

STUDY ABROAD PREPARATION

Safety Planning Considerations

Royal Roads University has a Duty of Care for its staff, faculty and students. Any travel to an international location that is supported and/or funded by RRU must be assessed for potential risk. The following information can be used as a point of reference in preparation for your time abroad. Please use your own discretion in taking precautions and preparing for your travels.

PASSPORTS & VISAS

- Ensure that your passport will be valid for 6 months after your date of entry to your destination.
- Photocopy the identification page of your passport and keep the copy in a safe place.
- Leave a copy with a friend or family member at home.
- Find out if your destination country requires a visa for entry.

EMERGENCIES & SECURITY

Global Affairs Canada (GAC) provides travel reports for each country, which offer information on safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements, health conditions and other important travel issues. Visit the [GAC website](#).

- Complete and submit RRU's "Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks, and Indemnity Agreement" and "Emergency Contact Information" available on the [website](#) to the Global Recruitment and Partnerships at go.global@royalroads.ca or drop it off in Sherman Jen Bldg. 201.
- Be aware of common problems when travelling abroad – check www.travel.gc.ca
- Know the address of the nearest embassy or consulate for Canada and/or your home country in your destination country.
- Register with the [Registration of Canadians Abroad \(ROCA\)](#) if you are Canadian or register with the equivalent for your home country.
- If you are Canadian, make note of the [Emergency Assistance](#) service number: 613.996.8885.

It is important to note that situations can change unexpectedly and quickly; therefore it is suggested that travelers use the Registration of Canadians Abroad Service through the Government of Canada - Foreign Affairs and International Trade. Registration enables travelers to be contacted in case of an emergency abroad, such as a natural disaster or civil unrest, or inform them of a family emergency at home.

Sign up online at <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration> prior to departure.

FINANCIAL MATTERS

- Find out about banking fees, bank access, access to ATMs (card compatibility), etc.
- Pick up cash and traveller's cheques at the bank – be aware that ordering certain currencies can take several weeks.
- Notify bank or credit card companies of your travel plans to avoid having your cards blocked for suspicious activity.
- Obtain a Power of Attorney, if required.

TRAVEL HEALTH & MEDICAL INSURANCE

In addition to GAC, The Public Health Agency of Canada and World Health Organization (WHO) provide information on diseases and outbreaks that occur worldwide. For the latest travel health advisories and related information, visit the Public Health Agency of Canada's Travel Health website at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/index-eng.php> or the WHO website at <http://www.who.int/en/>.

A travel clinic (such as Travel Medicine & Vaccination Centre(<http://www.tmvc.com>)) will provide individual assessments and determine the need for immunizations and/or preventive medication, as well as offering advice to avoid diseases. Where vaccinations are needed, it is important to allow sufficient time (6-8 weeks) for the administration of vaccines (and where necessary boosters) and the development of a protective immune response. It is also important that routine immunizations (e.g. tetanus, diphtheria, polio, and measles) are up to date.

- Before your departure, ensure that you have adequate travel and medical insurance (extended medical and emergency insurance).
- Carry a copy of your insurance policy with you.
- Leave a copy of your insurance policy with a friend or family member at home.
- Understand your coverage and ask questions if you need clarification.
- Inform MSP or your current medical insurance provider about your time abroad.
- Check www.travel.gc.ca to find out whether you will need vaccinations or immunizations, depending on your destination country.
- Carry copies of your medical records, prescriptions and vaccination/immunization certificate(s) as proof.

Please note that it is a pre-requisite of most insurance policies that all pre-existing medical conditions/treatments be reported in writing prior to travel. It is likely that prescription and over the counter medications may be different from those available at home. It is important to check that any prescription medications you are traveling with are legal in the destination country. It should be emphasized that all dangerous sports and activities, e.g. skiing, snowboarding, parachuting and bungee jumping, are generally excluded from insurance coverage unless special coverage is purchased.

ITINERARY & YOUR DESTINATION

- Research your destination and know the 4 C's: Customs, Currency, Culture and Climate. Know what kind of clothing to pack, how much money to bring with you and in what denomination, important phrases, cultural etiquette, places where you should exercise caution, etc.
- Leave a copy of your travel itinerary with a friend or family member.
- Carry the name and phone number(s) of the person meeting you at the airport.
- Carry the address and phone number of where you are going.
- Be aware of airline carrier baggage limits and additional charges for excess luggage.

OTHER

- For reference, review the Work & Study Abroad Checklist, on the next page.

WORK & STUDY ABROAD CHECKLIST

Timeline of Events

Visa and Work Permit Application

4-6 months before travel

- Ensure that your passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond the end of your trip.
- Update any other personal identification so that it contains current information and a recent photograph.
- Once you have determined which country you will be travelling to, it is important to take some time to research what visas and permits you might need. **In many cases you will need both a visa and permit.** Unfortunately, there is no single application for a visa or permit for studying abroad. Check the requirements for the country in which you will be studying: <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/documents/visas>
- Some standard visa application materials include:
 - An official letter from your program area/department head stating your purpose of travel.
 - An original letter from your employer describing the position you will hold and whether or not you will be paid.
 - Proof that you can pay for your time abroad. (e.g. bank statement)
 - A detailed itinerary of your time abroad.
 - Proof of purchased transportation leaving the country.
 - Passport that is valid for at least 6 months beyond the end of your time abroad.
 - Passport quality photos – the dimensions required vary by country.
 - If you are applying through the mail: prepaid and pre-addressed return envelope.
- Tips for getting your visa on time:
 - Apply at least 2-6 months in advance. Please be aware of the entry requirements when applying for your visa. Some require that you enter the country before a certain date i.e. within 90 days. It may take longer to apply for your work permit (if required); check current processing times.
 - Review your application carefully. Make sure you have followed the directions. Most consulates will have step-by-step instructions on their website.
 - If you are applying through the mail, pay the extra few dollars to track your package with express mail.
 - If you are not comfortable applying by yourself, there are agencies which can help you apply (for a fee) such as [Visa Services Canada](#) and [SWAP](#).

Health and Safety

4-6 months before travel

- Check the Department of Foreign Affairs website for health and safety advisories for the country you will be visiting: <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>. For levels 3 & 4, you will need to be in communication with the Global Recruitment and Partnerships (Sherman Jen Bldg. 201) for additional support. Level 4 requires a High Risk Travel Waiver/Release.

Level 1: Exercise normal security precautions

Level 2: Exercise a high degree of caution

Level 3: Avoid non-essential travel

Level 4: Avoid all travel

- Schedule a medical check-up before the trip. Ask your doctor about necessary vaccinations and have any medical procedures done before you go: <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list>
- Complete and submit RRU's "Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Assumption of Risks, and Indemnity Agreement" and "Emergency Contact Information" available on the [website](#) to the Global Recruitment and Partnerships at go.global@royalroads.ca or drop it off in Sherman Jen Bldg. 201.
- Purchase travel medical insurance for the duration of your trip.
- If you have any special medical equipment that you will be taking with you, it is a good idea to get a translation of the device description and purpose. Attach this information to the device. This will help at security check points (e.g. in airports).
- If you will take medication on your trip, check that there is no ban on that medication in the country you will be visiting. Obtain an extra set of necessary medications with a doctor's note.
- If you have any medical conditions, including severe allergies or special dietary requirements, it is a good idea to obtain a translation describing your health condition and any accommodations that you require. Keep this information in your wallet for ease of access.
- Know the address of your passport country's embassy/consulate in your destination country.
- Canadians only – Register with the Registry of Canadians Abroad: <http://travel.gc.ca/travelling/publications/roca>

Personal Preparation

1-3 months before travel

- Pick up cash or traveler's checks at the bank. Check local travel sites to confirm what methods of payment are most commonly (and safely) used in the country that you will be visiting. Be aware that ordering certain currencies can take several weeks.
- Make photocopies or scan important documents. Keep these copies separate from the actual documents while you travel. Important documents include:
 - Passport
 - Visa
 - Work permit (if applicable)
 - Insurance provider/policy number/telephone number
 - Bank cards
 - Vaccination/immunization certificate(s)
 - Prescription(s) (e.g. prescription lenses, medication, etc.)
- Check to see if your mobile phone will work in your destination country. It may be necessary to get a telephone calling card and take it with you, or you may be able to get your phone unlocked prior to departure so that you can buy a local SIM card when you arrive.
- Notify your friends and family of where they can contact you at your overseas address.
- Read up on the social and cultural norms of the country that you will visit, especially with regards to clothing, so that you can pack appropriately.
- Research the climate of the area to be visited and prepare to pack accordingly.
- Research the location of your travel accommodation in relation to your host institution/organization and other essential services.
- Familiarize yourself with some key phrases in the local language of your destination country.
- Familiarize yourself with the effects of culture shock. The links below provide some insight and tips on how to prepare for adapting to a new culture and returning home (reverse culture shock):
 - <http://www.searchingforyourzen.com/the-culture-shock-roller-coaster/>
 - <http://www.globalexperiences.com/blog/the-4-stages-of-culture-shock-gifs/>
 - <http://www.wikihow.com/Overcome-Culture-Shock-in-a-Foreign-Country>
 - <http://www.studentsabroad.com/handbook/reverse-culture-shock.php?country=general>