Helpful Tips for Preparing for Study Abroad: A Checklist

It can be frustrating to get settled into a new country, especially when you are not sure how basic things work. In an effort to alleviate potential stress, the Office of International Services has compiled a checklist that we hope you’ll find useful!

**Appliances**
Electricity voltage, electricity frequency, and electrical outlets are all different abroad, and this can create a hazard if appropriate precautions are not followed.

- Buy plug adaptors for appliances that have built in voltage converters (camera, ipod, phone, computer).
- Leave hair dryers and straighteners at home! They will not work properly abroad and could blow a fuse or spark a fire. Instead, go in on these items together with your roommates when you get abroad.

**Cell Phones**
Adding international calling to your existing plan is very expensive. We recommend purchasing a basic phone when you get abroad.

- Wait to purchase cell phone abroad.
- Some study abroad programs provide cell phones, check to find out if your does.
- Consider purchasing Magic Jack and/or Skype Credit for calling home.
- Set up Skype on your family’s computer before you leave.

**Money & Banking**
You never want to find yourself in a situation abroad where you run out of money or cannot access your money. Here are our suggestions to avoid these scenarios:

- Inform your bank of all the countries where you plan to travel and how long you’ll be abroad.
- Find out if your bank has fees for international withdrawals or if they have a partner bank where you are going.
- Make sure your ATM card has a **4 digit numerical pin**. Other lengths of pin numbers may not work abroad and the ATM keys don’t always have the alphabet on them which makes it hard if you have letters in your pin.
- Set up online banking so you can keep track of your spending and make sure no fraudulent charges were made.
- Get some local currency at your home bank (no later than a month before you leave -it can take a while to process).
☐ Sign up for a credit card. This is an important safety precaution. You do not want to run out of money when you are traveling. You can decide to use it for emergency purposes only.
☐ Alert your credit card company that you are traveling abroad.

**Language**
It’s a good idea to have a few common phrases in the local language before you go- it will make a world of difference in those first few days!

☐ Learn how to say basic phrases in local language (Hello/goodbye, where is the..., may I please have, etc.)

**Health Insurance**
It is **highly recommended** that all Lasell College students have international health insurance while going abroad. The Office of International Services requires all abroad students to submit information on their insurance provider prior to going abroad.

Check whichever one is true for you:
☐ I have the Lasell Insurance Plan through Consolidated Health Plan. (If so, you are covered internationally).
☐ I have my own insurance provider, and will find out my international coverage.
☐ I will be buying International Health Insurance through a third party provider. (A few you might check out include: Gateway Plans, HTH Worldwide, CMI Insurance Worldwide)
☐ My study abroad program provides International Health Insurance. Note: It is important to compare the program’s insurance to your regular provider because one may provide better coverage than the other

**Food and Diet**
☐ Research the local cuisine prior to leaving- especially if you have allergies, or are a vegetarian… or just a picky eater.
☐ If staying with a host family, communicate these needs to the family before arrival.

**Prescriptions**
If you use prescription drugs, you will need to plan ahead in order to ensure that you’ll be able to have and use them abroad.

☐ Talk with your doctor and your insurance company as early as possible about getting a semester’s worth of any medications prior to going abroad.
☐ Ask your doctor for a letter to explain your condition, any medication you are prescribed, and the generic names of your medicine.
☐ Carry a copy of your actual prescription with you.
☐ Carry all prescription drugs in original containers with labels clearly visible.
☐ Check the foreign embassy of your country to make sure any of your required medications are not considered illegal narcotics! A list of these drugs is available on the Department of State’s website [http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm](http://www.state.gov/s/cpr/rls/dpl/32122.htm)