

# Student Exchanges



## PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION HANDBOOK

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## INTRODUCTION

**The world is a book, and those who do not travel read only a page.  
--Augustine (354-430)**

The responsibility for your study abroad preparation does not rest with the staff of Camosun College International. Staff can and will guide you, but ultimately **you must prepare yourself for the period of study abroad.** Having an enjoyable study abroad experience first means learning how to travel responsibly and sometimes, independently.

To assist you in this process, Camosun College has prepared a **Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook.** Information has been taken from a variety of sources including tips from students and staff who have traveled, studied and/or worked abroad.

This Handbook is fundamentally a series of questions on travel, study and life in another culture. Although you may have answers to some questions already, there will be other issues that require research. **Your Handbook requires that you find the answers by searching them out for yourself.** Remember, answering the questions should keep surprises to a minimum once you arrive in your host country.

**Here are some good places to start researching and finding answers:**

- The internet
- Students and locals who have lived or traveled in the countries you will visit
- The library
- A travel guide (can be purchased at any bookstore or may be found at the library)

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Camosun College International wishes to acknowledge and thank the sources we have used to create our Study Abroad Pre-Departure Orientation Handbook.

## TIME LINE

**“Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness”**  
Mark Twain

### 1. **Approximately four months prior to departure**

- a. Get your PASSPORT
- b. Make airline arrangements if not done through Camosun College International
- c. Meet with your program advisor to arrange for classes to take upon returning to Camosun College
- d. Start to RESEARCH YOUR HOST COUNTRY and host culture

### 2. **Approximately two months prior to departure**

- a. Make sure that you have medical insurance and check the limitations on the policy (Camosun College students that did not “opt out” of student medical will have coverage through the Camosun College plan. See page 5 for more info)
- b. Get a physical and have a health card filled out with prescription information
- c. Get your VISAS for host country study and other country travel (this is generally arranged for you if you are participating in a Field Institution)
- d. Purchase a travel guide or make your own
- e. Get any immunizations required to visit the host country (see page 5 for more info)

### 3. **Approximately one month prior to departure**

- a. Make sure that you are available to attend the mandatory pre-departure orientation scheduled by Camosun College International
- b. If you plan to travel by rail, arrange for purchase of discount tickets
- c. Arrange for your International Student Identity Card (some host institutions provide this card)
- d. Arrange for your MONEY matters (traveler’s cheques, credit cards, ATM card) and determine bank fees for overseas bank activity (you may want to talk to someone to pick a banking plan that best accommodates your needs)

### 4. **One week prior to departure**

- a. Confirm with the assigned staff person at CCI that everything is in order and you will be departing as scheduled
- b. TAKE OUT HALF OF THE STUFF IN YOUR SUITCASE













## CULTURAL COMPARISONS

What differences and similarities are there between your host culture and Canadian culture?

	<b>Canadian Culture</b>	<b>Host Culture</b>
<b>Communication Styles</b>		
<b>Gestures</b>		
<b>Personal Appearance (Dress)</b>		
<b>Recreation and Leisure Activities</b>		
<b>Eating Habits</b>		
<b>Food (Diet)</b>		
<b>Family Lifestyle</b>		
<b>Dating/Marriage</b>		
<b>Religion and Spirituality</b>		
<b>Local Views on Sex, Alcohol and Drugs</b>		



## INFO TO GO

The Department of Foreign Affairs provides information for Canadian travelers abroad. Please visit the following website for more information:

<http://www.international.gc.ca/international/index.aspx>

This site contains information on each country's culture, history, geography, economy, government, and current political situation.

**Check for Travel Warnings and Public Announcements.** Travel Warnings recommend Canadian citizens defer travel to a country because of dangerous conditions. Public Announcements provide fast-breaking information about relatively short-term conditions that may pose risks to the security of travelers. For more information visit the Travel Updates website at:

[http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular\\_home-en.asp](http://www.voyage.gc.ca/consular_home-en.asp)

**List the Canadian embassy, consulate and tourism office in the country/countries you will be visiting:**

(Include address, phone number and web site):



# **SAFETY ABROAD**

## **PERSONAL SAFETY**

As you prepare for your travels outside of Canada you should think about your personal safety. As you would in many areas here in Canada, you should continue to use care and caution while travelling abroad.

Remember, ignorance is not an excuse! Students participating in a study abroad program are expected to be familiar with and follow the laws of the host country as well as other countries the student may be visiting. Failure to do so could have very serious legal implications including possible prison sentences. Students being charged with an offence should contact the Canadian Embassy immediately; however, they should not expect any benefits from the Canadian government if they have broken a local national law.

“Canadian consular officials will respond to requests for assistance from all Canadians. While they are in [the foreign country], however, all Canadians are subject to the laws and regulations of the [foreign country], including legal and administrative processes.” DFAIT, December 2002.

The following are some common safe travel suggestions to help you plan:

- Before you head off, familiarize yourself with any trouble spots and/or potential conflicts in the countries you plan to visit, and be aware of current events while you are away. Visit the Department of Foreign Affairs website at: <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/ctry/new-en.asp>
- Protect your valuables from pickpockets by remaining alert and cautious. Conceal your valuables in a money belt or neck-safe under your clothing while traveling
- Do not leave your luggage unattended and do not agree to carry or check any luggage or other items for anyone
- If you are looking for a taxi, ‘official’ taxi stops are generally located outside airports, train and bus stations
- Do not impair your judgment by consuming excessive amounts of alcohol or by using drugs
- Always avoid traveling alone
- As is wise anywhere, do not walk alone at night or in remote and unfamiliar areas. Stay near busy and well-lit areas
- Avoid demonstrations. What appears to be a peaceful demonstration can suddenly change into a dangerous situation and you can become caught up in an unwanted situation
- Leave your travel itinerary – where you are going and when you expect to return – with the international office of the host College and with a friend

## **HARASSMENT**

While CC attempts to ensure its students are not placed where racism, homophobia and/or sexism are evident or rife, we do recognize that in some cultures and some countries one or all of the above may be an issue. Please prepare for your travels by thoroughly researching (on the Internet, using travel guides and talking with past participants) your host country and region to have a better understanding of the culture and society. If you find yourself in an uncomfortable situation involving some form of harassment, please contact the international office of your host institution and/or contact CC International for possible guidance and assistance.

## RISK ASSESSMENT SOURCES

Listed below are websites that may help you find valuable information as you prepare for your Study Abroad experience.

**Air Security International: Hot Spots** [www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HOTSPOTS.asp](http://www.airsecurity.com/hotspots/HOTSPOTS.asp)

Up to date information on various situations throughout the world, including important reminders of anniversary dates which may indicate an increased risk.

**Health Canada** [http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/tmp-pmv/pub_e.html)

This comprehensive web site contains current information on health, inoculations, and current conditions in countries throughout the world.

**Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade** [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca)

Contains travel information and advisory reports from the Canadian government.

**Foreign & Commonwealth Office** [www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)

This is the British version of the US State Department consular information sheets. Information on world news and travel can be found at this website.

**Foreign Affairs and Trade/Australia** <http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/>

This service offered by the foreign affairs office of Australia provides hints for travelers and consular information by country.

**Kroll & Associates** <http://www.kroll.com/library/>

A private investigation and risk assessment company with offices through out the US and world. Features current press releases on world situations.

**Transport Canada** <http://www.tc.gc.ca/aboutus/travel/Plan/menu.htm#generalinfo>

Information for Canadians flying internationally. Includes listings of what you can and cannot pack in your hand luggage.

**World Clock** <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock>

Easily check the time difference between major cities and convert the time zones between home and your current location.







