



SAFETY

SECURITY

& HEALTH

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HEALTH, SAFETY & 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 on a 24/7 basis (contact numbers are 802-258-3212 or 888-272-7881).

CELL PHONE POLICY

As part of SIT's commitment to student safety and security, students must have a working smart phone capable of making and receiving both local and international calls throughout the duration of the program. Specifically, students are required to either (a) bring an open, unlocked smart phone that is able to accept a local SIM card and is usable at the program location, (b) work with the academic director

within the first week upon arrival in country to purchase a smart phone locally, or (c) bring a dual SIM smart phone. Note: International Honors Program (IHP) participants are required to bring an open, unlocked smart phone that can accept a local SIM card in each program country.

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. Please review your Country Overview document for program specific details (found with your pre-departure documents [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.

Please note: As a precaution, always be sure to back up information stored on laptops and memory drives. Past students have suggested making frequent backups of important documents, including assignments and ISP data. Store your backups in a separate physical location and/or online.

U.S. STATE DEPARTMENT

U.S. passport holders should review the U.S. State Department's Consular Information Sheet for information on the country or countries they are visiting. SIT will register U.S. students in STEP (Smart Traveler Enrollment Program) prior to their departure. Non-U.S. passport holders should visit their countries website and register, if applicable.

However, if you are traveling independently before or after the program, we strongly recommend that you register your travel plans. Please go to <https://step.state.gov/step/> and follow the steps to register with the relevant embassy.

GENERAL PROGRAM TIPS

Students are ambassadors for their home country, home institution, and SIT Study Abroad. Students are, therefore, 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--in particular, 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. Further, criminals often target those who have consumed excessive alcohol.

ALCOHOL & 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.

HEALTH GUIDELINES & REQUIREMENTS

Maintaining good health is critical to having a successful semester. SIT provides specific health guidelines and requirements --which can be found with pre-departure materials [here](#). Please read this information as early as possible and share it with your medical provider.

GENERAL HEALTH TIPS

Based on student experience, SIT recommends:

-Bring 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. Some past students have reported difficulty in obtaining a semester' worth of medication from their provider and/or insurance company; if that occurs, SIT can assist by providing an explanatory letter.

-Be prepared for the unexpected. You should have a list of your prescriptions written on medical/health provider letterhead to provide if questioned by immigration officials.

-Keep prescriptions in hand baggage when traveling. Do not place prescriptions or other medicine in checked bags.

-Asthma. If you are asthmatic, bring an ample supply of inhalers for the entire program.

-Allergies. If you have any serious allergies, be sure to bring an extra epinephrine kit and an antihistamine.

-Eye Care. Bring adequate solutions, contacts, and a back-up pair of eyeglasses.

-Dental Care. Please take care of all necessary dental work and allow for ample recovery time prior to your program.

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.

SIT works carefully to identify in-country mental health resources where possible. Additionally, SIT has counseling consultants available to speak with students remotely. SIT's [Wellness Tips](#) can assist students to create a wellness plan that proactively shapes their in-country learning experience.

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 while outside of the US and during the program period. Details on the benefits and the scope of this coverage can be found at this link: <https://studyabroad.sit.edu/health-safety-and-well-being/student-insurance/>

For routine medical issues, students are expected to cover medical costs upfront and

submit a claim to get reimbursed. With more serious medical issues, a direct payment to the provider is typically arranged.

IMMUNIZATION RECORD

Students should speak with their health care provider and consult SIT's [Health Guidelines and Requirements](#) regarding required and recommended immunizations and country regulations.

Students participating on programs 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,

which can be printed [here](#)). 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 yellow fever is not a requirement for your program, it is a good practice to bring a copy of your immunization record with you.

SIT recommends that students insert this document into their passport so that it is easily accessible when requested by immigration officials.