

## KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

### Recommendations for a Healthy Student Travel Abroad

Traveling abroad may be a stressful event and we would like to assist you in better preparing you for your experience. It is important to note that studying, performing research, fieldwork, interning or engaging in other activities away from home can be risky for those with medical or psychological health conditions that are not managed properly before departure. Therefore, students should take into consideration any special medical, physical, or psychological needs that may impact their participation in travel abroad prior to departure. Please keep in mind that study abroad sites may not be able to accommodate all reported individual needs or circumstances.

#### **Pre-departure Checkups:**

You are strongly encouraged to schedule a medical exam at the Engemann Student Health Center (<http://engemannshc.usc.edu/>) or with your family physician prior to departure.

A thorough dental exam is also strongly recommended.

For information on necessary or suggested vaccination for travel abroad, consult your family physician or the Engemann Student Health Center (<http://engemannshc.usc.edu/>)

#### **Students Using Medications:**

If you use medication/s, including asthma inhalers, on a regular basis you should take a supply to last throughout your stay and carry a letter from your physician explaining the medical necessity and treatment. Any medications taken overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled.

Prescription medication for legitimate health conditions may be scrutinized by foreign officials when going through Customs. In some countries drugs that are legal and readily available in the United States will be considered illegal, require a prescription, or a host country authorization to be allowed in the country.

If you are being treated for a psychological health condition work closely with your physician or mental health professional to understand possible triggers and how to reach out for help. It is in your best interest, if you are taking psychotropic medications, to be stable in your medication before starting your overseas experience. Discuss proper medication management with your doctor or mental health professional prior to your departure.

Mailing medication abroad: Most countries have very strict regulations on having medications shipped abroad. Students regularly find that refills of regularly taken medications in the U.S. get stopped by the host country's Customs. Decisions on what medications may be mailed legally into some foreign countries are made by the host country government, not the U.S. Post Office. Students should call the host country government office in the U.S.

**Students with Different Abilities**

Passage of legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the American with Disabilities Act has spurred schools in the U.S. to accommodate students with varying abilities. It is important to know that other countries are not bound by U.S. legislation, and physical facilities and academic resources vary significantly from one overseas site to another. If you are currently receiving disability-related accommodations at USC or anticipate needing them at your program site, please contact the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) located in the Student Union 301 or call (213) 740-0776, to discuss appropriate responses to your needs.

## Informed Consent for Student Travel Abroad

Students are expected to consider their physical and mental health and any special needs when deciding whether or not to travel abroad and when choosing a program or project. Travel abroad involves challenges related to differences in facilities and physical conditions, cultural norms and expectations, and types of stress. While abroad, students may also be separated by distance from their familiar support networks and healthcare providers. All students--especially those with different physical or learning abilities, those with medical conditions, and those with psychological issues--are strongly encouraged to consider all potential challenges and consider whether traveling to the selected location is appropriate for them. Student may then take necessary steps to have a healthy experience abroad.

Examples of psychological issues that can be exacerbated or triggered while abroad include depression, anxiety, body image and eating disorders, panic attacks, and addictive behaviors. Examples of challenges for students with physical and learning disabilities include lack of wheelchair access, pedestrian-unfriendly infrastructures, and little or no accommodation for alternate testing situations.

Students are strongly encouraged to take the following measures to help increase the likelihood of a healthy and successful abroad experience:

- Get a thorough medical exam and explain to the physician the location and nature of the project abroad.
- Get any immunizations or take any medications (e.g. *anti-malarial*) necessary or suggested for the destination and locations in which you plan to travel extensively.
- Bring a sufficient supply of needed medications, including asthma inhalers, along with prescriptions. Don't respond to the stresses of adjusting to a new culture by taking more than the prescribed doses of your medication, discontinuing medication without advice from a doctor, or taking medication prescribed to another student.
- In the case of a history of any psychological issues, consult with a physician or mental health professional and explain to the practitioner the location and nature of travel abroad.
- In the case of disabilities (e.g. *learning disabilities, physical disabilities*), consult with the Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) , Grace Ford Salvatori 120, 213-740-0776.

Student acknowledges that they have read this informed consent and the attached “Know Before You Go” document and that they understand their meaning and effect.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Parents or Legal Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student is under 18)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ USC: \_\_\_\_\_