



2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

Off-Campus Study Policy & Guidelines Handbook

DENISON | Center for
Global Programs

2023-2024 ACADEMIC YEAR

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An Overview of Off-Campus Study at Denison

Learning through global experiences is integral to a Denison education. We provide individualized mentoring to help students craft their off-campus experience and take advantage of learning opportunities that foster global competencies essential in today's workforce. With hundreds of Denison-accepted off-campus study programs to choose from, students have many opportunities to realize the full potential of their education, hone a language, develop workplace skills, and increase multicultural understanding.

Our office works with many semester-length off-campus study options, as well as summer and January programs. In addition, shorter term opportunities are also possible. Denison Seminars, semester-long credit bearing courses are open to sophomores and juniors, and typically include an off-campus travel component. Students can also participate in summer, short-term, faculty-led credit bearing seminars.

There are many other opportunities for students to apply and extend their off-campus learning. These include independent research, internships, and lectures that connect students to international educators and peers around the world. The Center for Global Programs (CfGP) works closely with the Knowlton Center and Lisska Center to share information about the many global learning opportunities and resources available to Denison students.

Participation Limits

Denison strives to accommodate all qualified students for off-campus study. There are, however, two related points that impact this policy. First, Denison establishes limits on the number of participants in individual programs in order to facilitate optimal integration into the range of experiential learning contexts and communities. Second, slots for off-campus study in the Fall and Spring semesters are awarded on a first come, first served basis, according to the date/time stamp of the student's submitted Advising and Program Selection form in Global Tools. Students are strongly recommended to complete the Advising and Program Selection form as early as possible. This provides the best chance to secure the preferred term and program of study.

Application Processes

To pursue off-campus study for academic credit, students must first select an approved program found in Global Tools, develop an academic plan around the program, and obtain approval for study through the [OCS application](#). Once approved by the Center for Global Programs, the student is then responsible for completing an application with the program provider. Students approved for off-campus study must complete pre-departure requirements including a mandatory orientation session and maintain eligibility as described below. Failure to complete requirements by stated deadlines may result in revocation of approval. Students are expected to read email regularly and check their application materials to comply with all requirements.

Eligibility

To apply for off-campus study, students must have a minimum GPA of 2.3. To be eligible to participate in off-campus study, students must meet the guidelines concerning academic and disciplinary statuses posted in the [Academic Catalog](#).

Note that students must complete a minimum of forty-eight credits prior to participation on an off-campus program. It is recommended that transfer students complete one semester of study at Denison prior to participation on an off-campus program. This requirement does not apply to summer study.

Academic Policies

Denison's Academic Catalog governs Academic Regulations for Off-Campus Study. [Please read](#) all policies regarding transfer of credit and grades to the Denison transcript, maximum credit enrollment, excess credit hour fee waiver, and petition requirements for seniors in their final semester.

Denison requires that students participate fully and responsibly in all academic aspects of the proposed off-campus study program, **throughout the program's official dates**, including required language and area studies courses, orientation, exams, and/or a homestay stipulation. Review your plans for next year to ensure that you do not have anything that conflicts with your program's calendar. You are expected to arrive on time to start your program and remain for the entire duration.

Spending More than One Semester on OCS

Students applying for two semesters of Off-Campus Study within their academic career- either one full academic year on one program or two semesters on two different programs- must undergo review for the second semester. Students should articulate a strong academic rationale for spending two semesters away from Denison. Students are expected to thoroughly discuss their plan with the faculty advisor. They will be required to pay the OCS administrative fee for both semesters.

Foreign Language Study

Denison students studying in a non-English speaking country will be required to take a foreign language course offered by the program or partner university. This requirement is waived for students with a documented language disability accommodation on file in Denison's Academic Resource Center (ARC).

Seeking Approval From Denison's Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Research Involving Human Participants

Students on off-campus study may wish to conduct research with human participants while abroad. In some instances, students are required to do research as part of an abroad course or an internship. In either case, students need an IRB review of their research plan prior to conducting a research project that involves human subjects. Those students must consult with their Faculty Advisor/course instructor before submitting an Approval Form to the University IRB. Visit [MyDenison](#) for more information.

Please note that in some OCS programs, students may not learn about the need to conduct a human-subjects research project until after the program begins. The Center for Global Programs strongly urges students to work carefully with the instructor to construct a sound and complete IRB submission as soon as possible, and follow the instructions. Carefully review [the information](#) concerning the process of submitting a proposal to the IRB.

Sensitive topics that may require Full IRB Review typically averages 6-8 weeks. That interval begins at the time a researcher successfully submits a complete set of materials to the IRB, can include one or more reviewing cycles with the IRB communicating with the researchers and ends with an approval notification from the DU IRB. If you are not sure what a Full Review means, see the DU IRB Guidelines.

For other one-semester projects on less sensitive topics (*i.e., for Expedited, Exempt or Limited Review by the IRB—see DU IRB Guidelines*) an expedited review or exempt screen typically requires 2-7 days depending on both the nature of the research project and the number of submissions already in our queue. Please direct any questions that you have about the IRB process to University IRB Chair at brooksc@denison.edu.

Health Advisories, Travel Advisories, and Travel Warnings

All students studying off-campus are required to download the AlertTraveler app in Global Tools. The Center for Global Programs staff will instruct students in downloading and use of the app.

All students are further required to register with the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#).

Denison strongly recommends that all students avail themselves of the travel information available at the [U.S. State Department](#) (DoS), [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC), and [World Health Organization](#) (WHO). In particular, students should carefully consider the safety information included in State Department travel advisories for the country(ies) in which they are pursuing off-campus study and/or for any other country to which they are planning to travel during their time abroad.

The Center for Global Programs routinely reviews CDC, DoS, and WHO travel advisories, as well as safety and risk updates from our program partners around the world. Denison reserves the right to withdraw its approval for study on an off-campus program at any point due to elevated travel advisories from any/all of the aforementioned agencies, and/or advice from our program partners,

and/or general risk concerns. Withdrawal of approval for an off-campus study program bars a student from receiving Denison credit for the program and from applying financial aid to the program costs.

In the case of an elevated U.S. State Department travel warning, or a CDC or WHO travel advisory issued before or after a program has started, Denison will work closely with the educational partner/ program provider and other informed parties to determine an appropriate course of action. In the case of requiring that a student return home, Denison will pursue reasonable steps with the program provider to mitigate the financial and academic impact of such an action.

It is not possible for Denison to predict world events or assure that a study abroad experience is entirely risk-free. Rarely, but occasionally in the past, emergencies (dangerous conflicts, natural disasters, COVID-19 pandemic etc.) have resulted in alteration or cancellation of an off-campus study program for which a student has been approved. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of all program policies regarding suspension/cancellation and implications for their academic program.

Conduct While Off-Campus

While traveling abroad you are an ambassador for the university and your country. You are expected to behave responsibly. You are required to observe all applicable laws and Denison University standards for student conduct according to Denison's Student Code of Conduct. Please read the full policy in the Academic Catalog [here](#).

Housing for Off-Campus Study

Denison carefully selects approved programs which offer student housing that balances the needs for student safety, immersion, and convenience. Because of the importance of residential living to the off-campus study program, Denison may further designate specific housing options within an approved program which our students may/may not select. Please see the Denison Notes section of each program's Program Brochure in and review the Permitted Housing Options in Global Tools (located under the Fact Sheet heading) to review which program housing options are allowed for your program. Students are not allowed to opt out of program-provided housing, even when the program provider would otherwise allow students to live independently. Our strong preference is that Denison students are not housed with other Denison students. Please do not request a Denison roommate, as providers have been instructed not to accommodate these requests.

Withdrawals

Students who withdraw from a program after being admitted are required to notify our office in writing immediately.

Policies related to withdrawal vary according to each program. Students should make themselves aware of their program's withdrawal policies by checking the program provider's website and contacting the program staff. Withdrawals after confirmation of participation, including deferring to a future term, almost always result in forfeiture of deposit and, in some cases, a student may be held liable financially for expenses paid by the program provider in preparation for their participation. In the event of withdrawal from a program after the program has begun, students will be required to repay Denison as outlined in the OCS and [Financial Policy](#). Withdrawal from both the OCS program as well as from Denison will be subject to Denison's [Withdrawal Policy](#). The withdrawal process begins when the Center for Global Programs is informed by the student of the withdrawal.

We encourage students to carefully review program policies and/or student handbooks regarding withdrawal from the program provider.

Billing and Financial Aid Policies

For Fall and Spring Semesters

Denison students may spend a semester of off-campus study on an approved program with all awarded institutional, need-based, or merit aid, except work-study. Denison charges students for tuition, room, meal plan, and OCS Administrative Fee (\$1,060 as of Fall 2023). Students will pay the program's application fee and confirmation deposit.

Denison pays the program providers' standard expenses, which include program tuition, meals, and housing. For students with demonstrated financial need, Denison will provide a flight allowance to travel to their host city. Please [click here](#) to read the full policy.

Summer and January Term Program Applicants

The OCS Administrative Fee (currently \$320 for summer 2024) will be billed on student accounts for summer off-campus study.

Because Denison does not offer a summer term or J-term on campus, there is no financial aid available from Denison for summer programs. Many providers offer need-based scholarships, and there are [federal scholarships](#) students can apply for. We recommend that students look carefully at the costs listed on provider websites. When doing so, consider not just the program fee, but also other estimated fees (e.g., housing, food budget, local transportation, transportation to your host site). Note that typically the more credits a program offers, the higher the cost, so if you want to keep costs lower, look at programs where you can earn 3-4 credits in the summer. You can read more about applying to J-Term and Summer programs [here](#).

Travel Documents

Passport

You need a passport to travel outside the United States (including Mexico and Canada). Passport applications are provided [here](#). A passport is required to obtain a visa.

Students are responsible for all costs associated with passport application and renewal. If you already have a passport, ensure that it is valid for the full length of your time abroad, plus six months beyond the scheduled date of return. Apply for your passport early. Processing the application takes time. The OCS office is equipped to take passport photos for your passport application by appointment.

Remember: your passport is the most important document you have while outside the United States. Know where it is at all times and keep it in a secure place. Make color copies of the inside information page. Keep one for yourself [not in your luggage] and give one to a family member.

We highly recommend that at least one parent/guardian obtain a passport so that travel will not be unduly delayed in the case of a medical or personal emergency.

Visas

Your program provider is the best source of information about necessary visa applications. In some cases, the program provider will help you obtain a visa, in others they will provide you the information about how to obtain a visa, but it is your responsibility to obtain it on your own. Visa regulations vary by country and even by Consulate, and require surrendering your passport for processing, so do not plan any international travel during the 3 months before your program. Non-US citizens, including permanent residents, studying abroad must meet different visa requirements than U.S. students, requiring earlier preparation and planning. Please contact your program provider in a timely manner to review specific visa requirements and/or immigration restrictions that may impact you. Be aware that visa processing can take 8 weeks or more, so be sure to begin the process promptly upon acceptance into your off-campus program.

Health & Safety

Your Physical and Mental Health

Before You Go

It is important to be informed about and tend to your health before you leave your home. Your health can impact the quality of your off-campus study experience. For this reason, we strongly recommend- and many programs require- that all students studying abroad undergo a full medical exam at least three-months prior to departure. Communicating your medical conditions and concerns before you depart, and understanding resources for health care in the location you will study will help you stay healthy and safe.

Medications and Medical Records

Common medications for depression, anxiety, OCD, and ADHD, as well as over-the counter medicines for allergies or birth control, just to name a few, may be illegal, or require government authorization in other countries. **Check the legality of your prescription medications and/or over-the-counter medicines in your host country.** Denison's EIIA insurance offers accepted students assistance determining the availability of prescription medication in a country. If your medications are restricted, you'll need to talk with your provider about alternatives available to you, and start taking them before you depart.

Update prescription medications-including allergy shots, birth control pills, glasses or contacts- and obtain copies of all important medical records. Bring prescriptions written in generic and brand names, preferably on letterhead from your doctor's office. **The best option is to bring enough medication for the entire term,** but this takes additional time for your doctor to prescribe, your insurance to authorize, and your pharmacy to fill, so plan ahead! If you cannot take an adequate supply with you, talk to your physician about whether you can obtain the remainder of your prescription abroad. If you must purchase medications abroad, know the generic name of the medication, as the exact brand name may not be available. Do not plan to have medications or vitamins mailed to you: USPS does not permit mailing prescriptions except by doctors and pharmacists, and even orders from these sources will be refused or delayed indefinitely in customs.

Pack your prescriptions as well as any over-the-counter medication you take in your carry-on luggage in the original, labeled container. It's a good idea to take a first-aid kit with you that may include: bandages, PPE, gauze, sterile cleaners, period supplies, contraceptives, cough drops, anti-diarrheals, and tissues.

Vaccinations and Immunizations

Students studying abroad are strongly encouraged to be up to date on vaccinations and immunizations prior to travel, and to travel with an updated copy of vaccination records. Refer to the Centers for Disease Control website and your program provider for any additional vaccinations for your study away location. The Wellness Center can administer many vaccinations to students, although some vaccinations may require a trip to a county health department or travel clinic. Some vaccinations require multiple doses, so research what you need early enough to complete all doses.

Your program provider's role

Communicate with your study abroad program about any mental or physical health concerns, conditions, or limitations that may impact your participation. Not all locations are prepared to accommodate all of your health needs, but they will be better able to inform you what to expect and to assist you if they are aware in advance. Ask your program questions to learn about available health care services on site. If you have allergies to foods or medicines, ensure these are communicated to your program provider and noted in generic and brand names on your health forms. Disclosing information is not intended to keep you from participating, but to empower you with better information and resources. If you have a health emergency, your program representatives need to have ALL of your health information in order to communicate with a doctor if you are unable to communicate yourself.

Mental Health and Wellness

Make a plan for your mental health while abroad. Think about how you will respond to new and sometimes stressful environments, while far from your support system at home. English counseling may not always be available, or as frequently as you are used to, or you may need to pay a co-pay for your insurance. Denison is extremely limited in its ability to intervene or coordinate care when you are off campus. Hoaglin staff and counselors cannot provide telehealth or other remote care, so you should plan to use local resources. Investigate local options and your insurance coverage in advance, so you are prepared for the reality in your host community.

It can be helpful to think ahead about how you can implement self-care while abroad. If books, music, exercise, or something similar helps you on campus, make sure you schedule time for it while on your program, and be sure to pack any supplies you need. Many students find it helpful to keep a journal while off campus, so they can record their feelings and activities. It can help to see what is going well, and is also a fun souvenir to look back on later.

Allergies

Be sure to notify your program in advance if you have any allergies. Learn to say your allergy in the language of your host country. Consider downloading an app (such as <http://allergyft.com/>) to help you translate food allergies if you will travel frequently. If you have been prescribed an EpiPen for your allergy, *be sure to bring an ample supply* for your time abroad, teach someone near you how to use it, and plan to take it with you on any travel or excursions throughout the program.

What to Expect While You are Abroad

While the risk of serious problems is typically no greater off-campus than on-campus, it is important to remember that changes in diet, weather, climate, sleep, and more impact your overall health. Here are some steps you can take to ensure you are in optimal health while abroad. When you arrive, pay close attention to your program's orientation regarding health and safety. Note local and program emergency contact information, saving it in your phone and keeping a note in your wallet or bag in case your phone dies.

Try your best to maintain good health- drink clean water, eat well-balanced meals, and get lots of sleep. Stay active by walking around your host city, but know your limits and slow down when you need to. If you do become ill and are too sick to go to class, or if there is any emergency situation, notify your provider. Communication is key.

Mental Health

Enact your plan for well-being abroad! Meditate, breathe, make note of where to find a counselor in case you need to see them later. If you are distressed, or are concerned about a friend, reach out to your program provider for help. They can help you work through adjusting to a new culture, or seeking professional help. Your program is a great resource, so don't be afraid to reach out to them.

If you are experiencing a crisis and don't know where to turn, please know that Denison has a 24/7 crisis line from ProtoCall. To access a mental health provider, call 740-587-6647 to receive immediate support from a licensed mental health clinician. All calls are free and confidential.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol is part of social and cultural life in some, but not all, parts of the world. U.S. laws and norms around alcohol consumption differ from many other countries in terms of purchase and consumption, and studying off-campus may represent your first opportunity to legally drink. You are encouraged to use good judgment, and to be sensitive to others' attitudes about drinking. Where drinking alcohol is common, moderation is the norm and drinks are perceived to enhance the food and socialization that goes with it. Excessive and irresponsible drinking leading to intoxication and behavior that impacts/injures the rights of others is subject to immediate disciplinary action, including termination of participation in your off-campus program, parental notification, and return to the U.S. at your own expense.

When drinking in public places, be sure to purchase your own drinks, never go home with a stranger, and always go out with AND return with at least one other friend. Drink responsibly and designate someone to stay sober. Make a plan to get home safely before you start to drink, including a cab or ride-booking app in your budget if it will be late, and then stick with the plan.

In a nutshell: know the law, local customs and your own limits when it comes to alcohol consumption.

Sexual Health and Relationships

While abroad you can anticipate that social and cultural norms around sex and romance are different than in the U.S. Social norms concerning dating and relationships vary from culture to culture, and laws around consent, sexual orientation, gender affirmation and more differ around the world. Learn about your host country's attitudes toward relationships, gender, sexuality, and dating. How are those attitudes reflected in the laws and norms of the host country? Some countries may stigmatize or even criminalize public displays of affection, same-sex romantic activity, or contraceptives. Consider approaching a host sibling, returnee, or program provider advisor for guidance on how they navigate gender and sexual orientation roles in your host country.

If you engage in sexual relationships, be sure to inform yourself about access to condoms, birth control pills, Plan B, and other sexual health supplies. Be proactive. Learning about the host country's culture concerning acceptable and safe sexual behavior is something you are responsible for. HIV and AIDS is a global public health problem. We urge students to be cautious about their sexual activity while abroad and not to have unprotected sex.

Safety

Drugs

Use of illegal drugs is strictly forbidden ([see the Academic Catalog](#)). Purchasing drugs abroad puts you at greater risk of being a victim of theft or other crimes. Drug use can also increase your risk of contracting diseases like Hepatitis or HIV/AIDS. Attempting to carry drugs across international borders is extremely risky, as customs officials have the legal right to search you and your belongings. Penalties for possession, including drug paraphernalia, are often harsh. Once you travel beyond US borders, US laws and constitutional rights no longer protect you, and the US government cannot supersede local laws.

Sexual Misconduct

If you experience any type of sexual misconduct, please know that you have choices regarding how to respond, you have rights, and options for support are available to you.

If you are a survivor of sexual misconduct that occurred abroad, what happened to you was not your fault. Experiencing as well as processing sexual misconduct is difficult. It can be even more confusing and complicated if it occurs in another country or culture. Survivors often experience a range of emotions including fear, anxiety and confusion. There is no one way to respond. Whatever feels like the right response to you is normal. Determining what steps to take after a traumatic experience can be difficult, especially when you are far from home. The options listed below are just that, options.

You/the survivor should be in charge of your own healing process. It should be your/the survivor's choice whether to seek help or tell others about the experience (please see below on disclosing vs. reporting). You may reach out to the [Title IX Coordinator](#) or Center for [Global Programs](#) for any questions.

The resources below are listed for survivors who wish to learn about or utilize them – however, not all survivors of sexual misconduct need or seek immediate medical attention, or are interested in reporting. Some survivors choose to finish their OCS experience while others feel their recovery will be hastened by returning home. The information and resources listed on this page are here to help you learn about all your options and if you have questions, consider reaching out to talk about them further.

If your immediate safety is being threatened, please consider calling your program’s local emergency contact first. Most programs have a trusted individual on site, such as a resident/faculty director or a Student Affairs staff member, who will often have received training on responding to a disclosure of sexual misconduct. These individuals are in the best position to provide immediate assistance, such as identifying and helping to secure access to appropriate, quality medical care. You may also call Denison’s 24/7 Campus Safety office at 740-587-0810.

If the person accused (respondent) of sexual misconduct is a member of the Denison community, then they are subject to [Denison’s Policy Prohibiting Sex Discrimination](#).

Regardless of the identity of the respondent, a reporting party has access to Denison’s support. However, our ability to investigate or adjudicate a complaint may be limited by the level of control it has over the learning environment and the respondent. Furthermore, local laws and/or the policies of a host organization may further govern your options.

We encourage individuals to [report incidents of sexual misconduct](#) to the Title IX coordinator and/or local law enforcement officials in addition to a trusted on-site program staff member. If you feel your program is not adequately supporting you, the Center for Global Programs would like to know in order to assist you, and to ensure our partners are equally committed to ensuring your continuing success.

Resources

The resources outlined below are not an exhaustive list of agencies and services in each country. Additional resources can be found through your insurance provider or the closest [U.S. Embassy and Consulates](#). A list of resources and explanation of services from the [U.S. Department of State](#) for U.S. citizen victims of crime abroad.

[International Directory of Domestic Violence Agencies](#): Global list of abuse hotlines, shelters, refuges, crisis centers and women’s organizations, plus domestic violence information in over 90 languages.

[Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network \(RAINN\)](#): Toll-free 24/7 hotline for sexual assault counseling and referrals: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673). RAINN also offers a hotline that provides live, secure, anonymous crisis support for victims of sexual violence, their friends and families over RAINN’s website. The online hotline is free of charge and available 24/7.

[Pathways to Safety](#): Provides services to Americans who are victims of interpersonal & gender based violence abroad.

Cosmopolitan magazine explains [how to respond to a sexual assault abroad](#).

[“Sexual Assault Victimization Among Female Undergraduates During Study Abroad,”](#) is an article that investigates the prevalence of sexual assault and related factors among undergraduates in the context of study abroad programs.

Safety & Security Tips

In a new country, you may not be as familiar with cues for safety, or when things may be amiss. It's wise to exercise greater caution about your personal safety and property. Always be aware of your surroundings.

When you Arrive

- Learn how to ask for help in the host language.
- Familiarize yourself with the location of the closest police, fire station and hospital or health clinic.
- Heed the warnings of your program and/or host family about unsafe areas.

Risk Mitigation

- Avoid public demonstrations of any kind, even if they are peaceful.
- Avoid areas of high risk, e.g. military installations, American restaurants or clubs
- Avoid drawing attention to yourself (e.g. college sweatshirts, baseball caps)
- Be alert in crowds
- Look like you know what you are doing, even when lost.
- Obey all local laws.
- Monitor world events. Global Programs will do its best to help you and your parents stay abreast of world events and their impact on your study abroad location. We receive routine and emergency updates from the program providers, [AlertTraveler](#), and the U.S. Department of State.
- Trust your instincts. If you feel unsafe, find a way to leave the situation.

Travel/Transportation Safety

- Carry an ID at all times, but not your passport unless crossing borders. A copy of your passport is fine for everyday use.
- Check before using ride-hailing apps. In some countries it is not legal, and a reputable taxi service is best.
- Have extra money to get home in case of an emergency.
- Don't hitchhike.
- Don't rent cars, scooters, mopeds or motorcycles.
- If you carry a backpack, hold onto it on crowded transport, and if you have a purse or bag, hold it next to your body. Always check if your bag is zipped! Big bags and purses are often targets of thieves.
 - Be aware of local traffic and transport, especially as a pedestrian. Many countries do not give pedestrians the right of way and you'll need to be more careful crossing roads.
- Let people know where you are going and when to expect you to return.
- When possible, travel in pairs and leave information regarding your itinerary (with contact points and phone numbers), traveling companion, mode of travel, dates of departure and return. Watch out for each other.

Technology/Social Media

- In terms of data security, be advised that cell phones, laptops and tablets are common items that are stolen. Protect your personal information on your devices and upload photos to other sites. Your item can be replaced, but not your data, images or any other personal artifacts stored on your devices.
- Always charge your phone and make sure you have some minutes if you have a pre-paid plan. Don't rely on wi-fi in case an emergency comes up.
- Mitigate risks of social media use, including geotagging of photos, and location sharing. Review social media security and privacy settings.
- Take off headphones and put away your phone when you are walking around so you can pay attention to your surroundings.
- Look for more tech tips on our Before You Go page under "[Tech Savvy Travel](#)".

Insurance

Most program providers include medical insurance coverage into their program fee and enroll students automatically. Some programs, however, do not, and require students and their families to provide their own private insurance to provide adequate coverage while the student is abroad.

Denison covers all students participating in an international off-campus program with *supplemental* international emergency medical and evacuation insurance coverage through EIIA International Travel Insurance. Students may review the EIIA policy and register to print an ID card from the following webpage: <https://www.eiia.org/international-travel/>.

All students at Denison must be covered by U.S. health insurance for ongoing and chronic conditions and non-emergency health events. Denison's health insurance is an annual plan that covers both semesters. Students may waive the health insurance if they are covered by another plan, but that waiver will cover the full year. If students are not covered by another plan, they must purchase the Denison insurance plan, even if it is only used for one semester.

In Case of Emergency

An emergency is any situation where there is an immediate threat to your health and/or safety. In the event of an emergency, students' FIRST CALL should be the contact person in the program on site. That information is provided either before you depart or during orientation after you arrive.

Should an emergency arise at home while you are abroad, it is important that family or friends are able to contact you, especially if you are on a program excursion, traveling on your own, or the program has ended. Be sure to leave all contact information with family and/or friends. Please contact your program provider local staff if a family emergency arises so they can support you with resources or any necessary arrangements.

Water Safety

Drowning is a leading cause of death for Americans visiting countries where water related activities are popular. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, more than half of these deaths are individuals under age 25. If you plan to visit a beach while abroad, research your destination and learn whether it is safe for swimming. Tides and rip currents may be difficult to spot, so follow the lead of locals. Be aware that alcohol consumption while swimming, in the ocean or a pool, can greatly increase your risk, and moderate your consumption.

STEP Enrollment

Smart Traveler Enrollment Program is a service of the Bureau of Consular Affairs U.S. Department of State. You must enroll yourself in STEP. Once enrolled, you will receive important information from the Embassy about safety conditions in your destination country, helping you make informed decisions about your travel plans. Registration allows the U.S. Embassy to contact you in an emergency, whether a natural disaster, civil unrest, or family emergency as well as helping family and friends get in touch with you in an emergency.

Student Responsibility for Safety

Denison University and program providers will make every effort to assist students to have a healthy and safe experience off-campus. There are some things we cannot do:

- Guarantee or ensure safety of participants or eliminate all risks from off-campus study environments;
- Monitor or control daily personal decisions, choices, activities of individual students and participants;
- Prevent students from engaging in illegal, unsafe, dangerous or unwise activities;
- Assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by the program sponsor, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of the sponsor and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information;
- Assure that home-country cultural values and norms apply in the host country.

Some strategies for staying safe include:

Understanding the culture and political environments of the countries you will go to. Stereotypes and safety are linked. Your reputation precedes you when you travel abroad.

Questions for thought:

- How do nationals generally see Americans? What are the stereotypes?
- How do those impressions impact your behavior?
- What are host country attitudes toward gender, race, sexuality, etc.?
- How are those attitudes reflected in the laws of the host country?
- What are your own stereotypes? How might they affect your behavior?

Thinking about your daily life here that you want to continue abroad. Questions for thought:

- Do you jog during the day or night?
- What do you do on weekends? How do you get around?
- What should you think about/research before doing these things abroad?
- If staying with a host family, consider how your habits from home will fit or not fit with host family norms and habits?

Think about how you can blend in. Questions for thought:

- What behaviors might identify you as a “tourist” and how can you avoid that?
- What are appropriate standards for dress?
- What will be the “firsts” while abroad? e.g. taking a train, eating alone in a restaurant, not being able to speak the dominant language, paying to use a public toilet, navigating public transportation.

Identify your instincts and learn to pay attention to them. Questions for thought:

- What types of situations make you feel uncomfortable?
- What are your limitations and boundaries?
- What do you do when you are in those situations?
- Do you have any specific concerns about safety? What are they?
- Whenever you feel endangered, trust your instincts.

The most important way to reduce risk and respond to emergencies:

- Keep abreast of international, national, local situations;
- Have a plan for getting help when you need it;
- Trust your gut and use common sense.

Academics Abroad

Expectations for academics can vary significantly from those you have experienced at Denison. For example, students may take more responsibility for learning, looking at a reading list and choosing where to focus their studies rather than reading a specific passage assigned by an instructor. Students may balance school as a part of other aspects of their lives, commuting long distances each day. Courses or exams may be disrupted, postponed, or cancelled by strikes (students or faculty), weather, or illness. Assessment could be based more on group work, or on just one or two exams, on a single paper, or even a presentation or oral final. The exam period may be much longer than you are used to, stretching over weeks, with several weeks to prepare in between the end of classes and the exams. You must complete the final assessments organized by your program. Denison students are not permitted to individually negotiate exam dates, change exams to papers, take exams online, etc., unless this is explicitly required by your program provider. We encourage you to learn about the academic system you will be studying in and embrace the differences as an opportunity to learn more about your host country and the values underlying the educational system there.

Identity & Off Campus Study

Our identities travel with us when we go abroad. Changes in your own self-awareness and identity may emerge when immersed in another culture. Social climate, laws, and personal interactions of your host culture will often differ from the U.S. We encourage you to learn more about Identity and read through the resources we have compiled for you [here](#), including topics about race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, disability, religion, and more.

Money

As you prepare for your off-campus experience, you should consider your budget for personal spending, the cost of living in the country/city you will be going to, and what it will cost to do the activities you want to do. Please read Denison's [OCS Financial Policy](#) carefully to understand what expenses are NOT covered as part of the OCS experience (e.g., local transportation, etc.).

You will also need to consider how you will access money while abroad, and, how you will keep money and valuables safe. A few tips will help you with these matters:

Budgets

- Make a budget. Most program providers have outlined budget sheets. Denison's Financial Wellness Office can help provide templates.
- Explore student discounts. Many cities around the world offer generous discounts for students.
- Talk to your program's on-site staff about money-saving tips, like free festivals or cheaper transportation options.
- Check exchange rates between the US dollar and your destination currency.

Accessing Cash

- Develop a plan for obtaining money in an emergency.
 - If using ATMs, go during the day or regular bank hours. When possible, use an ATM inside a bank, as opposed to on the street.
- Consider obtaining an ATM card with no fees.
- Travelers cheques are in decline or not accepted at all in many places around the world.
- Cash is in decline or not accepted in some parts of the world. In those instances, credit/debit cards or smartphone payment apps are more common.
- Avoid carrying large sums of cash, but try to obtain local currency before you arrive in case you need to take a taxi or bus. Many larger banks in the US can help you with that.
- In places where pickpocketing is a problem, consider using a money belt or pouch.

Credit/Debit Cards

- Take a credit card along, if nothing else, for a financial emergency.
- Make sure your card has a chip and pin and memorize the pin. Keep a copy of your card somewhere safe.
- Inform your credit card company and the bank linked to your debit card of your upcoming travel plans, otherwise they might put a hold on your account.

Cell Phones

- Investigate in advance how you will make calls and access data. Using your U.S. cellphone plan abroad can be very expensive.
- Make sure to budget money for your cell phone plan or pre-paid minutes so you will always have a way to make a call to your program in case of emergency.

Returning from Abroad

Returning from a study abroad program and processing everything that you experienced is a part of the learning process. Models of cross-cultural adaptation reflect that for many people, an initial excitement about returning can lead to further stress transitioning and adapting back to the “home” culture. The skills that helped you to adapt while on your program will help you to adapt back to life on campus, but this still takes time. While you have probably grown and changed, your friends and family may not have expected to see you change so much, and you may miss your new friends from your program too. Here are some helpful tips for returning home:

[IES Abroad Re-Entry Article](#)

[SIT Re-Entry Toolkit](#)

[Stanford Advice for Returning Students](#)

The Center for Global Programs is also a resource for you, as our staff and many of our Global Ambassadors have experienced these transitions, too. We are available to talk, and we encourage you to watch your email for activities for OCS returnees to share their experiences.

Acknowledgments:

We thank the following for providing information for this handbook:

[Forum on Education Abroad Standards of Good Practice](#)

[SAFETI- Global Ed](#)

[Middlebury College Schools Abroad](#)

[Kenyon College](#)

[St. Olaf College](#)

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