

Student Handbook  
For Short-Term International Programs



## PREDEPARTURE CHECKLIST

- Apply for a passport (see <http://travel.state.gov/>)
- Make two copies of your passport – leave one with your family and take one with you
- Attend the required orientation meeting for your program
- Submit prepayment or deposits as instructed
- Return required forms as instructed
- Selected programs:* Apply for visa when you receive instructions
- Register as directed by the program organizer
- Pay fees to appropriate office(s)
- Obtain Cirrus or Plus bank debit card with PIN, some cash, major credit card with PIN and International Student ID card
- Leave all unessential valuables at home (such as jewelry)

## INTRODUCTION

This handbook has been created by the Office of International Studies Education (ISE) and contains general information pertinent to students on Neumann University short-term faculty-led international study programs.

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# 1. Preparing for Departure

## A. PASSPORT

Apply for a passport right away. Pick up an application at a local post office, or download it from the Internet (<http://travel.state.gov/>). You will be instructed to submit the completed application with two recent photos, a certified copy of your birth certificate, another ID with photo and a signature (such as your driver's license), and \$75. Your passport will be mailed to you in about six weeks. It will be valid for 10 years.

Make two photocopies of the passport page that has your name on it. Leave one copy with your family when you go abroad and take the other with you. The copy will make it much easier for you to replace your passport if it should be lost or stolen.

## B. VISA AND RESIDENCY PERMIT

A visa is an authorization, usually a stamp in your passport, which permits you to travel into or reside in another country for a stated period of time. The visa is issued by the host country's consulate in the U.S. Though most short-term programs do not require a visa, Student visas are required for programs in countries like India, Brazil and Russia. If your program requires a visa, you will receive visa application instructions and supporting documentation.

If you are not a U.S. citizen, you are responsible for contacting the embassy of the country where you will study to determine its entry and visa requirements for citizens of your country. You are also responsible for arranging to remain in compliance with U.S. immigration regulations regarding an extended stay abroad and re-entry into this country.

## C. MEDICAL CHECKUP

You are strongly encouraged to schedule a medical exam. A thorough dental checkup is also strongly recommended. For information on necessary or suggested vaccinations for travel abroad, consult your family physician or the Center for Disease Control website ([www.cdc.gov/](http://www.cdc.gov/)). Living abroad can create stress. If you are currently under medical care, talk frankly to your counselor or health provider about the support you might need abroad.

You will be asked to complete a Health History form prior to departure to provide information important for your health and safety. Disclosure of specific information will help the staff get assistance for you in case of accident or illness. Language barriers and incomplete medical records can delay treatment. For your own safety, provide full information about medications you take regularly, drug allergies, and chronic or recurring conditions, including eating disorders.

## D. MEDICATIONS ABROAD

If you currently take medications, talk to your physician or nurse practitioner about arrangements for continuing the medications abroad. Any medications brought overseas should be left in their original containers and be clearly labeled. You should carry a letter from your physician describing the medical condition and any prescription medications, including generic names of prescription drugs. Be prepared for the possibility of having to see a physician abroad, to authorize continued treatment during your time overseas.

## E. HEALTH INSURANCE

Your personal medical insurance policy will cover you while you are out of the country. Should you require medical treatment abroad, you should pay for services when they are rendered and then file for reimbursement from your U.S. insurance carrier. Send receipts from your physician and pharmacist together with the claim form directly to the insurance company.

In addition, your program organizer will purchase a group policy to cover medical evacuation and repatriation of remains. This policy is valid worldwide, except in the United States, during the enrollment period. A description of this policy and its benefits will be emailed to you before your departure.

## F. TRAVEL TO PROGRAM SITE

Follow program instructions about travel to the program site. Once you have arrived at your program site, be sure to contact family and friends in the United States. They will be anxious to know you arrived safely.

### Proof of Onward Journey

Upon entering the country you will be expected to show proof of return transportation to the U.S. or onward travel to a third country (a round-trip ticket, even if the return date has not been finalized, or written confirmation of travel reservations). Failure to produce some confirmation of arranged departure may result in your having to purchase a return ticket on the spot which could be very expensive.

### Visits by Parents and Friends

Visits by parents and friends should be limited to vacation periods or at the conclusion of the academic program. Family visits do not constitute an excused absence from classes and many students find having to entertain visitors can be stressful since it takes time away from their studies. Some programs have required activities and required study trips on weekends so it is best to plan for visitors after you arrive and have a better idea of the schedule. All visitors must make their own arrangements for lodging when visiting you while on the program. Visitors should never expect to stay in the homestays or in any other student housing arranged by the program. In most cases, visitors are not allowed to attend classes, program events or participate on study trips.

## G. FEE PAYMENTS AND REFUND POLICY

Follow instructions provided by the program organizer regarding fee payments. It is critical that you submit your payments on time so as not to complicate program plans that rely on knowing the accurate number of participants. Canceling your participation at a late date will result in penalty fees that may be quite expensive.

*Program cancellation:* In the unlikely event that NU cancels a program, the program organizer will determine refunds based on each individual case. Factors include the timing of the cancellation, number of students affected, housing situation, negotiation of recoverable housing costs and other program-related fees. The amount of credit already completed and the opportunities for students to complete courses through alternative arrangements will also be considered.

## H. ON-SITE PROGRAM COSTS

The program organizer will provide estimates of the money you will need abroad for meals, personal expenses, weekend travel, etc. The figures are based on reports of students recently abroad and reflect the differences in their spending habits.

## I. MANAGING YOUR MONEY

Manage your money through a combination of the following:

- 1) **Cirrus or Plus debit card and 4-digit PIN** permits you to withdraw money directly from your U.S. checking account. This option is fast, convenient, and offers the best rate of exchange. Use your card at least once before you leave the U.S., and find out your bank's overseas ATM fees as well as limits on withdrawals. ATMs are plentiful throughout most areas of the world, but students going to nontraditional study abroad destinations should check a reliable guide book for more information.
- 2) **Major credit card and a 4-digit PIN** permits a cash advance on your credit card. This is a fast and simple option, but it involves a fee, and interest is charged. VISA, MasterCard and American Express are widely recognized throughout the world, but some regions favor one over the others. You may want to investigate whether special services for travelers are available through your credit card of choice. **American Express card** holders are permitted to write and cash checks on their U.S. bank accounts at AmEx offices worldwide. Bring your U.S. check book and plenty of checks for this option.
- 3) **Cash.** Bring \$100-300 US for initial expenses and as a fall back when ATMs are out of order.

4) **Bank checks, personal checks, or scholarship checks** should be avoided. They must be sent by registered or insured mail and can take two to four weeks to clear before you have access to the cash. Instead have the sums deposited in your U.S. bank account and withdraw the funds with a debit card. Be prepared in case of loss or theft of financial resources. Keep important information such as credit card phone numbers separate from original documents.

#### **J. E-MAIL**

You will probably have e-mail access abroad through Internet cafes. NC has instituted Webmail which is easy to access overseas. It is available at <http://webaccess.neumann.edu/gw/webacc>.

#### **K. EMERGENCY CONTACT ADDRESS**

You will be asked to complete an Emergency Contact form so that your program organizer has an emergency contact name and number of a friend or relative.

#### **L. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT IDENTITY CARD**

The International Student Identity Card (ISIC) can provide discounts on international and local transportation, lodging, and admissions to museums, theaters, historical sites, etc. Cards may be purchased on-line from STA Travel ([www.statravel.com/](http://www.statravel.com/)).

## **2. Academic Policies**

While abroad you must adhere to the same NC academic policies and regulations that you are subject to on your home campus. Catalogs can be found at [www.neumann.edu/academics/catalogs.asp](http://www.neumann.edu/academics/catalogs.asp). You should be familiar with the basic policies of the University and your own degree requirements. You must also complete all program course work for a letter grade during the time specified by the program organizer. **If you do not complete the course in the time allotted for the course, you can expect to receive a failing grade.**

#### **A. WITHDRAWAL FROM THE PROGRAM**

If you do decide to withdraw from a program, it is your responsibility to contact the program organizer immediately, outlining the reason for your withdrawal.

#### **B. CREDITS AND GRADES**

All program credits and grades are direct Neumann University credit. Consequently, grades are included in your cumulative GPA and, for most purposes, credits are treated as if they were taken in residence at NC. Students must take all courses for a grade that will be factored into your NC GPA. Pass/Fail is not an option on NC programs.

#### **C. INCOMPLETES**

All coursework must be completed and submitted by the end of the time specified by the program organizer. Unfinished course work will result in a grade of F for the course. Only documented illness is considered a legitimate excuse for missing a final examination.

#### **D. TRAVEL RESOURCES**

Should you plan to travel around from your program site, plan ahead by bringing travel guidebooks for those destinations. Also, prepare and bring a list of useful travel Web sites. These may include sites for cheap hotels and youth hostels as well as discount airlines such as Ryan Air, Easy Jet and Virgin Express.

## **3. Legal & Safety Issues**

#### **A. LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

By your signature on the Release Agreement, you have agreed: 1) to respect the laws and customs of the host country, the Neumann University Student Handbook, and all other reasonable standards of conduct promulgated by NC, its

agents and consortium partners, and 2) to participate fully in the academic program by attending classes, remaining at the host institution for the full length of the program and completing examinations. You have acknowledged that if the program staff, with the concurrence of the ISE Coordinator, determines that your conduct is detrimental to the best interests of the program or of Neumann University, your participation in the program may be terminated and you may be sent home early, at your own expense.

In situations where programs are based at local institutions, the host institution has primary responsibility for discipline in connection with violations of its regulations. Although host institution officials may consult with Neumann University concerning student misconduct, final disposition rests with the host institution and in extreme cases may also become a matter of concern to the host government.

### **Illegal Drugs**

Avoid illegal drugs. Drugs can impair your judgment in situations that require increased awareness. In addition, penalties abroad can be very severe if you violate local drug laws. Remember that you will not be eligible for U.S. legal protection, and you will be held to the laws of the country where you are living. Neither NC nor U.S. consular officials can intercede effectively on your behalf. In some countries the burden of proof rests with the defense and not with the prosecution.

## **B. HEALTH AND SAFETY ABROAD**

Neumann University will work to protect your health and safety overseas, but you must take responsibility for the results of your decisions, choices and behavior. Before the program, read carefully and consider the information given to you by program organizers regarding your health and any special needs; and together with your family, review the Neumann University Safety and Responsibility Guidelines (Appendix A). You are also encouraged to consult the State Department Consular Information Sheets and Travel Warnings at [http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel\\_1744.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/travel_1744.html) and the Centers for Disease Control website at <http://cdc.gov/>. While NC can provide information about health and safety issues, we cannot eliminate all risks from a study abroad environment or ensure that U.S. standards of due process will be applied in legal proceedings outside this country.

Please be especially alert to the following aspects of living abroad, which may not at first appear to you as safety or health issues:

### **Alcohol**

One of the best ways to protect yourself abroad is to avoid excessive drinking. Although alcohol may be more accessible at your program site than in the U.S., if you drink alcohol at all, do so in moderation. Not only may inebriation be culturally offensive, more importantly, it can impair your judgment in critical moments when you most need to be alert (e.g., finding your way home late at night, socializing with strangers, etc.).

### **Hazardous Activities**

Students abroad sometimes participate in new activities in which they are not well-practiced or proficient. Be cautious if you are attempting any activity that has an element of danger or risk, particularly if you are far from assistance. These activities can include but are not limited to rock climbing, cliff jumping, snorkeling, bungee jumping, skydiving and skiing. Many insurance companies will not cover accidents that occur during engagement in sports or activities deemed to be dangerous, including those listed above. For more information about specific insurance exclusions, review the benefits statement of your policy. Extra insurance can often be purchased.

### **Emotional Problems**

You are likely to experience some form of culture shock during your time abroad, but this should not be confused with a real emotional crisis. If you feel withdrawn or detached and cannot cope with your environment, ask the resident director on-site for guidance and/or a recommendation for a skilled health care provider. If your problem involves an eating disorder, share your burden with someone before you become seriously weakened. Any medication that you take for a mental health condition should be continued during your time abroad since an interruption in medication can produce serious consequences.

## Political Disturbances

In the event of anti-American activity abroad, maintain a low profile. Avoid places known for attracting Americans (fast-food restaurants, American Express office, etc.), dress to fit with the local culture, and avoid clothing that will quickly identify you as American. Do not approach unattended packages in public places. Be cautious and report any unclaimed object.

## Sexual Harassment

If you feel you may be the victim of sexual harassment, consult the resident director immediately. They can help you sort out the difference between unacceptable harassment and culturally acceptable behavior which is nonetheless uncomfortable for you. In the case of sexual harassment, you may need to file a report at the local police station with the assistance of the resident director on-site.

## Dating

It is important to understand social norms of the country where you will be studying. In many cases they differ from the United States. You can learn about these through various sources, books, discussion with host nationals etc. This is not a time to be involved in a relationship but a time to learn about different cultures as a whole.

## C. TRAVEL SAFETY

### Air travel

Recent increased security measures at airport facilities and on aircrafts will require that you take additional precautions when flying. You should be prepared to comply with multiple document checks, baggage searches, and inquiries. Be patient — these steps are being taken for your protection.

**Packing:** Examine everything that you normally pack in your suitcase and evaluate whether an object could be scrutinized by airport security. (This includes items found in manicure kits, etc.) Consider removing anything that could be perceived as threatening, or may raise suspicion at a security screening checkpoint. No knives of any size will be accepted. Avoid over-packing so that carry-on luggage and checked suitcases can be opened and closed with ease.

**Airport etiquette:** Arrive at the airport early (at least two to three hours before scheduled departure). Be sure to have your ticket, paperwork and passport available. Be prepared to demonstrate the operation of electronic equipment such as laptops, cell phones, etc.

**In transit:** Maintain your sense of awareness and keep your possessions with you at all times. Once through security, place your passport in a secure location.

**Upon arrival:** Have your luggage receipts available for verification when retrieving luggage.

### Car travel

Everyday traffic accidents are the main cause of injury to students traveling abroad. The road-safety standards and risks for Western Europe are similar to those in the U.S., but the more adventuresome a destination you choose, the more primitive the roads, automobiles, trucks, buses, emergency medical resources, safety equipment and licensing standards inevitably become. In developing countries you may be exposed to narrow, winding roads with no guardrails on hairpin turns, poorly maintained vehicles and dangerously overcrowded buses. Even in developed countries drivers may be more aggressive than in the U.S., and speeding and passing may be more common.

- Keep track of local holidays that increase traffic and exercise the same caution you would on a holiday weekend in the U.S.
- Do not ride in a car without wearing a seat belt.
- Demand that taxi and bus drivers drive safely. "Slow down," "Stop," and "Let me out," are three of the most powerful phrases you can learn.
- Do not hitchhike.



The Association for Safe International Road Travel ([www.asirt.org](http://www.asirt.org)) offers statistics, tips and articles about road safety around the world.

### **Pedestrian travel**

- Avoid crowded areas where you are most likely to be robbed: crowded bus stations, market places, festivals. Don't use narrow alleys or poorly-lit streets.
- Avoid traveling alone at night.
- Beware of pickpockets. They often have an accomplice who will jostle you, ask for directions or the time, point to something spilled on your clothing, or distract you by causing a disturbance. Beware of groups of vagrant children who create a distraction while picking your pocket.
- Try to seem purposeful while you move about. Even if you are lost, act as if you know what you are doing.

### **Hotel stays**

Keep your hotel door locked at all times. Meet visitors in the lobby. Leave valuables at the front desk.

## **4. Adjustment and Cultural Differences**

### **A. PERSONAL ADJUSTMENT**

Part of your success abroad will depend on how well you have prepared the logistics covered earlier in this handbook, but even more depends on how you prepare yourself for cultural adjustments and personal growth abroad.

#### **American Identity**

Before you can understand another culture, you should understand your own. What does it mean to be American? What characteristics, values and attitudes define American culture? What generalizations can you make about American attitudes towards education, gender, family, money, politics, race, relationships, religion, success, time, work? How do American values affect your attitudes toward others, your friendship patterns, your work habits, the way you spend your time and money? How do Americans measure success in life? What role does tradition play in our culture? A clear understanding of what is characteristically American (and its many variations) will give you a better chance of appreciating similarities and differences in another culture.

How flexible are you? Once you have identified your American values, patterns and habits, think about the strategies that will help you adjust to different ways of dating, dressing, eating, shopping, banking, relating to professors and studying.

#### **Learn about the U.S.**

Every student abroad is inevitably put in the position of having to explain (or even defend) the home country's political or economic system or its stance on global issues. If you begin now to keep abreast of the U.S. role in global activities, you will be more articulate when you are questioned about U.S. policies and reactions to world issues. In addition, students often report that they wish they had brushed up on such basics as how a bill becomes a law in the U.S. or the composition of the European Union before going abroad.

Remember, however, that you probably don't want to get into a hostile debate with questioners or automatically defend everything that is American. What are some strategies for deflecting potentially hostile questions so that they lead to conversations in which everybody listens and everyone learns?

#### **Learn about the host country**

Learn as much as possible about the country to which you are traveling, since understanding the culture will facilitate your adjustment to living there. How do you plan to inform yourself about the host country before arrival? Taking courses is one method, but you can also independently explore histories, periodicals, novels, travel books, videos and tapes that inform you about the differences in daily life you will encounter overseas.

## **Your expectations**

Take a personal inventory of your expectations. What do you hope to get out of the experience overseas? Do you have any hidden or unspoken expectations? Identify your goals—linguistic, academic, career. How are you going to achieve them? How will you track your personal growth during this experience? Outlining your goals now and then keeping a journal abroad will help you map both your inner and outer journeys. Indeed, daily writing, which attempts to interpret the cross-cultural meanings of your experiences, may be your most powerful learning tool.

## **B. CULTURAL DIFFERENCES**

You will adjust in many small ways over a long period of time to the new culture, even though the familiar term “Culture Shock,” leads you to expect a jolting and immediate clash of values. While there are many differences between the U.S. and your host country to which you will have to adjust, the following are particularly significant.

### **Gender Roles**

Both male and female students abroad will discover that growing up in the U.S. has prepared them for different roles in society than the ones their contemporaries in other countries expect. Many events in recent decades have heightened U.S. awareness of gender stereotypes, sexism, and the limitations of traditional male-female roles. However, it may not be wise to suggest to your host country friends that U.S. patterns are appropriate for their culture. Instead, look at gender difference in the host culture from its historical and sociological perspective. Since you will be viewed according to the gender expectations of the host culture, you may feel uncomfortable at times. This is particularly true for female students who may find themselves the targets of unwanted attention.

### **Sexual Orientation**

Just as traditional gender roles have been questioned in the U.S., we also have had extensive dialogue regarding sexual orientation. It should come as no surprise that distinct cultures approach the question of sexual orientation differently. Remember, NC follows the principles of human dignity for all, as outlined in the Bishops document “All God’s Children.”

### **Different Abilities**

The passage of legislation such as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act has spurred schools in the U.S. to accommodate students with varying abilities. Other countries are not bound by U.S. legislation, of course, and physical facilities and academic resources vary significantly from one overseas site to another. NC resident directors will endeavor to provide reasonable accommodation for students with documented disability conditions (e.g., physical, learning, etc.), but only if you disclose your needs well before the program begins. If you are currently receiving disability-related accommodations at Neumann or anticipate needing them at your program site, send your program organizers documentation that confirms the disability, information about the accommodation currently provided and details about accommodation required abroad. They will then be in a position to work with you to seek appropriate responses for your needs.

### **Religion**

Few countries have the religious diversity and pluralism that you find in the U.S. and few have such a strong tradition of separation of church and state. As a result, you may be struck by the number of public holidays that are based on a religious calendar and the extent of public prayer and public religious ceremonies. You will have to probe to understand the relationship between the external, ritual manifestations of religion and individual beliefs or the role of religion as a political element or an active social force. If you wish to be affiliated with a religious community abroad, check with your local place of worship for contacts or discuss your interests with program staff overseas.

### **Ethnicity**

U.S. citizens often identify strongly with their family’s cultural and ethnic heritage and refer to themselves as Asian-American, Italian-American, African-American, or Hispanic-American. In other countries such ethnic differences are often overlooked, and U.S. students report that for the first time they have been identified (and have identified themselves) as simply “American.” Students may find that physical features that distinguish them from the host population may result in stares, comments, or sometimes overt prejudice. Consult the program administration regarding these matters, particularly if there are certain areas to avoid and steps to take to minimize negative interactions.

### C. CULTURE SHOCK

“Culture shock” is the term used to describe the disorientation that every student experiences to some degree when spending an extended period in a new culture. The common symptoms include homesickness, boredom, withdrawing from the culture by spending excessive amounts of time alone or with other Americans, excessive sleeping, compulsive eating, irritability, stereotyping of or hostility toward host country nationals, weepiness or even some psychosomatic illnesses. Although you will inevitably experience some degree of culture shock, you certainly won’t have all these symptoms. If you recognize what is happening, keep busy, and ask friends and the resident director for help when you need it; culture shock will not last long.

During your period abroad, you may experience several normal stages of cultural adaptation. These include:

1. **Initial euphoria.** When you first arrive in the new culture, everything seems wonderful and exciting, and you are struck with how similar people around the world can be.
2. **Irritation and hostility.** Your focus changes from the similarities between cultures to the differences, and the differences become irritating and frustrating. Small problems loom as major catastrophes.
3. **Gradual adjustment.** The crisis of adjustment passes. The new culture seems more familiar and you move more confidently in it. You make friends. You learn to interpret some of the subtle cultural clues and cues.
4. **Adaptation and biculturalism.** You are able to function in two cultures with confidence. You are so well adapted to the new culture that returning to the U.S. will provoke a “reverse culture shock.”

There are several ways you can minimize the impact of culture shock:

- Learn as much as you can about your host country before you go.
- Keep an open mind. Combine the best of your host country’s culture and life with all the good things in American culture. This “best of both worlds” approach will help you get the most out of the full cultural immersion you experience.
- Be flexible. There will be many surprises, and the more open you are to that, the more exciting and wonderful your experience will be.
- Go out and do things to meet students—remember, in most cases you will be the “outsider” and will have to make the first move. Pay attention to wall posters and read a local newspaper to learn what is going on in the city (festivals, exhibits, concerts). Read signs at the university announcing lectures, films, student organization. Attend programs where you can meet students who share your interests. Visit local student hangouts—cafes, pubs and movie theaters. Join a sports club; if you are active in church, take part in one of the local congregations.

### D. RE-ENTRY: REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK

Once you have adapted to life abroad, coming home may require readjustment to U.S. culture. You will have to integrate what you have learned abroad into your U.S. life. You will cope with re-entry at various levels:

1. **Family:** You may be expected to fit back into your family but find it difficult to communicate effectively because they have not shared your international experiences. They may have difficulty adjusting to your new independence and changed values.

**Strategies:** Try to share your experience with your family (slideshow, stories, etc.) and let them know how much you appreciate the chance they have given you to grow in new ways by studying and traveling abroad.

2. **Friends:** You and your friends may no longer be as close. Be sensitive about discussing your experience with them. You may also miss the new friends you made abroad.

**Strategies:** Ask and listen to what your friends experienced while you were away. Ask them to bring you up to date on local events. Try to do new things together to get the relationship on a new footing. Maintain contact with friends you met on your program.

3. **School:** You are likely to look at your home campus in a new light, and you may miss being part of a close-knit group of American students.

**Strategies:** Talk over your academic experience with your advisor, especially if you are considering new career goals. Make contacts with international students on your campus through the ISE Office. Contact ISE and

volunteer to talk to students who plan to study abroad. Seek out other students on campus who have studied overseas. Take part in activities for international students.

4. **Country:** Aspects of the U.S. may no longer be entirely to your liking and you may have the sense that you no longer fit in. You will probably evaluate ideas and events in the context of the broader cultural perspective you acquired abroad.

**Strategies:** Recognize that we all tend to look past the shortcomings of our home culture when we are away, and to criticize it on the basis of changed perceptions when we return. Seek out others on your campus who are interested in international and intercultural matters. Keep up your interest through the internet, newspapers, literature, music, friends, etc.

5. **Self:** You have become accustomed to a level of activity and anticipation that your home and campus probably cannot match. It is natural to feel a little restless or a bit depressed for a while after your return.

**Strategies:** Recuperate from the physical journey. Think over the ways you have changed: Which of those do you like? What did you learn about yourself? How have your family and friends reacted to the new you? Keep a journal so you can see your thoughts evolve. Talk with other returning students.

# NEUMANN UNIVERSITY SAFETY AND RESPONSIBILITY GUIDELINES

Because the health and safety of its study abroad participants are primary concerns at Neumann, these guidelines have been developed to provide useful practical guidance to institutional representatives, student participants, and their parents/guardians/families. No set of guidelines can guarantee the health and safety needs of each individual involved in a study abroad program, but the following address issues of general concern and the responsibilities of all parties. It is not possible to account for all the inevitable variations in actual cases, so those involved must also rely upon their experience and thoughtful judgment while considering the unique circumstances of each situation.

## A. Responsibilities of the Office of International Studies Education

The Office of International Studies Education (ISE) has university-wide responsibility for all Neumann University study abroad programs. In the case of co-sponsored programs, this responsibility is delegated to other institutional providers (i.e., CEDEI, IES, IPSL), with ISE in a consultative role. For faculty-led programs, responsibility is shared with the Resident Director of the program.

NC study abroad programs are those which have been approved by the ISE Office as well as the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Study abroad initiatives which attempt to proceed without the approval of ISE have no official status as NC programs and cannot advertise themselves as such. Independent initiatives risk being cancelled, and credit for their participants denied upon review.

The following responsibilities of the ISE Office apply only to approved Neumann University programs abroad:

1. Conduct regular assessments of health and safety conditions for NC programs, including program sponsored accommodations, events, excursions and other activities, prior to program. Monitor possible changes in country conditions. Provide information about changes and advise participants and their parents/guardians/families as needed. Develop and maintain emergency preparedness and crisis response plans.
2. Provide guidelines for resident directors and staff with respect to managing emergencies abroad.
3. Provide orientation meetings and materials to participants prior to departure for the program and on-site, which include appropriate information on health, legal, environmental, political, cultural, and religious conditions in the host country. In addition to dealing with health and safety issues, the orientation should address potential health and safety risks, and appropriate emergency response measures. Ask students to share this information with their parents/ guardians/families so they can make informed decisions concerning preparation, participation, and behavior while on the program.
4. Consider health and safety issues in evaluating the appropriateness of an individual's participation in a study abroad program.
5. In the participant screening process, consider factors such as disciplinary history that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
6. Provide students with information on the role of and assistance provided by the on-site resident director.
7. Discuss with students, following their selection but prior to their participation in a study abroad program, individual health and disciplinary history issues that may impact on the safety of the individual or the group.
8. Provide health insurance (including emergency evacuation and repatriation) to participants or assure that participants receive information about how to obtain such coverage.
9. Direct on-site program staff to provide information for participants and their parents/guardians/families regarding available medical and support services, and to help participants obtain the services they may need.
10. Hire vendors and contractors (e.g. travel and tour agents) that have provided reputable services in the country in which the program takes place. Advise such vendors and contractors of the program sponsor's expectations with respect to their role in the health and safety of participants.
11. Communicate applicable codes of conduct and the consequences of noncompliance to participants. Take appropriate action when participants are in violation.
12. In cases of serious health problems, injury, or other significant health and safety circumstances, maintain good communication among all program sponsors.
13. Provide these guidelines to participants and their parents/guardians/families regarding when and where the responsibility of the Neumann University ISE Office ends, and the aspects of participants' overseas experiences that are beyond the control of ISE. In particular, ISE generally:
  - a) *Cannot* guarantee or ensure the safety of participants or eliminate all risks from the study abroad environments;
  - b) *Cannot* monitor or control all of the daily personal decisions, choices, and activities of individual participants;
  - c) *Cannot* prevent participants from engaging in illegal, dangerous or unwise activities;
  - d) *Cannot* ensure that U.S. standards of due process apply in overseas legal proceedings or provide or pay for legal representation for participants;

- e) *Cannot* ensure that home-country cultural values and norms will apply in the host country.
- f) *Cannot* fully replicate home campus support services at overseas locations;
- g) *Cannot* assume responsibility for the actions of persons not employed or otherwise engaged by ISE, for events that are not part of the program, or that are beyond the control of ISE and its subcontractors, or for situations that may arise due to the failure of a participant to disclose pertinent information.

## **B. Responsibilities of Participants**

In Study Abroad, as in other settings, participants can have a major impact on their own health and safety abroad through the decisions they make before and during the program and by their day-to-day choices and behaviors.

### **Participants should:**

1. Participate fully in all orientations before departure and on-site, and read and carefully consider all information provided by ISE that relates to safety and health conditions in host countries.
2. When applying for or accepting a place in a program, consider carefully their health and other personal circumstances, and assume responsibility for them after acceptance.
3. Make available to ISE accurate and complete physical and mental health information and any other personal data that are necessary in planning for a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
4. Obtain and maintain supplementary health insurance coverage and liability insurance, if necessary, and abide by any conditions imposed by the carriers.
5. Inform parents/guardians/families, and any others who may need to know, about their participation in the study abroad program, provide them with emergency contact information, and keep them informed on an ongoing basis.
6. Understand and comply with the terms of participation, codes of academic and ethical conduct, and emergency procedures of the program, and obey host country laws.
7. Once onsite, be aware of local conditions and customs that may present health or safety risks when making daily choices and decisions. Promptly express any health or safety concerns to the program staff or other appropriate individuals.
8. Become familiar with the procedures for obtaining health and law enforcement services in the host country.
9. Avoid substance abuse of all kinds.
10. Follow the program policies for keeping program staff informed of their whereabouts and wellbeing, especially when traveling away from the program site.
11. Behave in a manner that is respectful of the rights and well-being of others, and encourage others to behave in a similar manner. Act in accord with the Neumann Student Handbook and the Code of Conduct.
12. Accept responsibility for their own decisions and actions.

## **C. Recommendations to Parents/Guardians/Families.**

In Study Abroad as in other settings, parents, guardians, and families can play an important role in the health and safety of participants by helping them make decisions and by influencing their behavior overseas.

### **When appropriate, parents/guardians/families should:**

1. Through their student participants, obtain and carefully evaluate health and safety information related to the program, as provided by ISE and other sources.
2. Be involved in the decision of the participant to enroll in a particular program.
3. Engage the participant in a thorough discussion of safety and behavior issues, insurance needs, and emergency procedures related to living abroad.
4. Be responsive to requests from ISE for information regarding the participant.
5. Keep in touch with the participant.
6. Be aware that some information may most appropriately be provided by the participant rather than the program.

*These guidelines are based on those recommended by the NAFSA Interorganizational Task Force on Safety and Responsibility in Study Abroad (May 2002).*