Frequently Asked Questions for Parents/Guardians

How safe is it for my son/daughter to study abroad?

Hofstra University is committed to doing everything possible to provide program participants with a healthy and safe study abroad experience. Your son/daughter has attended pre-departure program meetings that highlight the host city and emphasize safety procedures as well as health risks and how to avoid them. Students are required to visit the Wellness Center and have a travel consult at which time he/she is informed of any inoculations that are needed for travel. The student also completed two medical forms: medical information form and a medical emergency authorization form. All program directors and important offices on campus (Public Safety and Deans Office) have access to these forms in case of an emergency abroad.

Are there any other safety suggestions that I as a parent can pass along to my child?

Please make sure that your child leaves copies of his/her itinerary, passport data page and any other important document related to his/her study abroad program. Encourage him/her to let you know where he/she is traveling to on the weekends as well as providing you with contact information. Encourage your child to exercise caution especially in large cities, airports, train stations (or other crowded places).

Will my son/daughter have health insurance abroad?

Hofstra University mandates that all study abroad students, program directors and participating faculty members are enrolled in insurance coverage for the duration of the study abroad program through the Allen J. Flood Companies. Details about insurance coverage can be found as well in this Parent Session folder.

How should I communicate with my son/daughter while they are abroad?

The most cost effective way to call is via “Skype” online calling software and operates through your computer. It is recommended that students purchase a calling card once they arrive. All our previous participants recommend not bringing a cell phone since it is extremely expensive. Parents/guardians can also call the hotel where students are staying. Please be aware of the time difference.

What important documents are needed to go abroad? Is a passport enough or does my child need a visa?

All U.S. citizens do not need a visa for short-term visits. The most important document needed is a passport, valid for the time abroad and extends 6 months after your child’s return. Please encourage your child to keep his/her passport in a secure location, if at all possible, in a safety deposit box once he/she gets to the designated hotel.
How is money handled abroad?

A student may feel comfortable arriving in his/her host country with some local currency to cover initial expenses. If you think your child would feel more comfortable, you should speak to your bank (requests for foreign currency can take several weeks to process). You can also exchange U.S. dollars at the airport when you arrive. Please note that in either case, the exchange rates are not good. Make sure that you do not exchange more than $100. Our previous participants encourage the use of ATMs and credit cards abroad. ATMs allow your child to receive the most up-to-date exchange rates – and they can be found almost everywhere! Credit cards such as Visa and MasterCard are another good option, and like ATM cards, they allow you to get the most up-to-date exchange rates. Credit cards also come in handy for emergencies or if your child cannot find an ATM. Please note that American Express is not widely accepted abroad. Please make sure that your bank is aware that your child is abroad and will be using the credit card(s). Other options include using traveler’s checks (American Express) which are a safe option and easy to carry around. They can also be helpful when the student first gets to the host country. However, the exchange rate is often not as favorable and there may be additional fees to exchange them.

How can I assist with my child’s packing?

Please encourage your child to pack lightly. Many of our previous participants inform us that once they were abroad they realized that they had over packed. Please make sure that your child takes all non-prescription and prescription medication (for flu, colds, headaches, etc) abroad since the same medication probably cannot be found.

This is my child’s first study abroad experience. What can I expect?

For many of our students, this first study abroad experience takes them out of their “comfort zone.” Although this is invigorating and necessary for personal growth, it can be overwhelming for the first-time study abroad student who now needs to confront differences in manners, beliefs, customs, laws, language, values, etc. Homesickness is one of the most common adjustment problems related to culture shock and is experienced by a good number of our students who initially feel separated from what is familiar to them. However, homesickness lasts a very short time as students begin to develop friendships with other students in the study abroad group, locals and participate in all the academic, cultural and social activities of the program. In addition, independent travel on the weekends further encourages the development of friendships with other international students. The students find themselves so busy that they do not have time to be homesick!

Does Hofstra University have emergency procedures and safety guidelines in place for my child’s study abroad program?

Emergency procedures and safety guidelines have been developed by Hofstra University to promote the health, safety and well-being of every participant abroad. The program director is the student’s first point of contact in the event of an emergency abroad.
**HOFSTRA STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS**

**Frequently Asked Questions** *(Financial Aid Related)*

**Q:** Where can I find information on Hofstra’s study abroad programs?

**A:** Visit [www.hofstra.edu/About/Administration/Provost/Abroad/index.html](http://www.hofstra.edu/About/Administration/Provost/Abroad/index.html) for detailed information.

**Q:** Can students use financial aid to help pay for a fall and/or spring Hofstra study abroad program and related expenses?

**A:** Yes. Students may use their institutional scholarships/grants. However, these scholarships, in conjunction with other tuition-only awards you may have (i.e., TAP), cannot collectively exceed the cost of the program’s tuition-only cost. If this occurs, the scholarship/grant(s) will be reduced accordingly, but will automatically renew at the original award amount for applicable subsequent semesters, providing the student meets the standard scholarship/grant renewal criteria.

In addition, the TAP award is applicable only if the student is registered as a full-time student during the semester abroad.

Students may also use their Pell and SEOG Grants, and Stafford/Perkins/alternative and/or Parent/Graduate PLUS loans *(Parent PLUS loans are available only to dependent students and Graduate PLUS loans are available only to graduate students)*, etc., up to the respective program’s total cost of attendance providing the student is registered at least half-time *(6 credits undergraduate, 4.5 credits graduate)*.

Students may also use their TEACH Grant, providing s/he is a TEACH Grant recipient *(even if you are registered less than half-time)*.

**NOTE:** SOME ALTERNATIVE LOANS ARE AVAILABLE IF STUDENTS ARE REGISTERED LESS THAN HALF-TIME.

**ALSO NOTE:** FINANCIAL AID FOR SUMMER and JANUARY STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS CONSISTS PRIMARILY OF LOANS.

**Q:** Is there additional financial assistance particularly for Hofstra students who study abroad through a Hofstra program?

**A:** Yes. Refer to the following for applicable donor scholarships:

- **Hofstra in Venice Scholarship** - Hofstra alumnus Dan Spahr generously contributes $3,000 annually to benefit a deserving Hofstra student. Eligible Hofstra students can apply for this merit- and need-based award. For information and eligibility criteria, contact Professor Maria Fixell, program director, at 516-463-4765 or Maria.L.Fixell@hofstra.edu.

- **Donald Tattenbaum Endowed Memorial Scholarship** - This scholarship is awarded to student(s) intending to study in the Frank G. Zarb School of Business *(awarded by the Student Financial Services Office upon the recommendation of the dean of the Frank G. Zarb School of Business)*.

- **Thomas Hetzel Endowed Memorial Award in German Studies** - This scholarship is awarded to a student studying abroad in Germany through a Hofstra-sponsored program or other accredited American university program approved by the director of the German Program *(The Development Office will prepare the award check for the recipient upon the...)*.
Q: Does Hofstra University process and certify financial aid for non-Hofstra students?
A: No. Hofstra processes and certifies financial aid for HOFSTRA students only.

Q: Is there aid available if a student studies abroad over the January-session through a Hofstra program?
A: Yes. Only alternative loans are available. Visit Student Financial Services (206 Memorial Hall) or call 516-463-8000 for details.

Q: Where can students begin to look for outside scholarships to help fund their Hofstra study abroad program?
A: Students may find the following information useful as you begin your research:
- The Gilman International Scholarship Program - Offers study abroad scholarships of up to $8,000 for U.S. undergraduate students receiving the Federal Pell Grant. Scholarships are available for the fall, spring and summer semesters, or the academic year. Visit www.iie.org/gilman** for more information.
- DAAD - German Academic Exchange Service - Offers funding for students, faculty, researchers and others in higher education to help defray travel expenses. Visit www.daad.org** for more information.
- Boren Scholarships and Fellowships - Provide opportunities for U.S. undergraduate and graduate students to become more proficient in the cultures and languages of world regions critical to U.S. interests, including Africa, Asia, Central and Eastern Europe, Eurasia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Maximum awards are $20,000 for the Boren Scholarship and $30,000 for the Boren Fellowships. In exchange for funding, recipients commit to working within the federal government for a minimum of one year. Visit www.borenawards.org** for more information.
- www.StudyAbroadFunding.org** - A useful funding resource that allows you to search by country or subject to find study abroad funding information.

Students may also contact Hofstra's Study Abroad Office (107 Roosevelt Hall, 516-463-4765) or Student Financial Services (206 Memorial Hall, 516-463-8000 - studentfinancialservices@hofstra.edu).

Q: How do I find out more about Alternative loans?

Q: How do I find out more about loans in general?
A: Visit www.hofstra.edu/learnaboutloans** for detailed information.

**Links are provided as a general information resource for general use. The links provided are maintained by their respective organizations, and those organizations are solely responsible for the content. Hofstra neither favors one link over another, nor profits, in whole or in part, from any products or services offered or promoted by any of the web sites whose links appear.
7. How many meals are covered by the program?
   Full and diverse buffet breakfast everyday (17 breakfasts); 3 lunches on 3 excursions. Diners (8):
   Monday through Wednesday (students usually travel Thursday afternoon thru Sunday).

2. Where can my student do laundry?
   We have a laundry a few blocks away that we use that washes and folds a ten lb. bag of clothes
   for about 9 euro. The hotel will also send out clothes to be cleaned at a higher rate.

3. Should I purchase an international phone card for my student? What about a cell phone?
   No. The best deals are local. Students can get a telephone care for 5 euro that they can use on
   the phones in their room for a minimal fee and will give them nearly five hours of calls. Cell
   phones are unnecessary and are both easy to use and can be stolen. If students insist on having
   a phone, they should have their USA phones outfitted with the best international plan for
   roaming, shut their voicemail so as not to pay for potentially endless messages, and use texting
   rather than talking which is cheaper. They are not necessary, yet it does make one feel more
   secure to have one. Yet one should keep phones out of sight for maximum security.

4. Does the Program have a curfew?
   We have a recommended time to get back to the hotel during class days, but we consider our
   students adults and expect they will behave as such.

5. Do students have free time during the weekend to visit other cities?
   The students have free time and do visit other cities in other parts of Greece and Europe. They
   have between Thursday afternoon and Sunday night.

6. If my student travels to another city, should he/she use rail or fly?
   Students would really need to fly to cities outside of Greece and quite a few cities within Greece.
   Their excursions, unless they were to go to nearby cities or islands in Greece, demand that they
   don’t devote more than 3-5 hours of travel each way, as they only have 3 and a ½ days to
   complete their trip. For the January program, a rail pass is useless.

7. Do you recommend hostels for students who are doing independent travel?
   Some youth hostels are magnificent but one has to do research and be selective. There are
   many hotel bargains in the winter. Our students do very well in setting up nice accommodations
   for themselves when they travel and there are many travel agencies in the vicinity of the hotel
   that come up with great deals that often include a hotel pick up on both ends and include
   transportation once at the destination to the cites (this was the case with one of the favorite
   places students like to visit: the island of Santorini).
1. **How many meals are covered by the program?**
   The London program covers only breakfast (a large buffet at the hotel).

2. **Where can my student do laundry?**
   The hotel will do laundry but will charge you a fortune. There is a Laundromat near the hotel.

3. **Should I purchase an international phone card for my student? What about a cell phone?**
   Either phone option will work. There is a phone in each room, but the hotel (like most hotels) will charge a fortune to use its switchboard.

4. **Does the Program have a curfew?**
   There is no curfew on the London program.

5. **Do students have free time during the weekend to visit other cities?**
   Classes are Monday thru Thursday so the students will have 3-day weekends to travel.

6. **If my student travels to another city, should he/she use rail or fly?**
   For travel in Europe, either trains or airplanes will work. For Paris, the Eurostar train is a good and fast deal. There are a lot of budget airlines with cheap flights—Ryanair or Easyjet—to anywhere in Europe. Air travel is of course much faster than trains.

7. **Do you recommend hostels for students who are doing independent travel?**
   Hostels can be a good deal in Europe, though there are plenty of budget hotels as well.
1. **How many meals are covered by the program?**
   Breakfast is served seven days a week; Monday thru Thursday 7:30 – 8:30, Friday thru Sunday breakfast is extended and later. Monday through Thursday dinner is provided at the Taverna San Trovaso. For lunch, students can pick up a panino or slice of pizza for 2-4 euro.

2. **Where can my student do laundry?**
   Students have the option to either bring a small container of detergent and/or woolite and wash their laundry in their hotel rooms, or go to the local laundry mat that is a short walk from the hotels.

3. **Should I purchase an international phone card for my student? What about a cell phone?**
   The best way to contact your student is by Skype or iMessage. If your student does bring a cellphone he or she should keep it on airplane mode and use only with Wi-Fi. Phone cards can be purchased but are not the most recommended form of communication.

4. **Does the Program have a curfew?**
   No, but we encourage students to behave responsibly and we expect them to use common sense. The director reserves the right to suspend a student from the program—in line with Hofstra regulations—if necessary. Although there is no curfew, pubs and bars in Venice close around midnight. Venice is a very safe city but after midnight, any safe city can become unsafe so we advise students to exercise caution while traveling late at night.

5. **Do students have free time during the weekend to visit other cities?**
   Yes, students are free to travel on the weekends. They may start their weekend travel as early as Thursday after class. For health and safety reasons, students are requested to sign out prior to travel (hotel name, students traveling with, etc.) and must sign in when they return (no later than Sunday).

6. **If my student travels to another city, should he/she use rail or fly?**
   Students traveling within the country are advised to use the rail service. Students who are traveling to other countries will need to fly, however more time will be spent in transit and it will be more costly.
7. Do you recommend hostels for students who are doing independent travel?
Students have a variety of options for living arrangements during weekend travel. A list of recommended hostels, and hotels, are compiled every year by our previous participants.