

Off-Campus Study Pre-Departure Checklist

- Research host country. Watch movies, read books, and learn more about the country and culture of the place you will be living. Reach out to international students you may know who are from that location.
- Engage. Prepare to take advantage of opportunities to engage with locals and local cultural events.
- Reflection. Prepare to document and process what you will be doing: take photos and videos, write a blog, journal. Inform yourself on program guidelines for doing so respectfully in that context.
- Passport. Obtain one or verify it is valid for 6 months beyond your return date (travel.state.gov)
- Visa. Find out about visa requirements and timelines for applying and what you will need. Check with your program, and if necessary also consult with the website of the relevant embassy or consulate. Be aware you may need to make an appointment or be without your passport while your visa is being processed. Direct questions to your program provider.
- Immunizations. Ask your program and consult the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/)'s Travelers' Health website as well as your healthcare provider(s): <https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/>
- Potential accommodations. Communicate with your program and with Grinnell's Office of Accessibility and Disability Resources about any concerns you may have about special needs or academic accommodations.
- Flights. Check with your program on any guidelines or advice. Set a fare watch on kayak.com. Use STA Travel to book a flight with just a deposit or try Student Universe.
- STEP. Sign up for the U.S. Department of State's Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP): <https://step.state.gov/>. Non-U.S. citizens can receive alerts; U.S. citizens would also receive assistance from nearest U.S. Embassy in the case of an emergency.
- Emergency Plans. Have a communication plan for your program staff, family, and the Office of OCS. What will you do if cell phone service and landlines are overwhelmed?
- Banking. If you will be using an ATM or credit card you should notify them of your plans and any additional travel in advance so they don't put a hold on your account.
- Important documents. Photocopy your important documents. Leave a copy at home with someone. Take a copy with you and leave it somewhere safe.
- Voting. Sign up for an absentee ballot through the Secretary of State of your home state or the equivalent in your home country.
- Packing. Pack conservatively and only what you can comfortably carry. Refer to program guidance.
- Email. Check your Grinnell email account daily for important emails that may concern your preparations.
- Keep in touch with OCS. Communicate with the Office of Off-Campus Study with course changes, problems you are unable to resolve, etc.
- Other communications. Discuss expectations for communication in advance with friends and family members. How and how often will you connect?
- Post-graduate opportunities. Research deadlines for graduate school, fellowships, or important tests and locations in advance so as not to miss them. Ann Landstrom in CLS is a campus resource.

Other Resources

See the general list of resources at <http://www.grinnell.edu/academics/ocs/resources>

And specifically "Pre-departure Resources" in our application portal at travel.global.grinnell.edu

Free online trainings "What's Up With Culture?" or www.preparingtostudyabroad.com

The organizations [Diversity Abroad](http://www.diversityabroad.org) and [Mobility International](http://www.mobilityinternational.org)