Imminent Departure Packet: Fall 2021 and Academic Year 2021-2022

As your summer break flies by, we hope that you are getting excited for your upcoming semester abroad! Please keep in mind that travel procedures and COVID protocols in country continue to be unpredictable and require flexibility. Here are a few essential to-dos and important reminders before you depart. We realize this is a lot of information, but please read through this packet in its entirety.

Deferring, Withdrawing, or Changing Programs:

If you no longer plan to study abroad during Fall 2021 or your program information is not up to date in our system, it is your responsibility to inform our office using this form. It is extremely important that students inform us of any changes to their study abroad plans as soon as possible so that we can respond effectively in the event of an emergency.

Register in Study Abroad CRN and back-up courses:

If you have not already done so, login to Gibson and register for the study abroad placeholder course using the following CRN: 98822. Given the exceptional circumstances, students registered to study abroad through a Tulane-approved program were able to register for Fall 2021 on-campus classes as well as the placeholder course for a total of 28 credits: 12 study abroad placeholder credits and 16 on campus credits. Students should drop their Tulane enrollment once they are confident that their program is running and they are going abroad. We recommend that this be done no later than three weeks prior to your departure date.

Complete Post-Decision Documents and Change Status to Committed in your Tulane Portal:

Students should complete the health insurance and travel information forms in their applicant portal prior to departure. Please note that you do not need to request another faculty recommendation. You have already been approved to study abroad by OSA and you can ignore this field. Students should also change their status from “Tulane Approved” to “Committed” in the Applicant tab to confirm their participation in study abroad.

COVID-19 and Health Abroad:

All Tulane students studying abroad are required to be vaccinated in Fall 2021. You must carry your vaccination card with you during travel.

Remember that vaccine distribution is not universal—many of your host countries will not have vaccination rates parallel to those in the U.S. As such, mask mandates, social distancing, restrictions on business and restaurant operations, lockdowns, shifts to online or hybrid courses, curfews, and restrictions on movement and travel are all possible. You should be prepared to abide by all local and program health mandates regardless of your own vaccination status. Keep in mind that you are a guest in your host country and should be respectful of local communities by doing your part to help minimize the spread and impact of COVID-19. Students who are found in violation of program or local health mandates may be subject to disciplinary action upon return to Tulane or may be dismissed from the program.
Some students have raised questions regarding vaccine booster shots and the possibility of receiving booster shots abroad. While certain host institutions abroad may have their own individual policies on this, in general students should not expect to receive COVID-19 vaccine or booster shots while abroad. Individual host countries may or may not approve the same vaccine types as are available in the U.S. and doses are unlikely to be directed to foreign nationals.

All students are required to maintain both a domestic and international health insurance policy while abroad. If you have opted to remain enrolled in TSHIP as your domestic policy, UnitedHealthcare StudentResources and HealthiestYou have partnered together to provide access to doctors and mental healthcare from anywhere you are, even while traveling internationally. All services are free for students covered under the UHCSR insurance plan; services are available for all other students for a fee, as noted here.

If you take prescribed medication regularly, make a plan with your physician before departure to determine how you will access medication abroad. We do not recommend attempting to ship medication as it will likely be stopped in customs. You should plan to bring a full supply of any needed medication with you or, if you are unable to obtain enough medication for the entire semester or year, speak to your program directly regarding your options. Program staff can also assist you in identifying a local healthcare provider within your host country if needed.

**Accommodations Abroad:**

Students with Goldman Center accommodations abroad should notify both their program and the OSA with their official accommodations letter. Even if you do not plan to use your accommodations abroad, we recommend reporting them before departure just in case. If you wait to report your accommodations until you are on-site, they may no longer be available to you.

**Mental Health Abroad:**

We realize that this semester may be a particularly challenging one given that students studying abroad will be navigating the usual cultural shock in addition to COVID culture shock as many host countries are in various stages of vaccination regimes, reopening, etc. Your provider or host university may provide mental health resources to you as part of your program fee. Program staff can also assist you in locating mental healthcare providers within your host country if needed. While students do typically have access to such resources on site through their provider or host university, keep in mind these may differ from what you may encounter in the U.S. depending on your program as well as the host country’s culture respective to mental health. Before you depart, reach out to your program contact directly to ask about counseling and other services which may be available to you on-site.

Remember that students enrolled in T-SHIP have access to remote counseling and other resources while abroad (see link above). Students who are not enrolled in T-SHIP can research remote mental health resources available through their domestic provider—telehealth services such as BetterHelp or Talkspace may be covered under your domestic plan.
**Independent Travel:**

Due to continued border restrictions and risk of possible infection, many programs have banned independent travel outside the host country for the duration of the Fall 2021 semester. Irrespective of vaccination status, Tulane students are required to adhere to all local and program policies regarding independent travel. Students who are found in violation of such policies may be subject to disciplinary action upon return to Tulane or may be dismissed from the program. Even if your program does allow you to travel independently, Tulane University strongly discourages students from travelling independently outside the host country during their study abroad program. Any testing, travel, or lodging expenses incurred as a result of independent travel—including in the case of a sudden lockdown or mandated quarantine—will be the student’s responsibility alone. Tulane University is unable to assist with evacuations or on-site support should a student be rendered unable to return to the host country. All course absences resulting from students unable to return to the host country following independent travel will be considered unexcused. Students should consult with their program directly with questions regarding policies on independent travel.

**Credit Transfer:**

If you have not already done so, reach out to your major, minor, and/or academic advisors to discuss transfer of credit for courses taken abroad. All courses return to Tulane automatically as 5000-level general elective credits, however the awarding of major, minor, and NTC core credit is determined by the relevant department. Final course selection often occurs on-site, so make a plan to stay in touch with your advisors abroad in case of last-minute schedule changes. Students should also consider keeping copies of syllabi, reading lists, papers, etc. from abroad to assist in the credit transfer process upon return.

**Visas & Passports:**

Many of you may already have your student visa in hand or are applying for a visa as we speak. If you have not yet researched entry requirements for your host country, do so immediately. Some countries may require that you present documents (proof of insurance, proof of housing, program acceptance letter, etc.) in order to pass through border control. Even if these documents are not specifically asked for, it is a good idea to keep paper copies with you just in case—you will likely not be able to use your phone while in customs.

**Departure:**

When purchasing flights, the NTC Office of Study Abroad recommends that students purchase flexible/refundable tickets if at all possible. While not yet required, Tulane students are encouraged to book through Tulane’s travel provider World Travel Services in order to have Tulane support in the case of needed evacuation or ticket changes due to COVID-19 or other on-site emergencies. Students should also make an effort to reduce or eliminate layovers outside the U.S. as this could complicate entry, testing, or quarantine requirements. Make sure you are aware of all policies on masking, testing/vaccination requirements, and quarantine on arrival set by both your airline and your host country. Pay attention to detail—some host countries may require specific testing (such as a PCR) within a specific timeframe (72 hours prior to departure and/or on arrival, for example). These requirements may differ from host country to host country and from airline to airline. It is your responsibility to be
aware of and comply with COVID-19 related entry requirements and quarantines. Failure to do so may result in missed or delayed flights or could jeopardize your ability to participate in your program.

Arrival:

Keep all relevant documents (passport/visa, acceptance letters, proof of insurance, PCR testing results, proof of vaccination, etc.) in your carry on—NOT CHECKED BAGGAGE. Make sure you know where you are going once you get off your flight. Write down the address you are headed to in English and the local language in case your phone dies during the flight or does not work upon landing. Are you meeting someone from the program at the airport? Write down their name and contact information. Are you responsible for arriving at your housing or orientation site independently? Research transportation options (subway, taxi, local ride share apps) and decide how you will get to where you are going once you make it through customs and border control. Will you need cash on arrival or is your host country card/app payment friendly? Do your research before arrival—it might be a good idea to grab some cash from an ATM before leaving the airport, or you may opt to order some local currency in advance through your bank in the U.S.

Register in STEP and Global Rescue:

If you have not yet done so, please register for the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). Enrolling with STEP will ensure you receive updates from the Department of State on the security situation in your vicinity, and important advice that can keep you safe. Students should also download the Global Rescue GRID app to receive automated alerts from your area and access features such as local emergency contacts, GPS check-in, and more.

Cultural Immersion and Culture Shock:

Your intercultural learning begins before you board the plane! Have you made yourself a reading list to learn about your host country? Make sure you read a wide array of literature, history, and current events from your host country before you even arrive so that you have the background knowledge to be able to engage in your coursework and ease your transition into this new culture.

Have a plan for culture shock. The cultural adjustment process has many highs and lows. No matter how much preparation you do and how open-minded that you are about your upcoming experience, you are bound to experience a bit of culture shock at some point while you are abroad. Before you go, think through some strategies to help you through those moments when you feel mentally exhausted from navigating another culture. Do you have some of the basic phrases memorized in your host country language? What novels, moves or music will help you de-stress? Have those items readily available! Consider investing in a journal so you can jot down your thoughts whenever you’re feeling overwhelmed. Think about bringing a few recipes for your favorite comfort foods—you can always share those with new friends. Having a plan to deal with culture shock is one strategy to handle the low points so that you can more quickly get back to pushing yourself to learn beyond your comfort zone. Pack a dose of patience and flexibility. The study abroad experience is a great opportunity to develop adaptability and flexibility, skills that will help you as you enter the job market upon graduation! Creativity and resourcefulness will help you to respond to challenges and to take advantage of the opportunities available to you while studying abroad. Great learning occurs when you step outside of your comfort zone and respond with agility and grace.
Stay in Touch with OSA:

Finally, should you have any questions while abroad, do not hesitate to reach out to your study abroad advisor, send us an email, or give us a call. Virtual advising appointments will remain available to Fall 2021 and academic year study abroad students. Studying abroad during a pandemic will be a uniquely challenging experience but remember that our office is here to support you throughout the process and even after you return. We love to see your photos and hear your stories from abroad! Stay in touch by sending your photos or a link to your blog to us via email or direct message @tulanestudyabroad on Instagram. We wish you safe and healthy travels!

Sincerely,

The NTC Office of Study Abroad
6901 Willow St, 2nd Floor
New Orleans, LA 70118
osa@tulane.edu
504-865-5208

Check out these resource pages:

- [What If? Health, Mental Health, Safety, and Risk Abroad](#)
- [Intersectionality of Identity: Traveling as People of Color](#)
- [LGBTQA+ & Allies Abroad: Navigating Identity and Expression in a Global Context](#)
- [Diversity Abroad: Tips for Heritage Seekers](#)