

Statement from Education Abroad for Students Independently Participating in International Programs:

You have indicated that you are independently participating in an international internship/research/field studies program*. UMD is not formally sponsoring this program and you are participating as an independent student. You will not be covered under the University's Risk Management program and the University will be unable or limited in our ability to assist you in the event of an emergency.

The Office of International Affairs and Education Abroad offer the following guidance to help travelers such as you prepare to have a safe and successful time abroad.

Health and Safety Guidance

1. **We strongly encourage you to be fully vaccinated and boosted for COVID-19 before your travel.** Being fully vaccinated significantly reduces the risk of contracting and/or becoming seriously ill from the virus. Vaccinations are available to all MD residents. Do **NOT** travel if you have contracted COVID-19. Many locations require proof of a negative COVID-19 test and/or a COVID-19 vaccine (both doses) within a certain number of days or hours of your entrance into the country. You must meet these requirements to enter the country. You can find this information on the [International Air Transport Association's website](#) or the [U.S. State Department's COVID-19 country specific information pages](#). **Learn as much as you can about your destination.** Use credible sources (i.e. the State Department's [international travel website](#), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, etc.) to research the political climate, weather, crime, health issues, cultural differences, transportation culture, major holidays/celebrations, etc.
2. Be aware that the U.S. State Department has issued a [worldwide caution](#) for travelers. Please be sure to read this caution, and the information specific to the region to which you will travel. Please also take a moment to do the following before your travel:
 - a. Visit the U.S. State Department's [travel advisories website](#) to see if there are warnings about the location to which you are traveling. If there are, carefully review and adhere to the guidance provided in the warning.
 - b. Visit the U.S. State Department's [Students Abroad website](#) for excellent travel advice.
 - c. Visit the [Traveler Information page](#) to review health and security guidance specific to women, LGBTQ+ travelers, people with disabilities, and other groups.
3. Register your trip with the Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#)
4. Check in with [UMD's International Travel Clinic](#) or your personal physician.
5. Purchase international health insurance. As a UMD student, you may purchase a policy through [Cultural Insurance Services International \(CISI\)](#), which is UMD's insurance provider for Education Abroad sponsored programs. Please note that you would be purchasing coverage as an independent enrollee.
6. Have a mobile phone while abroad, and share the number with family and/or friends.
 - a. Be sure to add important numbers into your contacts such as the local 911 equivalent, your hotel, the CISI or other insurance policy emergency assistance number, and your in-country program partner if applicable.

7. Consume alcohol responsibly. If your judgment is impaired because of drugs or alcohol you may make decisions that put you and others in harm's way. You may also appear to be more vulnerable to those who intend to do you harm, making it easier for them to target you.
8. Get a travel safety app. One example is the [Smart Traveler app](#) (created by the U.S. State Department). Other commercial travel safety apps are available.

Travel Guidance

1. Check your passport to be sure it is current. If it expires within 6 months of your travel, you need to renew it before you depart. Apply for a visa well in advance of your departure date if one is required for entry into your destination.
2. Share a copy of your itinerary with your family or friend(s).
3. Make copies/photographs of important documents (i.e. passport and visa, credit card, prescriptions, etc.)
4. Be prepared for financial transactions while abroad. It is important that you:
 - a. Tell your bank and credit card companies your dates and locations(s) of travel.
 - b. Take only the credit card and ID you will need.
 - c. Have some local currency on hand before you depart.
 - d. Be aware of any departure or arrival taxes you may be required to pay in-country. Budget for this expense.

While You Are Abroad

- Follow local COVID-19 restrictions and requirements. Keep in mind that these can change quickly depending on the local conditions.
- Wear a snug-fitting mask that covers both your nose and mouth when indoors. If you're in an area with high numbers of new cases, it's advisable to wear a mask outdoors as well.
- Avoid excessive drinking and all other activities that could impair your judgment and compromise your safety.
- Do not use illegal drugs.
- Stay abreast of current political and social issues reported in the media. Pay close attention to and follow all public safety advisories.
- Stay in touch with your on-site program staff, and follow all health and safety guidance they provide. Use them as a resource as you make decisions about tourist activities.
- Dress and behave as inconspicuously as possible. Avoid American logos on your clothing and property.
- Stay away from all demonstrations.
- Avoid posting about controversial political or social issues on social media outlets.
- Exercise good judgment about the places you visit during the day and at night and avoid being out late as much as possible.
- Socialize in groups of trusted peers. Avoid going out alone, especially at night.
- Maintain a heightened awareness of your surroundings and walk away at the first sign of trouble.
- Research and use the safest modes of transportation where you are. We strongly discourage you from driving a vehicle (cars, motor cycles, etc.) as traffic accidents are the leading cause of death for international travelers.
- Inspect your housing so that you are aware of the quickest way to safely exit the building, and check for smoke detectors and other fire safety precautions (clearly marked or lighted exits, fire escapes, etc.) Consider bringing your own smoke detector if your housing doesn't provide one.

*If your program awards academic credit for this experience and you would like to have it reviewed for eligible transfer credit, please contact Education Abroad by the appropriate deadline. Approval will depend on the type of program, academic content, and review from your academic department and college. If approved, you would be eligible for transfer credit services and risk management by Education Abroad, including coverage in international insurance.