

# Guide for Short-term Study Abroad Programs

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## **Guide for Short-term Study Abroad Programs**

### **Introduction**

This guide is designed by the Office of International Education (OIE) to help you to organize a short-term study abroad program (usually less than one semester in duration.) The goal of this Guide is to provide a practical and helpful tool in the planning of short-term study abroad programs by Carnegie Mellon.

Students often site overseas learning experiences as one of the most important and influential aspects of their college experience; short-term Carnegie Mellon-led trips provide a valuable dimension to the student experience at Carnegie Mellon. These trips add an exciting real-world component as well as unique insights to what is offered via traditional teaching in the classroom experience. We appreciate your careful planning and leadership in encouraging students to include study abroad in their college plan.

Planning a short-term study abroad program will require you to go beyond the usual realm of planning and to become a travel agent, bookkeeper, security guard, first aid administrator and 24-hour companion. Study abroad program planners must ensure that the program not only broadens the students' experiences and enhances their understanding of the culture, but also furthers their academic accomplishments. We encourage you to work with a department head (or the administrator in your department most familiar with study abroad) from the early planning phases to ensure that program adheres to department and university expectations and procedures for academic programming.

The guide is divided into three sections: *Proposal & Planning*, *Post Approval Planning*, and *Planning for Emergency Situations*. Most of the details of your program will need to be in place for your proposal to be considered. We provide a sample timeline to help you to gauge your progress and time constraints.

Remember, the Study Abroad Advisor in the OIE is available to provide support, and we are happy to help at any point during the program—from inception to your time abroad.

Carnegie Mellon students are required to attend a pre-departure orientation. This orientation is required so that we can assure that all students receive basic information on

culture, health, safety, travel and administrative procedures. Please plan to participate in our orientation, then supplement the general information with additional meetings specific to your program. The Study Abroad Advisor will work with you to create a program-specific pre-departure orientation if that is preferable.

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## SAB Planning Checklist

1.	<b>Create</b> Plan, write and submit program proposal	
2.	<b>Budget</b> Determine costs, establish budget, set per-student cost	
3.	<b>Determine Travel Mode</b> Plan travel arrangements, lodging, transport etc	
4.	<b>Publicize/Recruit</b> Publicize program, recruit students, establish deadlines for deposits, finalize participants	
5.	<b>Manage Risk</b> Carefully articulate risk issues and prepare student forms including liability waivers	
6.	<b>Prepare Information Packets</b> Prepare comprehensive student and parent information packets and distribute in timely manner	
7.	<b>Conduct Pre-Departure Orientation</b> Conduct group orientation with the Study Abroad Advisor, or send students to OIE's pre-departure orientation.	
8.	<b>Finalize</b> Finalize personal and student travel details, passports, visas, insurance, waivers, transportation etc	
9.	<b>Emergency Contact Information</b> Prepare complete packet of travel details and Emergency Response Information to be carried on person at all times	
10.	<b>Emergency Resources</b> Ensure that OIE and home department contact are completely knowledgeable and updated about final itinerary, contact information etc	
11.	<b>Go Abroad!</b> Depart and enjoy an enriching program!	
12.	<b>Return Safely</b> Submit program report to OIE and home department.	

## Proposal & Planning

This section outlines the elements you will need to create a proposal for a short-term study abroad program, which you will then submit for approval to your department and the appropriate “College Council”. *Short-term* characterizes a program the duration of which is less than a semester, for example over Summer vacation, Winter or Spring break.

### *Academics: Creating the Course Content*

While planning your program subject and course content, cultural site visits, tours, lectures, or interviews with local residents might be planned to complement the course content.

Once you have determined your academic and cultural concentration for the program, begin planning the syllabus design: readings, discussions, interviews with experts, trips, tours of sites, journal assignments, lectures. Coordinate the timing of assigned readings and related discussions to site visits.

Other tips:

- Take advantage of contacts that you or members of your department have in the host country.
- Confirm academic quality of planned events by speaking with on-site representatives, making advance site visits and carefully reviewing all available information sources.
- Consider how pre- and post-travel meetings and courses can add to the learning experience.
- Consider including an introductory/conversational language component relevant to your country if applicable.
- Be careful that your program does not compete with another program on campus for a target student population, which could affect your recruitment efforts.

### *Credits and program length*

To determine the credit to be given for the study abroad program, use a calculation to determine an equivalent to the number of hours of contact (in and out of the classroom) during a regular semester. For example: 9 unit fall semester course = 9 hours x 15 weeks = 135 hours total (in and out of classroom work.) Since your program will be shorter, you will need to calculate how many hours and translate that into a unit measurement.

### *Application requirements and acceptance into program*

Depending on the length of the program and the number of credits, you will need to establish minimum requirements for admission into the program. A typical program requires a 3.0 minimum QPA and an essay, but you may also want to require a letter of recommendation and/or an interview. You want to ensure that the student is sufficiently

emotionally and academically mature to handle the requirements of living and studying abroad. Students who are on academic probation or have pending disciplinary action may be excluded.

### ***Financial***

It is crucial that you develop the budget early, before you announce the course. You can organize your budget based on categories or you can create a daily budget; just make sure it is easy to understand and follow.

#### *Determine program and additional expenses*

Decide what the program will cover and what the students will provide with their own additional funds, including,

- How many and which meals will be included. Many programs pay for breakfast and dinner and advise students that they will pay for their own lunches. This procedure might simplify schedules on busy tour days when coordinating lunch in a restaurant might take more time.
- The program costs, events, and admission fees where attendance is required.

In building the budget, try to anticipate all possible expenditures, including the administrative percentage paid to Carnegie Mellon University, which is a portion (between 10-20%) of the tuition paid by participating students for overseas program. A good travel agent can give fairly accurate estimates for travel and lodging long before departure. Some professors have found it helpful to establish their own in-country contacts who know about inexpensive facilities. Also, a good “affordable travel” guide such as “Lonely Planet” can provide ideas for ways to economize. The following list illustrates the typical items included in a budget:

- Round-trip airfare (sometimes students will arrange their own airfare)
- Eurail train pass (or its equivalent)
- Land travel (taxi trips, chartered buses, public buses, subway, etc.)
- Lodging
- Meals
- Special events and admission fees (museums, theaters, guest lecturers, etc.)
- Telephone, fax, etc. (include pre-departure communications)
- Travel materials (maps, guide books, etc.)
- Insurance (health, travel, evacuation and repatriation, equipment, etc.) ISIC (International Student Identity Card)
- Project materials
- Guest lecturers
- Gifts
- Cost to exchange money, allowing for fluctuations in exchange rate
- Tips

- Surprises (for example, a restaurant automatically delivers bottled water to the entire group when it wasn't requested, or there is damage to property in a hotel or restaurant)
- Miscellaneous contingencies (photocopies, parking fees, luggage transfers, emergency funds), which should be at least five percent of your projected budget
- Include taxes

*Err on the high side:* While you want to keep the program as affordable as possible for students, it is important that the program fees you collect are adequate.

It is possible to work with a study abroad provider or a travel agent for a tour package, which will include a certain number of days in hotels, meals, group transportation and special services like luggage transfers or guides. It is possible to get discounts depending on the size of your group. Any negotiated agreements should be vetted with the contracts office.

*Determine the minimum group size and set the per-student program cost:* The program cost is the cost you will charge each student for the program. To estimate the minimum cost per student, determine the minimum number of students needed to support the overall cost of the program. If your department has established a minimum under which the program will not operate, use that minimum for budgeting.

First-time programs, especially those to less common destinations or in disciplines which offer several competing programs, may attract a smaller than average number of students, perhaps ten. Some departments support a new study abroad program by permitting it to run with fewer than ten students, with the understanding that the department will cover some of the costs rather than increase the cost per student. Once the minimum student number is set, add yourself and any other members whose costs you expect the students to bear. Thus, for a new program being led by you and one other professor and anticipating ten students, you will base your total budget upon 12 participants. The cost per student will be the total costs for the 12 participants divided by the ten students.

**(# of estimated students + # of travel leaders) = Total cost of program**

**(Total cost of program) ÷ (# of actual students) = cost per student**

Be sure to be very clear in all program publicity about what the program cost covers and does not cover.

Adjust for outside revenue: some departments or colleges have small amounts of funds available to support study abroad programs. Check for currently available funds and grants.

### *Handling money abroad*

During your program, collect and keep all receipts. After the program you will be required to complete an expense report, and you will need to provide daily accounting of activities. You should provide an example of the required data, for example the date, vendor, description of service or product, local currency, US dollar equivalent, form of payment, and who made the payment. Explain the expenditure and how it fit into the program. Please review current auditing procedures on any gifts received.

A good site for currency exchange rates is <http://www.oanda.com/>.

### *A Comparison of Methods for Carrying Money Abroad*

Payment Method	Advantages	Disadvantages
<b>Personal credit cards and ATM cards</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better exchange rate than with traveler's cheques</li><li>• Easiest way to pay (ex. large group in a restaurant)</li><li>• Back-up accounting information if receipt is lost</li><li>• Visa &amp; MasterCard widely accepted in Europe</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• May have daily or weekly withdrawal limits (taking more than one will increase chances of one being accepted)</li><li>• Unless program is very short, payments may come due while you are still abroad</li><li>• Some hotels, restaurants, means of transportation do not accept cards</li></ul>
<b>Traveler's checks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Safest way to carry money</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost to purchase them (unless you have an AmEx Corporate Card)</li><li>• Frequently a fee to change them for a foreign currency, and usually at a higher rate</li><li>• Must carry passport on person to cash</li><li>• Acceptance limited</li></ul>
<b>Cash</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Sometimes the only acceptable method of payment</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Many people are uncomfortable carrying large quantities of cash on them (a money belt, a hotel's safety deposit box are possible solutions)</li></ul>
<b>Western Union</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you run out of money, Western Union has over 30,000 locations and sends money to over 100 countries</li><li>• <a href="http://www.westernunion.com/">http://www.westernunion.com/</a> or call 1.800.325.6000</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cost of the transfer is high</li><li>• US Government might restrict transfers of funds to the country where you are traveling.</li></ul> Check <a href="http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/eotffc/ofac/">http://www.ustreas.gov/offices/eotffc/ofac/</a> for more information

### *Student payment procedures*

Students should pay fees directly to the academic department sponsoring the program, which will handle all transfer of money to the HUB.

### *Advance deposits*

You should require a substantial non-refundable deposit from your students well in advance of the date of departure; we recommend \$500. This deposit should count toward the students' total program costs. Selecting a deadline for the deposit can be tricky. An early deadline allows you to make accurate and timely arrangements for your program, but if it's too early you may not get enough applicants in time. It is possible to extend an

already established deadline, but if publications indicate an earlier date, applicants are likely to believe that they missed the deadline and can no longer apply. In general, deposits are due 10 to 20 weeks before departure. For example, the CFA's Rome program has a deposit deadline of six months before the program begins.

#### *Date for final payment of program fees*

You will need to establish a date for final payment. For this final deadline, you should consider the dates by which you must make your final payments for air tickets or other arrangements, typically two to four weeks before departure. Many program organizers spread the deadlines over three payments: a non-refundable down payment, fifty percent of total costs, and then a final payment for the balance.

#### *Other deadlines*

Do not rely on students to show up with all the necessary documentation on the day of departure. Set a separate and clear set of deadlines at least one month before departure for the following documents:

- Passport (photocopy)
- Proof of insurance i.e. of insurance card and/or policy that indicates that overseas is covered
- International Student ID Card ("ISIC") (photocopy) available from STA Travel
- Eurail Train pass or other similar ground transportation pass (if applicable)

#### ***International Travel Risks - Country and Regional Considerations***

Country-specific and regional travel safety issues should play a critical role in your decision about suitable locations for overseas study experiences. Countries or regions which regularly experience unrest lead to tricky planning and last minute cancellations of even the best-laid plans. Further, risk to yourself and students in your charge are important issues to the University community.

Be sure to read the US Department of State travel advisories both during your entire planning process, and immediately prior to your departure. <http://www.travel.state.gov/>

For additional country-specific security information regarding all international travel, please contact:

Mr. James F. Gartner  
Senior Director of Global Security  
Carnegie Mellon University  
Doha Office: +974 454 8434  
Doha Mobile: +974 557 8094  
Doha Fax: +974 454 8410  
Pittsburgh Office: +1 (412) 268-6469  
Email: [jgartner@cmu.edu](mailto:jgartner@cmu.edu)

## ***Travel Arrangements***

*Do you want to arrange travel to site?*

Many program organizers prefer to focus on the actual on-site coordination and planning, and ask that students make their own travel arrangements to the site. Depending on the length of your program and timing considerations, as well your decisions concerning the program cost, you will need to decide whether or not to arrange students' travel. Most program organizers chose not to make the travel arrangements to the host country, but here are some resources in case you would like to make coordinate them yourself.

*Preferred providers for Carnegie Mellon, as of January 2009*

CTS International Travel

<https://www.cmu.edu/finance/procurementservices/supplier-directory/CTSInternationalTravel.html>

Carlson Wagonlit Travel

<https://www.cmu.edu/finance/procurementservices/supplier-directory/CarlsonWagonlitTravel.html>

Peoples Travel

<https://www.cmu.edu/finance/procurementservices/supplier-directory/PeoplesTravel.html>

*Resources for student travel: STA and Eurail*

Student Travel Agency (STA)

800. 777.0112 (National hotline)

<http://www.statravel.com/>

STA has good student airfares. They can issue International Student Identity Cards (ISIC), which they require to book flights and other services. The ISIC provides discounts and basic accident and sickness insurance, including emergency evacuation and repatriation of remains. This insurance should act as a supplement to existing insurance. OIE requires that all student who study abroad have the ISIC card prior to departure, primarily due to the insurance provisions for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.

Eurail

<http://www.eurail.com/>

Eurail passes can be a good solution if you are traveling several days in several European countries, but may not be worth the purchase price if you plan on staying in only one country. Some individual countries have their own passes for in-country travel. Passes can be purchased from most travel agents or the Internet.

## **Lodging**

Lodging standards can differ considerably from one country to the next. If the housing you will be using during your program is very different from what they would expect in the US, we recommend that you provide students with as much information as possible in pre-departure meetings to help develop realistic expectations. Existing STO-IT programs from Carnegie Mellon usually house students in university dorms or hotels.

In selecting lodging, there are several factors to consider:

- Location
- Cost
- Services
- Opportunities for cultural learning/optimizing exposure to culture
- Life-Safety

### *University dorms*

Many universities around the world rent their dorm space during the summers when school is not in session. This tends to be an affordable option. Remember that differences in University calendars mean that university housing may not be available during all of the summer months.

### *Hotels*

For short stays, low-cost hotels or pensions can be found in most cities. You can find lists of inexpensive hotels in budget travel guides, or you can consult the local or regional tourist bureau for additional hotel listings.

### *Hostels*

Hostels can be an inexpensive way to house a large group in a central part of a city or region. They are often located in unusual buildings (deconsecrated churches, closed monasteries, former army barracks, etc.). Hostels frequently have limits on how long you can stay and conditions are far from luxurious, so they are more practical for stays of a night or two than for the duration of a program. Facilities vary a great deal as well; some might have recreation rooms, dining rooms, vending machines, and private rooms, and others offer bunk beds and cold showers. It is important to investigate the quality of the hostel to assure that security is sufficient.

Hostelling International

<http://www.iyhf.org/openHome.sma>

## ***Approval Process***

### *OIE Review*

The OIE Study Abroad Advisor is available to review your proposal in draft form and may be able to suggest some practical revisions.

### *Department, School and (if appropriate) College Council approval*

Once you have a draft of your proposal for a short-term study abroad program, approval must be received by the head of your department or school and, if required the appropriate College Council.

### *Provost approval*

Once the proposal is complete and has been reviewed by the department head, prepare a final draft ready for signature. It should then be submitted to the Vice Provost for Education for final review and, if approved, it will be signed.

### *Special Payment Arrangements*

Faculty members will likely have to arrange for special dispensation from paying 100% of tuition funds to the University. Typically, 10-20% of the unit cost must be paid to the University. This special dispensation must be granted by the Provost's Office.

### *OIE Notification of Program*

Once the proposal has been signed by the Vice Provost for Education, notify the Study Abroad Advisor that the program has been approved so that the Advisor can help inform students about the opportunity.

### *Enrollment Services Notification*

When the new course has been approved, contact Enrollment Services, several months in advance of the course offering so that all the administrative details are confirmed, and the course is listed for the upcoming term.

## **Post Approval Planning**

### ***Liability and Risk Management***

Leading a study abroad program involves a variety of risks, with a diverse range of legal issues that can arise from these risks. The likelihood that an individual will take legal action against the University or any of its representatives is not great enough to deter leading an overseas program. Nevertheless, there are a variety of actions that should be

taken to reduce risk and liability. On the following pages, we have listed in significant detail the types of difficult situations you are expected to handle should the need arise, and offered advice and key recourses.

Carnegie Mellon University is committed to assisting you in your efforts to reduce risk and address liability issues. The Carnegie Mellon contact for Risk Management is Brian Cappo, Risk Manager, bcappo@andrew.cmu.edu.

*Disclosure of risks reduces personal and university exposure to liability.* The issue of “failure to warn” has become an increasingly potent weapon for a plaintiff’s attorney. Therefore, program leaders should disclose risks to students and their parents as far in advance as possible. *Students must have signed waivers regardless of age.* The requisite of full disclosure rests on the premise that participants need full information regarding the risks of an activity in order to make a truly informed decision about participation. (See sample waiver in Appendix.)

In addition, communicate frankly and clearly your personal expectations to students regarding behavior. One experienced Carnegie Mellon faculty advisor suggests that you inform students of behavior that will result in immediate expulsion from the program without the possibility of a refund. She further advised that you should include a number of warnings, but err on the side of strictness when facing a disciplinary problem.

Betty van der Smissen sets forth the following criteria in *Legal Liability and Risk Management for Public and Private Entities* (Anderson Publishing, 1990):

- **Obvious and Direct.** Avoid subtlety in giving warnings. Make sure that contradictory messages are not conveyed to participants.
- **Specific to the Risk.** A warning must be specific to the risk at hand so the person can make an informed decision. Advising people to proceed “at their own risk” is without value if the person does not know what the risks are.
- **Comprehensible.** The warning language must be understandable to the persons being warned. This issue includes the question of terminology and the “native” language of the participants. Also, use a variety of methods to convey warnings, e.g. oral warnings by supervisors, written warnings in *Agreements to Participate*, and signage.

#### *Student liability waiver*

Using a liability waiver form is an effective method of disclosing risks to students and parents and thus reducing liability. The timing of the disclosure is important as well. If you do not warn students of the risks until after they have made substantial non-refundable payments or just prior to departure, liability will increase. Carnegie Mellon has a Study Abroad Liability Waiver that is distributed at the pre-departure orientation. This waiver can be modified, with legal review, to conform to your program’s specific needs. We advise that you include the waiver form in the registration packet for students and that it be included as part of the non-refundable deposit package. (See sample waiver in Appendix.)

### *Student Emergency Contact Form*

Students are required to complete an Emergency Contact Form, and this form should be included in program materials by the travel leader and/or by the OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor during the pre-departure orientation session. Make at least two copies of this form: one for OIE's records, and one for the academic department/school. The travel leader should carry these forms at all times during the overseas education experience.

In the instance of an emergency, the travel leader would be expected to rely upon OIE, or their designate, to determine when the Emergency Contact will be contacted and who is the appropriate person to do so. *Faculty members should not contact the Emergency Contact until communicating with an OIE representative at Carnegie Mellon.*

### ***Students with Disabilities***

Under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans With Disabilities Act, study abroad organizations cannot inquire about an applicant's disability prior to having accepted that person into the program. Once a participant has been accepted, an organization may inquire about a disability in order to facilitate program adaptations.

Applicants with disabilities should be evaluated based on the same qualifications as any other potential participant. International organizations should not make any assumptions about an applicant's abilities or intelligence based on knowledge of a disability.

Program leaders with concerns related to students with disabilities may wish to contact the following offices or organizations.

#### *Carnegie Mellon contact*

Everett Tademy or Larry Powell  
Equal Opportunity Services  
Whitfield Hall 200  
(412) 268-3930  
et19@andrew.Carnegie Mellon.edu

#### *Mobility International*

Mobility International USA (MIUSA)  
132 E. Broadway, Suite 343  
Eugene, OR 97401  
Tel: 541. 343.1284  
Fax: 541.343.6812 E-mail: [info@miusa.org](mailto:info@miusa.org)  
<http://www.miusa.org/>

Mobility International USA is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting equal opportunities for persons with disabilities in international educational exchange, leadership development, disability-rights training, travel and community service. In addition to conducting international exchange programs, MIUSA consults with other organizations to help them include persons with disabilities in their exchange and leadership programs. MIUSA is also a good resource for locating services abroad such as mental health professionals.

### *Access Abroad*

<http://www.umabroad.umn.edu/access/>

The Access Abroad site is devoted to making existing study abroad opportunities accessible to college students with disabilities, in accordance with ADA regulations and was developed by the University of Minnesota.

### ***Information for Parents***

Faculty leaders should provide information to the parents of participants including the program brochure and US State Department Consular Information Sheets. You may want to create a separate packet of information or letter specifically for parents. A publication by William Hoffa, *Study Abroad: A Parent's Guide* (NAFSA: Association of International Educators, New York, NY, 1998) is a good resource for parents. It can be purchased from Amazon.com.

An information packet for parents should include the following:

- Detailed itinerary of the program for the entire period indicating contact information for hotels or other accommodations.
- Emergency contact information for faculty leader and Carnegie Mellon contacts.
- Detailed estimate of the complete program cost including anticipated personal expenses per student. This information will be helpful for financial planning.
- List of all individuals responsible for planning the program to ensure that parents know who to contact at all times, both at Carnegie Mellon and in the foreign country.
- Outline of the program highlighting academic and professional expectations, including courses to be taken, credit hours, syllabi, narratives, required textbooks and presentation requirements.
- Financial Agreement Form, spelling out deposit and payment schedules.
- Liability Agreement Form.
- The need for students or parents to furnish program directors with information about the student's special needs, such as diet and medication, and learning disabilities.
- A request that parents instill in their children the need to act responsibly throughout the entire period of the trip.

## ***Student Requirements***

Besides preparing to go abroad by getting their passports, visas, and travel arrangements in order, remind students that they must attend the orientation session(s) as part of their participation in a study abroad program.

### *Checklist for Student Preparation*

A helpful resource for students going abroad is the OIE Study Abroad Handbook, which details students' responsibilities for participating in programs as well as information on traveling abroad, obtaining a passport, and managing the administrative procedures before departure. While created for students going abroad for a semester or year, the OIE Study Abroad Handbook provides practical information and insights about culture shock that could be useful in your program. Students will receive the Study Abroad Handbook at the Pre-departure Orientation.

(From *Study Abroad Handbook Checklist*) This checklist for students will ensure that their administrative affairs are all in order before departure:

- Attend the Pre-departure Orientation
- Sign the Study Abroad Contract and Liability Waiver
- Complete a Personal Data Sheet for OIE (including emergency contact information)
- Obtain passport
- Obtain visa (if required)
- Obtain health insurance or verify that health insurance will cover them while abroad
- Submit copies of insurance cards to the program director
- Make photocopies of important documents to leave with family and take a copy abroad
- Obtain International Student Identity Card (ISIC)

Students should also carry telephone, address, cell phone, and any other contact information for the faculty member with them at all times while abroad. Parents should also have this contact information.

## ***Financial Aid***

Carnegie Mellon Financial Aid is not applicable toward short-term study abroad programs. However, if students plan ahead they can sometimes locate other funding to help pay for your program.

During the summer students have access only to Stafford Loans; if Stafford Loans are used during the summer, the amount used is subtracted from the general Stafford Loan allotment given to a student during the regular academic year.

The OIE provides a handout to interested students called *Funding for Study Abroad*. It includes Web sites and organizations for students who wish to apply for aid.

## ***Insurance***

Insurance is required for all students participating in Carnegie Mellon programs, whether they are on campus or in study abroad programs. Students who have purchased health insurance through Carnegie Mellon will be covered under that plan during the summer as well as during the academic year. Students who are covered by private insurance (such as insurance provided via their parents' employer) should provide proof that their medical insurance also covers them during overseas study, and in the specific country or region abroad. There are short-term study abroad insurance plans that students can purchase if their non-Carnegie Mellon plan does not cover them while abroad.

Further, OIE requires that students purchase the International Student ID Card ("ISIC") available from STA Travel. In addition to providing student discounts on a host of entrance fees around the world, ISIC also provides additional coverage for medical evacuation and repatriation of remains.

As the program leader you should consult with your own insurance company regarding health coverage while working abroad, and purchase supplemental insurance if needed. You may also wish to purchase additional insurance for any equipment that you are taking on the program, such as camera/video equipment, laptops, etc. Note that if your department purchases the Capital Asset internal insurance program, some University equipment may be covered for loss. Contact Risk Management at Carnegie Mellon for additional insurance coverage issues.

## ***US Passport and Foreign Entry Requirements***

Remind students that they need a valid passport for the duration of the program. The process can take four to six weeks, and sometimes longer, so ask students to plan ahead and apply in advance. Passports can be obtained from a passport office or from some US post offices, and require the following documents:

- A certified copy of the birth certificate stamped with a raised seal
- A photo ID
- Two 2"x 2" passport photos, which can be taken at most photo shops
- A check or money order (cash/credit cards are not accepted)

US Passport Services Web site: [http://travel.state.gov/passport\\_services.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport_services.html)

If your program's host country requires a visa for entry or for stays over a certain number of days, students (and program leaders) will need to individually apply to the Consular Services of that country. If your participants include non-US citizens, they may be required to apply for visas in cases where American citizens do not need visas for entry into foreign countries.

### *Web sites for requirements and locations to apply for visas*

Some countries require entry visas, even for short stays or for transit through one country to the next. The requirements will be country-specific, but you can find the information from the country's Consulate. You can also find a list of countries' embassies at <http://embassy.org/embassies/>, however, not all countries have their Web sites listed with Embassy.org.

## **Planning for Emergency Situations**

In this final section we discuss how to handle emergency situations should they arise while you and your students are in a foreign country.

### *Emergency Protocol Abroad*

In the wake of the terrorist attacks of 2001, Carnegie Mellon University has invested a significant amount of effort to establish protocols for the safety of the Carnegie Mellon community in the event of an emergency. The OIE wants you to be similarly aware of possible emergencies, and response protocols, in the event of problems while abroad.

OIE recommends that the faculty leader identify a person at Carnegie Mellon who is both familiar with the overseas program and/or site location and who is able to speak the native language of the country in which the program is occurring. This person, based at Carnegie Mellon, would prove a valuable asset during a crisis situation.

In the event of an emergency involving a student, the program leader should immediately inform the other participants and ask them not to send e-mails or make phone calls to friends or family until the affected student's parents have been contacted.

Determine the urgency of the situation. While the faculty leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources; immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

Campus Police 412-268-2323

When contacting Carnegie Mellon about a student (see flow chart and scenarios), please have the following information available:

- Name of student and basic details of the problem
- Your contact information: name, phone number (city and country code), your location (city and country), alternative contact name and phone number if possible
- Student's emergency contact information in the US.

Many emergencies will require you to be in regular contact with consular services of the US embassy or consulate. You should travel with the relevant contact information gathered prior to the program begin date. For links to US Embassies and Consulates worldwide: <http://travel.state.gov/links.html>.

You should keep copies of each student's passport, health insurance, and emergency contact information on your person at all times. Your academic department should also have copies of this information.

### ***Safety & Crisis Management***

The following section offers travel leaders specific guidance in handling emergency situations abroad. While each scenario offers its own solutions, there are some things that a faculty member should always do when managing a crisis. Here is a list of the elements of emergency response that are consistent throughout:

- ✓ Always keep a log of what has occurred and how you have responded
- ✓ Always communicate with local authorities.
- ✓ Always communicate with Office of International Education at Carnegie Mellon

### ***How to respond immediately to varying types of emergencies***

Gather as much information as you can about the circumstances surrounding the incident. Keep a written log of information and update it as the situation progresses. This will help you report back to Carnegie Mellon what has happened.

If contacted by the media during an emergency or incident and you have NOT been in contact with Carnegie Mellon, please use the following statement: *My first responsibility is to the students on this program, to their families, and to the University. I will be happy to discuss this matter with you after I have contacted these parties. Thank you for your understanding.*

The Office of International Education might put you in the role of de facto spokesperson. Do not release the name of the student or speak on Carnegie Mellon's behalf without contacting the Director or Coordinator of Study Abroad and Exchange Programs in the Office of International Education, or their designate, to provide support and assistance in developing responses to media inquires. Please see the flow charts for further information.

## *Types of emergencies*

### *Crime against a student*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Contact the host country's local police.
- Ensure that the physical and emotional needs of the student(s) are being attended to.
- Keep a log of all facts obtained.

(See also protocol for "Serious Injury/Illness/Hospitalization of a Student" for serious injury. When a victim exhibits fear/fright or shock, you should activate protocol for psychiatric emergencies.)

- Talk to the person who reported the crime and acquire his or her contact information; identify as many of the key persons involved and facts as possible. Determine the identity and present location of the victim(s) and perpetrator(s).

In order to ensure the necessary support to the victims and community, OIE will determine which people overseas and on campus need to be involved. You should brief OIE, or their designate, on at least a daily basis until the crisis has subsided. Inform OIE of any media inquiries.

### *Arrest of a student*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Quickly assess the situation by obtaining as many details as possible (i.e., determine who, what, when, where, how and why).
- Begin writing a log of the crisis situation that you add to as the case develops.
- Contact the US Embassy Consular Officer immediately. Ask the Consular Officer for the names of lawyers who can give the student the legal help he or she requires and provide this information to the student. The Consular Officer will also work to ensure that the student's human rights are not violated. The Consular Officer will also notify the imprisoned student's family and/or friends, if authorized by the imprisoned student.
- Visit the student as soon as possible. In some countries, you may have to assist in bringing basic necessities to the student—including food.
- Provide regular updates (at least on a daily basis) to OIE, or their designate; OIE, or their designate, will contact with the student's designated "Emergency Contact" if authorized.

### *Missing student*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Notify the local police authorities. Ask them to check hospital and city records for possible police information. Find out how long a person must be missing before a report can be filed and what the procedure is in the host country for filling out a missing persons report.
- Begin a log of information that you have been given and actions that you have taken.
- Contact the local university psychiatric services (if applicable) and the local university student health services (if applicable) on the chance that the student was admitted to their facilities.
- Contact OIE. OIE, or their designate, will determine whether to contact the student's "Emergency Contact."
- Talk with the student's roommate, or host family, and neighbors. Ask them to contact you immediately if the student returns. Check the student's residence so that you can look for information that may indicate where the student is. Gather information on any unusual behavior that may have been exhibited.
- File the missing person report with the local police when the required amount of time has passed.
- Contact the OIE to alert the University that an official report has been filed.

It is possible to request a “welfare/whereabouts check” from the Department of State, Overseas Citizens Services. The OIE can coordinate this in the US if it becomes necessary.

OIE, or their designate, will coordinate appropriate actions, which may include contacting the student’s designated “Emergency Contact” person. Appropriate follow-up will be planned.

Once the student has been located, inform all appropriate persons on-site and the OIE at Carnegie Mellon. OIE, or their designate, will inform the appropriate persons in the United States. If necessary, activate other protocol, such as “Serious Injury/illness/hospitalization of a student” or “Crimes against a student.”

*Psychiatric/mental health emergency*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

Carnegie Mellon's Counseling and Psychological Services

Carnegie Mellon's Counseling and Psychological Services provides 24-hour on-call service to assist you with assessing and responding to psychological emergencies. To consult with a mental health professional, please call: 412-268-2922.

Background Information

Occasionally students are predisposed to certain psychiatric conditions that manifest unexpectedly with the stress of overseas travel. The following cursory list identifies observable symptoms and traits that may warrant intervention:

- Expression of wish/intent to harm self or others
- Precipitous decline in functioning, e.g., academic, social, hygienic
- Unusual conduct: oddly disruptive or antagonistic acts, self-injury, talking to self
- Excessive energy, agitation, extremely elevated moods
- Extreme anxiety in the form of worry or panic
- Odd thought patterns, e.g., delusions, paranoia, disorientation, rambling or nonsensical speech
- extreme weight loss
- attending class or field trips under the influence of drugs or alcohol

*Serious injury, illness, or hospitalization of a student*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Get the student to the appropriate care facility, either by calling the country's equivalent to 911 (if it has one) or arranging for transportation (such as a taxi.) .
- Identify hospital staff who speak English.
- Contact the Director or Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor of OIE. OIE, or their designate, is responsible for notifying the student's family and answering their non-medical questions about the situation. The program coordinator should not contact the student's parents.

OIE may coordinate with Student Health Services staff to provide relevant information to the student's family, and other individuals.

- Visit the student in the hospital and/or organize visits from program participants. These visits should take place when circumstances permit and at your discretion.

A hospitalized student's parents might want to visit. Should the parents have needs, such as lodging, you should assist with needed arrangements. The OIE will assist as necessary.

If the decision between the student and the doctor calls for an emergency medical evacuation (to either the US or to the nearest location with the appropriate medical facilities), OIE should be contacted as part of the process. Carnegie Mellon will coordinate through their insurance provider. Also:

- The US Embassy or Consulate closest to your location can help arrange the transportation of the injured person. However, the full expense must be borne by the injured American or his or her family.
- If the student has a current ISIC card, he or she has supplemental medical evacuation insurance. Contact CIEE using the number on the back of the card.
- If the student has Carnegie Mellon insurance, they have MEGA Health Insurance. Contact MEGA directly and they will arrange for medical evacuation as prescribed by the attending physician.
- If the student is covered by another insurance company, contact the company to learn how to proceed.

### *Death of a student*

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Verify the identity of the student. Gather as much information as you can about the circumstances surrounding the student's death.
- Keep a written log of information and update it as the crisis progresses.
- Contact the Director or Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor of the OIE. OIE, or their designate, will determine whether to contact the student's "Emergency Contact."
- The Dean of Students, or his designate, is responsible for notifying the next of kin, responding to non-medical questions and referring medical questions to the host country medical authorities, and coordinating other actions.
- Notify OIE before notifying the US Embassy. According to the US State Department: "When an American dies abroad, a consular officer notifies the American family and informs them about options and costs for disposition of remains. Costs for preparing and returning a body to the US may be high and must be paid by the family. Often, laws and procedures make returning a body to the US for burial a lengthy process. A consul prepares a Report of Death based on the local death certificate; this is forwarded to the next of kin for use in estate and insurance matters."

OIE, or their designate, will offer to assist the family with issues such as transportation, accommodations, and arranging for a meeting with the US consular officer.

OIE will coordinate a plan together with Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) for dealing with the aftermath of the situation, including grief counseling and support to friends, program participants, host family, and the person who discovered the body.

## *Sexual assault*

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Talk to the person reporting the crime and determine the location and identity of the victim. If there is physical injury, you should arrange for the student to be taken to a hospital/clinic for emergency care. If you ascertain that the student's injuries need attention, but you are not in an emergency situation, contact the US Embassy or Consulate for a referral to a hospital/clinic that will be sensitive to an American's needs in a sexual assault case.

Do not ask the student why he or she did or did not do something. Assure the student that you believe his or her story; that it is not his or her fault; and that you want to help.

- Clarify with the student the degree to which s/he wishes to inform local authorities. Inform the student of the laws and procedures for dealing with sexual assault in the host country, as these may be different from in the US. For example, in the US it is important to preserve evidence of an assault as it may be used in a court of law as evidence.

When a student has been a victim of sexual assault, control has been taken away. It is vital to the healing process that he or she regains control. For this reason, it is important to resist the temptation to take over. Instead, offer assistance and allow the victim to make the decisions.

- Respect the student's confidentiality: Do not inform other students about the incident, nor should you inform the student's parents without permission. There are many resources available to the student and to you, the program director; do not attempt to handle the situation alone. Carnegie Mellon's Sexual Assault Advisors offer crisis support for victims of sexual assault and other types of violence, and can provide support and advice to the faculty member/program director regarding management

and advocacy on behalf of the student. For further information see the web site [www.studentaffairs.Carnegie Mellon.edu/SAA](http://www.studentaffairs.Carnegie Mellon.edu/SAA) or call the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs at 412-268-2075.

*Infectious disease or outbreak of an epidemic among program participants*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources.

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Obtain information from the local US Embassy or Consulate regarding the potential health threat, existence of local medical facilities, local resources and medical advice as to how to deal with symptoms until medical help is obtained.
- Consult with the Director of Student Health Services, Anita Barkin at Carnegie Mellon 412-269-2157.
- Consult the Center for Disease Control information for your host country. This information can be found on the Web at [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov).

*Political emergencies and natural disasters*

- Determine the urgency of the situation.

While the travel leader is responsible for the local coordination and trouble shooting, the leader may expect US-based support from Carnegie Mellon's OIE and other resources

- Immediately notify Carnegie Mellon of an **emergency** by calling:

*During Office Hours 8:30 to 5:00 EST, Monday to Friday*

OIE – 412-268-5231

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand

*After Office Hours or Weekends*

OIE Interim Director, Linda Gentile, 412-760-0109 (M)

OIE Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor, Christine Menand, 412-592-1040 (M)

*After Office Hours or Weekend if OIE staff unavailable:*

University Police 412-268-2323

- Make sure all participants are accounted for and safe. If a student has been injured, his or her physical injuries must be attended to. (*See “Serious injury /illness, or hospitalization of a student” above.*)
- Contact the US Embassy or other official government agency and ask for advice and assistance. If the US Embassy is closed, determine the location from which the embassy is operating (i.e., another embassy within the country, or US Embassy in another country). Gather information regarding the target of unrest and possible danger to US citizens, advice on minimizing danger to students, and the probable impact of the event on the availability of food, water, and medical supplies, the intensity of the emergency or political unrest, the presence of emergency or military personnel, the feasibility of continuing the program, etc.
- Write information in a log that you will continue to update as the situation progresses.
- Contact the Director or Study Abroad and Exchange Advisor of the OIE. They will determine whether to contact the students' “Emergency Contacts.”

Depending on the circumstances, OIE, or their designate, will

- Stay in regular contact with the US Department of State's Citizen Emergency Center
- Contact the US Embassy Abroad
- Determine if emergency funds will be obtained from the University or from the State Department

In severe situations, the US Department of State, may arrange for evacuation. If commercial transportation is disrupted, the State Department will charter special air flights and ground transportation to help Americans depart.

When commercial transportation is not disrupted, but the State Department recommends that US citizens evacuate the country, new airline tickets may need to be purchased since it may be difficult to quickly change existing tickets. The University will assist in procuring emergency funds and arranging new airline tickets as necessary.

If you are not close enough to a US Government office to receive funds or assistance, another recourse is American Express Global Assist Service (800-554-AMEX). This service provides worldwide referrals for personal, medical, and legal emergencies.

If American Express is not accessible, you should try to obtain information from every bank that is accessible and find out what services each can provide for quick transfers of funds. You should pass this information to the Dean of Student Affairs, or his designate.

You should brief OIE, or their designate, daily, if possible.

Once the crisis has ended, OIE, or their designate, will work with you to assess the impact of the event and provide any follow-up that may be needed.

## ***Emergency response***

### *Who to contact at Carnegie Mellon*

#### *OIE*

Christine Menand  
Study Abroad Advisor  
412.-268-4969 (w)  
412-592-1040 (m)

Linda Gentile  
Interim Director  
412-268-5231 (w)  
412-760-0109 (m)

### *Carnegie Mellon University Police*

412-268-2323 (emergency)  
412-268-2064 (non-emergency)

### *Campus Health Resources*

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS): 412-268-2922  
Student Health Center: 412-268-2157  
Sexual Assault Advisors: (contact the Office of the Dean of Students, 412-268-2075)

### *Dean of Student Affairs*

G. Richard Tucker  
Interim Dean of Student Affairs  
412-268-2075 (w)

## ***Terrorism Issues/Resources***

The NAFSA: Association of International Educators SECUSSA web site presents helpful safety information for study abroad program participants and organizers, and is a good resource for preparing for the possibility of terrorism  
<http://www.nafsa.org/>

The Overseas Advisory Council provides detailed reports on global security issues.  
<http://OSAC - Overseas Security Advisory Council>

The general advice for Americans abroad is to keep a low profile. Since you will be leading a group of American students, you can ask them to control their volume when in public, to be respectful of the places they visit, and to remain conscience of the fact that

they are guests in a country where the people may be annoyed, confused, frightened, or shocked by their behavior.

It is also advisable that you stay in touch with Carnegie Mellon University and students stay in touch with their families. Give family members your itinerary for the program and touch base often.

### *Pre-departure preparations*

Travel leaders should become familiar with the types of crime, illness, and emergencies that commonly occur in the host country and the appropriate preventive measures. Making site visits to the destinations can be one way of determining risks, but you can also obtain information from other institutions that have study abroad programs in the same location.

### *Travel advisories*

The United States Government will periodically issue travel warnings for countries where war or political upheaval may pose risks to US citizens. For programs in potentially volatile areas, you should check this site regularly:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel\\_warnings.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel_warnings.html)

### *The Center for Disease Control and Prevention*

<http://www.cdc.gov/>

### *Some additional sources of information:*

- State Department Background Notes:  
[http://www.state.gov/www/background\\_notes/index.html](http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/index.html)
- Pinkerton Global Intelligence Systems: <http://www.pinkertons.com/>
- International Traveler's Clinic: <http://www.healthlink.mcw.edu/travel-medicine/>
- *2001 International Travel Health Guide*, Stuart R. Rose. This health guide is recommended by the US State Department. It is available from Travel Medicine, Inc., Northampton, MA, (800) 872-8633, or you can download PDFs of the individual chapters at [http://www.travmed.com/thg/travel\\_health\\_guide.htm](http://www.travmed.com/thg/travel_health_guide.htm)
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators (<http://www.nafsa.org>) formed an inter-organizational task force for safety and responsibility on study abroad.
- SECUSSA, a part of NAFSA, has other Web resources for study abroad educators: <http://www.secussa.nafsa.org/>
- Travel Publications ([http://www.travel.state.gov/travel\\_pubs.html](http://www.travel.state.gov/travel_pubs.html)) from the US State Department contains over 20 online publications covering topics such as crises abroad, safety, medical information and services offered by US Consulates.