



Suggested Contents for a Pre-Departure Orientation Program

Give all students the address of the UGA Office of International Education's
Pre-Departure Web Site: <http://www.uga.edu/oie/orientation/>

I. Introduction

- ◆ Introductions of Program Director; faculty; TA's, staff
- ◆ Housekeeping issues (missing documents, etc.)
- ◆ Trip itinerary and changes to courses or trip itinerary
- ◆ Program director's role and availability while abroad
- ◆ Contact information for program director while abroad

Before You Go

- ◆ Passports
- ◆ Visas
- ◆ Customs and V.A.T.
- ◆ International Student ID Card and its benefits
- ◆ International travel arrangements; ticket distribution
- ◆ Taking money abroad (credit cards, debit cards, traveler's checks, wire transfers; changing money before departure)
- ◆ Cost of extras, how much students should bring; budgeting
- ◆ Packing (baggage and weight allowances, types of suitcases, what to bring; where to carry valuables; toiletries or feminine hygiene products not available abroad)
- ◆ Making copies of documents (storing one set at home; one set apart from documents)
- ◆ Power of attorney
- ◆ Financial aid information
- ◆ Shipping items overseas
- ◆ Different electrical sockets and voltages; converters
- ◆ Weather at destination
- ◆ Pre-departure medical and dental check-ups

Once You Arrive (some topics also appropriate for on-site orientations)

- ◆ Jetlag
- ◆ Arrival/airport transfer information
- ◆ Accommodations information (homestay, hotels, residence halls etc.)
- ◆ Laundry
- ◆ Local transportation; city maps or guides
- ◆ Location of classes; university facilities
- ◆ Group excursions
- ◆ Calling home from abroad; phone cards
- ◆ Opening a bank account abroad (if applicable)
- ◆ Changing money abroad

- ◆ Mail
- ◆ E-mail and internet access
- ◆ Local newspapers
- ◆ Food; manners; which meals are covered in program cost
- ◆ Metric conversions

Medical Issues

- ◆ General medical care
- ◆ Dental care
- ◆ Mental health care
- ◆ Pharmacies
- ◆ Availability of over-the-counter drugs
- ◆ Differences in quality or nature of health care
- ◆ Explanation of health insurance policy
- ◆ Making health care payments; how to get reimbursement for expenses
- ◆ Bringing prescription drugs for duration of trip in original containers; bringing generic prescriptions for drugs to be purchased abroad
- ◆ Bringing extra glasses, contacts, contact lens solution
- ◆ Sexually transmitted diseases
- ◆ Health problems common to destination (e.g., malaria, diarrhea) and prevention
- ◆ Drinking water and eating certain foods abroad – what to avoid
- ◆ Mosquitoes and other pests; sunburn
- ◆ Recommended and required immunizations
- ◆ Serious pre-existing conditions – medical alerts bracelets/necklaces; discussing conditions with director and faculty before departure
- ◆ Disclosure of disabilities before departure if accommodations desired
- ◆ First aid kits

Safety and Legal Information – full disclosure of known risks

- ◆ Airport safety regulations
- ◆ Disclosure of information on crime common to area or any known incident that has occurred in past sessions
- ◆ High crime areas to avoid
- ◆ Gender/diversity issues
- ◆ Safety risks at night
- ◆ Overindulgence with alcohol as a safety risk
- ◆ Health risks/diseases specific to area
- ◆ Swimming hazards
- ◆ Road hazards; driving
- ◆ Threat of terrorism or civil unrest
- ◆ Strikes

- ◆ State department consular information sheets and travel warnings
- ◆ Dangers caused by language barriers
- ◆ How students can protect themselves (safe handling of money, purses, wallets, backpacks, jewelry; use of money belts or neck pouches; less conspicuous dress and behavior; use of maps; hitchhiking; storing valuables in hotels)
- ◆ Legal matters (arrests, drug laws, etc.)
- ◆ Information on U.S. consulates and embassies
- ◆ Responsibilities of participants

Emergency Information

- ◆ What to do in an emergency
- ◆ 911 equivalent numbers
- ◆ Address, phone number of English-speaking physician
- ◆ Address, phone of hospital
- ◆ Insurance company emergency and general assistance numbers
- ◆ Program director phone number, fax, address, e-mail
- ◆ Home campus emergency contact information
- ◆ Loss of passport
- ◆ Separation from group

Review and signing of student agreement and waiver

- ◆ Review of program rules and policies
- ◆ UGA student code of conduct application abroad
- ◆ Sanctions for violations of policies
- ◆ Drug and alcohol policy
- ◆ Policies relating to motor vehicle operation and/or insurance
- ◆ Review of contents of student agreement and waiver
- ◆ Signature of student agreement and waiver

Academic and UGA issues

- ◆ Course registration
- ◆ Adding/dropping courses
- ◆ Registering for following semester courses at UGA while abroad, bringing appropriate e-mail addresses and phone numbers
- ◆ Transfer of credit and transcripts for non-UGA students
- ◆ Books and materials for courses
- ◆ Registering for parking while abroad (having access to arches e-mail)
- ◆ Differences in educational systems; teaching styles (for programs in foreign universities or with foreign faculty)

Cultural adjustment

- ◆ What it means to be an “American”
- ◆ How other cultures perceive “Americans”
- ◆ How to handle anti-American criticism
- ◆ Homesickness
- ◆ Culture shock
- ◆ Cultural differences (male/female relationships; personal space; privacy; formality; gifts; time; taboos)
- ◆ Religion (differences; taboos; locating religious services abroad)
- ◆ Diversity issues (lesbian/gay issues; minority students abroad)
- ◆ Regional issues (dialects; regional tensions, political issues, etc.)
- ◆ Intercultural communications
- ◆ Facilitating adjustment
- ◆ Keeping a journal
- ◆ How to meet people from host culture (clubs, organizations, families, places of worship, sports)
- ◆ Materials for cultural or language preparation (books, articles, films, music)

Personal Travel

- ◆ Rail passes
- ◆ Youth hostel card
- ◆ Other modes of transportation
- ◆ Dangers and responsibilities of participants during personal travel
- ◆ Recommended travel guides (Let’s Go, Lonely Planet)

Advice from past participants

- ◆ Anecdotes
- ◆ How much money to bring
- ◆ Cultural adjustment
- ◆ Learning the language
- ◆ Other recommendations

Re-entry

- ◆ Change and adaptation
- ◆ Skills, attitudes and knowledge acquired
- ◆ Loss of status
- ◆ Changes in family relationships and friends
- ◆ Integration back into university/college life