



SAFETY

SECURITY

& HEALTH



SIT

SCHOOL FOR
INTERNATIONAL
TRAINING

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HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELL-BEING

SIT carefully balances student health, safety, and well-being with experiential learning. Our experience with and knowledge of risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and crisis management allows us to adapt quickly to dynamic challenges. Because socioeconomic, political, environmental, and medical conditions vary widely in the 40 countries in which we operate, SIT's health and safety measures are specifically tailored to each location and circumstance.

Our in-country staff are host nationals; they know that students are not always aware of local risks and help them build awareness and resilience. It can be challenging to venture into a new location with unfamiliar risks. Students are instructed on safety and health matters during in-country orientation and are updated throughout the semester as circumstances change.

SIT's in-country staff and homestay families help students navigate their new surroundings by providing precautionary advice, firsthand exposure to local norms, and modeling culturally appropriate behavior. The experiential design of the academic program contributes to a student's ability to analyze their own behavior in relation to their host culture—enhancing their ability to make informed decisions about health and safety.

Students are expected to adhere to the safety and security parameters shared by the in-country staff and to understand [SIT's Student Code of Conduct and associated policies](#) and procedures. As is true in any location, being proactive about public health, food and beverage safety, appropriate dress for culture and climate, maintaining sound judgment, and being flexible will go a long way toward maintaining student's physical and mental well-being.

CRITICAL INCIDENT RESPONSE

Students are provided with local emergency contact information during orientation. In-country staff are a student's best resource in the event of a critical incident. In the event of a critical incident, SIT Study Abroad may inform a student's emergency contact and home institution of the situation to facilitate the best possible support for the student and their family. SIT staff in the U.S. provide consulting and assistance to our in-country staff, students, parents, and home school partners. Our 24/7 emergency phone number is 802-258-3366.

CELL PHONE POLICY

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, all students are required to have a working cell phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls, including a data plan so that your phone is operational when you are away from Wi-Fi.

During orientation, students will learn about local phone networks, how to purchase and use a local SIM card, and how to acquire minutes for calls and texting. Refer to SIT's full Cell Phone & Communications policies [here](#).

PERSONAL PROPERTY

Students should maintain environmental awareness and take proactive steps to protect their property from theft. SIT encourages students to carry personal property insurance. In the case of loss or theft, students should inform in-country staff, who can assist them with reporting to local police.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

U.S. passport holders should review the U.S. State Department's Consular Information Sheet for updates on the country or countries they are visiting. U.S. students should register in the [Smart Traveler](#)

Enrollment Program or STEP prior to the start of their SIT program and should also register any independent travel plans before or after their program. After registering in the STEP program, the U.S. Department of State sends your contact and trip information to the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate where you will be while abroad. This allows the U.S. Embassy or Consulate to contact you directly in the event of an emergency, natural disaster, or civil/political unrest that may occur in your area. You will also receive important updates on safety concerns identified by the U.S. Department of State that may impact your program area or any other travel you have planned.

Students can use the link <https://step.state.gov/step/> to complete their STEP enrollment. Before you begin, you will need:

1. U.S. passport number
2. SIT Study Abroad program contact information (please refer to your pre-departure documents)
3. Email address
4. Phone number (if you are not yet on an international phone plan, and cannot find a local country number, you can use the contact phone number of our office +1 802.258.3366).

Non-U.S. passport holders should visit their country's website and register, if applicable.

GENERAL PROGRAM TIPS

Students are ambassadors for their home country, home institution, and SIT Study Abroad. Students are expected to abide by the [Student Code of Conduct and associated policies](#); failure to do so may result in disciplinary follow-up and sanctions. The following are general safety and security tips:

- Take heed of the advice of locals, especially staff and host families, regarding local customs and norms.
- Be discreet with possessions that may attract undue and unwanted attention (e.g. smart phones, laptops, jewelry). Use an undergarment passport/money holder to safeguard these valuable resources.
- Try to maintain culturally appropriate dress, speech, and behavior to avoid undue attention.
- Travel and remain in small groups—

particularly at night.

- If alcohol is to be consumed, do so responsibly. Alcohol can amplify the misinterpretation of already unfamiliar cultural cues. Criminals often target those who have consumed excessive alcohol.

ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Excessive alcohol use carries serious safety and legal risks, may spawn cross-cultural misunderstanding, and can be grounds for disciplinary action. Behaviors that may be acceptable on a U.S. campus are often unacceptable while studying abroad. Students' homestay families expect them to behave responsibly and to be culturally sensitive.

Possessing/use of illicit drugs is strictly prohibited and is grounds for program dismissal. Legal penalties in many countries are severe—many operate on a presumption of guilt. The program will be unable to assist students facing legal trouble resulting from drug use. See full policy [here](#).

GENERAL HEALTH TIPS

Maintaining good health is essential to having a successful study abroad experience.

- SIT recommends doing research to stay up to date on [CDC guidelines](#) and local recommendations. It will be critical that you educate yourself about the potential health and safety hazards that may exist in your areas of travel and make informed decisions about what preventative measures to take prior to departure. SIT encourages students to have an informed discussion with your doctor and/or a travel clinician about what vaccines and other prophylactic medication you should receive.
- Consider your normal routines for maintaining your physical and mental health & wellbeing. How might your program impact your ability to continue these routines? With this in mind, SIT strongly recommends bringing a full semester's supply of prescription medication(s). Getting a prescription filled outside of one's home country is very difficult, if not impossible. Equally challenging is receiving medication from home by mail. Therefore, students should bring an entire

semester's worth of medication with them. Students are also advised to bring several extra inhalers and/or Epi-pens if prescribed.

If you have any questions, please reach out to the [Student Health, Safety, & Wellbeing Team](#).

EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

Cultural adjustment, academic challenges, a full schedule of classes, travel, field-based activities, and the dynamics of your SIT group can present new challenges to maintaining a good attitude and healthy emotional state. It is important to consider coping strategies in advance. For some students, this may mean personal journaling, exercise, music, movies, leisure reading, or coffee at your favorite café. Thinking ahead and planning will ensure that students have the tools needed for self-care.

Students who regularly use counseling services should discuss their needs with their mental health provider. Some past students have elected to maintain a phone or email relationship with their provider in the U.S., as in-country resources may differ considerably in approach and availability. Visit the [Mental Health & Wellbeing](#) page on our website for more information related to available ongoing remote counseling and proactively supporting mental health while on your program.

ILLNESS, ACCIDENT, AND EVACUATION INSURANCE

As part of tuition, SIT Study Abroad students are automatically enrolled in SIT's accident and illness insurance as part of their program fee. **The insurance plan only covers students outside of the U.S. and during the program period.** Details on the benefits and the scope of this coverage can be found on our [Student Insurance](#) page.

IMMUNIZATION RECORD

Students should speak with their health care provider and/or a travel clinician and consult [CDC guidelines](#) and local information regarding required and recommended immunizations and country regulations.

Students traveling to countries that require the yellow fever vaccine, will receive a signed and stamped "yellow card" after getting vaccinated, known as the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis

(ICVP). It is **important** to bring this card with you when traveling to the program. SIT recommends that students insert this document into their passport so that it is easily accessible when requested by immigration officials.

Even if there are not vaccine requirements for your program location(s), it is always good practice to bring a copy of your immunization record with you.