programs, the University's Nondiscrimination, Discriminatory Harassment & Sexual and Interpersonal Misconduct Policies ("Policies") apply to students participating in the University's off-campus programs. These Policies can be found at www.stlawu.edu/sexual-assault-resources. In addition to the Responsible Administrators identified in these Policies, you may make a formal report to your Program Director [Program Administrator or Program Assistant.] For Confidential reporting, you may contact the Confidential Resource designated by your program on-site or you may contact the St. Lawrence University Counseling Center and they will be able to advise you of your options. (Reporting an incident to a Confidential Resource does not constitute advising the University of the matter; therefore if you wish the University to investigate and/or take action, you should report to a Responsible Administrator, your Program Director [your Program Administrator or Program Assistant].)

The procedures found in these Policies may be adapted by the University as necessary to account for the out-of-country nature of the University's overseas programs. The University reserves the right to make such modifications to those procedures in any given case as it deems appropriate.

For students on programs operated by institutional or organizational partners, please consult that institution's/organizations Title IX policy and process for reporting. St. Lawrence will work with the host college for your support.

How Much money should I bring and in what form:

Your program handbook will contain advice relevant to the country to which you are travelling but here are some basic recommendations:

- Take some cash
- Take an ATM card that will work in your host country, consult with your bank about fees for using the ATM outside the US
- Take a credit card, especially for emergencies. Please Note: establishments in some countries will only accept credit cards with imbedded chips.
- Make sure to notify your bank and credit card company that you will be outside the US so they do not cancel your cards!
- Record your ATM and credit card numbers, expiration date, and phone numbers of the bank/company so that you may contact them in case of loss or theft.

Packing

Pack light: The airline will have limitations on the number of bags, weight or both and you need to be able to carry what you have packed.

Carry your passport and other required documentation, contact information of your host family and Program Director, initial meeting instructions and money with you in a secure location.

Pack medication and prescriptions in your carry-on bag (checked luggage can get lost.)

Put your name and address (in the host country) inside each piece of luggage as well as on a luggage tag.

Carry your insurance card and proof of worldwide coverage with you.

Refer to your program handbook for specific packing lists.