

Risk Research Bulletin

Responding to Sexual Assaults in the Study Abroad Setting

When your institution takes students abroad, the sexual violence response obligations imposed by Title IX and the Campus SaVE Act (also known as the amendments to the Violence Against Women Act or VAWA) follow. Yet colleges often lack a process to handle reports of sexual violence in their study abroad programs, according to an analysis of nearly two dozen United Educators (UE) claims from 2009–2013. Most institutions responded without specific practices in place and with little input from the home campus.

This report will focus on key practices for study abroad programs run directly by an institution, including short-term trips and fully owned foreign campuses. Institutions can use these suggestions to improve their response to student sexual assault and compliance with Title IX and the Campus SaVE Act in these programs.

Types of Study Abroad Programs

Institutions frequently use one or more of these study abroad models:

- **Institution-sponsored program.** An institution runs its own program at a site it owns or leases in the foreign country. This also includes faculty-led trips. Participating students remain directly enrolled in the institution, whose employees or faculty staff the study abroad site.
- **Third-party provider.** An institution contracts with a vendor to provide approved study abroad experiences. Students remain enrolled in their home institution while they study abroad. These providers may also enroll students from other institutions.
- **Foreign institution direct enrollment.** A student withdraws from the home school and directly enrolls in a foreign institution. The home institution may agree to accept credits from the foreign institution, but there is no formal exchange program between them.
- **Hybrid program.** Students study abroad with the home institution but also take classes at a foreign institution.

Offer a Prompt and Compassionate Response to the Victim

When a student in your study abroad program reports an assault, responding promptly, compassionately, and supportively is not only an institution's obligation under Title IX and the Campus SaVE Act, but also the right thing to do. In the UE claims studied, despite lacking a formal plan for handling sexual assaults, institutions were often able to effectively manage victim needs and promote student safety because of the humaneness its study abroad staff and administrators displayed. Consider the following examples:

- Upon learning that a study abroad participant had been assaulted, the program director reached out to the victim and later accompanied her to a local rape crisis center, contacted the police on the victim's behalf, and helped her obtain medical care. The student was able to complete her semester abroad and did not pursue a claim.
- On a trip to Italy, when a student reported she was raped by a man she met in a bar, the college offered to fly the victim home to be with her family and receive counseling. Her parents were grateful for the college's actions, and the student returned to Italy to complete the program.

Recommended On-Site Resources

To quickly provide support to the victim, does your institution:

- Have at least one staff or faculty member on site with training or experience in responding to reports of sexual assault?
- Have someone who is fluent in the country's language and can help them navigate medical care and any police response?
- Maintain a list of local resources, including sexual assault support resources and mental health providers to give victims? (To compile this list, consider consulting with the health insurance carrier providing coverage for your students abroad.)
- Assemble sexual assault resources for your faculty and students in an easy-to-reference format, such as brochures, bright laminated emergency cards, or posters that include reporting information for students and contact information for sexual assault support resources at home and abroad?

Using Home-Campus Resources

You may need access to home campus resources that cannot be replicated abroad. To ensure your institution is ready to integrate those resources in responding to assaults abroad, determine whether the institution:

- Can provide remote victim support services to students abroad. In doing so, consider whether there are technical obstacles, such as lack of phone or Internet service, at the foreign location that may impede providing that support.



Anticipating Insurance Issues

Most institutions require students studying abroad to purchase additional health insurance that will be valid in the foreign country. Explore whether the chosen provider will, in the event of sexual assault, pay for physical exams and counseling services.

Also, determine whether emergency insurance will provide for an evacuation following a sexual assault if the student cannot continue in the program due to physical or psychological trauma. Some insurance providers may also cover the cost of flying over a support person for the victim.

- Has given its personnel abroad the contact information for your home campus' victim support services and hours of availability.

Medical Personnel and Police

Being familiar with the practices of public service providers while abroad can help eliminate confusion and surprises for a sexual assault victim. Ensure that your institution understands the relevant customs of medical and police personnel. Does it:

- Have someone on staff who understands the location's crime reporting obligations? While Title IX does not require a victim to also file criminal charges, local law may differ. For example, in a UE claim, an institution operating a program in Austria learned that the country requires mandatory reporting to law enforcement of any sexual assaults. Knowing the legal process in each country will allow your victim to make informed choices.
- Know whether local medical personnel will examine assault victims without notifying the police? The victim may not wish to involve the police, but may want a medical exam. Following a sexual assault in France, a victim was distressed to learn that a nurse could not perform a medical exam until the victim made a statement to the police. Research which doctors and hospitals are equipped to provide a sexual assault exam.
- Ensure that the trip leader or program director has contact information for the following local resources:
 - Hospital?
 - English-speaking physician?
 - Police?
 - Attorney?

Interim Measures

Your institution should also be ready to provide interim protective measures to the victim, such as academic accommodations, no contact orders, and other safety measures, if the alleged perpetrator is also a program participant. In UE's claims, 19 percent of the alleged sexual assaults were committed by a fellow program participant, and the resulting claims were the costliest. Remember that Title IX requires your interim measures to cause minimal inconvenience to the victim. Has your institution considered how to provide the following academic accommodations:

- Taped lectures in lieu of class attendance?
- Alternate test taking?
- Revisions to required field trips away from the main program center?
- A reduced course load? If the victim requests this, consider whether a reduction will jeopardize a student visa or financial aid.

If both the alleged perpetrator and victim are students, your institution must separate the parties. To accomplish this, is your institution prepared to promptly:

- Remove the alleged perpetrator from the program site?
- Find alternative lodging for the alleged perpetrator?
- Relocate the victim if requested?
- Identify alternate transportation, such as different flights or trains, for the alleged perpetrator if the group travels together?

These alterations may be difficult if the group is staying together in a hotel or residential building, or if the group is traveling to a remote location.

Other Support

Consider options such as offering to transport a parent or other support person to the foreign location. In two UE claims, victims praised their colleges for flying in family members for support. Also, if the alleged perpetrator is a member of the local community rather than a program participant, be ready to provide the victim an escort while in the area.

When Victims Leave the Program

Colleges generally cannot require victims to leave their programs just because they have been the victim of a sexual assault. However, due to the physical or emotional trauma of the sexual assault, the victim may voluntarily decide to leave. If this occurs, is your institution ready to:

- Assist with travel arrangements?
- Have a staff member accompany the victim home?
- Consider offering a full or partial tuition reimbursement to the victim?

Integrate Sexual Harassment and Violence Policies Into Study Abroad Program Materials

Title IX and Campus SaVE require colleges and universities to have clear policies on responding to sexual harassment, sexual violence, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. Your institution's study abroad programs are an extension of your campus, but student participants may not consider themselves "on campus." Therefore, reminders of behavior expectations and the application of your home campus policies are a good idea.

An institution's study abroad program materials should explicitly state that sexual harassment and violence will not be tolerated abroad. Provide program directors, faculty, and students with copies of or links to the policies and instructions for reporting a sexual assault while abroad. Also, include a general statement of how the policy and institution will respond while the student is enrolled in your program.

Example:

The University of California Education Abroad Program disseminates a separate sexual harassment and sexual violence policy to all participating students during study abroad orientation. Georgia College specifically mentions study abroad when outlining the scope of its policies. American University's disciplinary and harassment policies clearly state that they apply during a student's entire matriculation to conduct occurring on or off campus. For more guidance on drafting sound nondiscrimination policies, please see the Title IX & Beyond publication, "Revising Nondiscrimination Policies and Grievance Procedures," on EduRiskSolutions.org.



Students From Other Institutions in Your Program

If your institution accepts students from other institutions into its study abroad program, you should be prepared for responding to sexual assaults involving these individuals. If an accusation of assault is made against a "visiting" student, plan how you will handle the accusations, invoke your procedures, and investigate the allegations. In addition to any discipline your institution may impose, such as dismissal from the program, consider notifying the student's home institution of the situation.

Your college should also be prepared to offer support to a sexual assault victim from another institution enrolled in its study abroad program. Encourage the victim to notify his or her home campus about the sexual assault to receive additional support services there.

Establish a Framework for Responding to Reports

Receiving a report of sexual assault triggers your policy. In addition to offering support services to the student victim, you will need to promptly begin an investigation. OCR's desired time frame of 60 days to complete the investigation and hearing process still applies abroad. While many UE claims reviewed involved a perpetrator unrelated to the foreign study program, institutions should also have a framework for handling student-on-student assaults in their programs, as described below.

Investigations

To ensure your college has the appropriate infrastructure for responding to assault reports abroad, has it considered:

- Having a program director or faculty member on site qualified to conduct a sexual assault investigation? Staff members who have not received significant specialized training are unlikely to be qualified.
- Sending an investigator from the home campus to conduct a sexual assault investigation if there is no qualified investigator on site? If adopting this practice, identify obstacles to getting someone abroad quickly.
- Assessing the institution's ability to conduct investigations remotely, anticipating technological hurdles?

Example:

One Massachusetts institution, after receiving a report of a student-on-student sexual assault at its campus in Europe, immediately placed its Title IX coordinator on a plane. She began her investigation within 36 hours of the initial report, and completed her interviews in two days. She returned home, and asked follow-up questions via email and videoconferencing.

Adjudication

If the alleged perpetrator is a fellow student and the investigation is conducted abroad, you may have to adjudicate the matter while the students are still abroad. Has your institution determined whether:

- Adjudications will occur abroad, on the home campus, or remotely from the home campus?
- Students or staff need to return to the home campus for the adjudication? Be aware that sending an alleged perpetrator home before an investigation or finding of responsibility may appear punitive. However, leaving the student in place can create trip complications and compound the victim's trauma.
- Technology used to facilitate the adjudication, such as Skype or other videoconferencing tools, has been tested at the abroad location or home campus?
- How the appeal process will work?



Challenges in Working With a Third-Party Provider or Foreign Institution

The requirements and protections of Title IX and the Campus SaVE Act apply to institutions receiving federal funding. It is unlikely your third-party provider or a foreign institution will be subject to these requirements.

Consider how to address instances of sexual assault with your third-party provider through your contract or memorandum of understanding. Document your expectations for incident reporting in situations involving one of your students. Review the provider's response procedures and any support resources it has assembled in the foreign location. Responding to a sexual assault claim abroad will likely be handled on a case-by-case basis, but aim to discuss your institution's expectations in advance.

Faculty or Staff as the Perpetrator

Make sure students have an avenue to report assault allegations against a faculty member, trip leader, or program director. When an employee is the alleged perpetrator of a student assault abroad, does your institution:

- Ensure students have access to another person who can assist them if the alleged perpetrator is someone in charge of the trip?
- Conduct an investigation and determine what interim measures will be provided?
- Have the ability to cut a trip or program short, or provide a substitute faculty member, trip leader, or interim program director? Substituting a faculty member on short notice may be difficult and cost prohibitive, especially on a short trip. If your program director is a foreign national, you may have foreign employment hurdles to overcome or may be unable to quickly find a suitable replacement.

Train Program Directors, Trip Leaders, and Students on Your Policy

Program Directors and Trip Leaders

Title IX and Campus SaVE require training of all employees likely to receive reports of sexual assault, domestic and dating violence, and stalking. Train study abroad employees and program directors on Title IX and Campus SaVE requirements so they will be prepared if contacted by a student or faculty member from a study abroad program. According to OCR, this training should include “practical information about how to prevent and identify sexual violence, including same-sex sexual violence; the behaviors that may lead to and result in sexual violence; the attitudes of bystanders that may allow conduct to continue; the potential for revictimization by responders and its effect on students; appropriate methods for responding to a student who may have experienced sexual violence, including the use of nonjudgmental

language; the impact of trauma on victims; and, as applicable, the person(s) to whom such misconduct must be reported.”¹

Furthermore, the Campus SaVE Act requires training for students and employees on domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This training should include:

- Prevention and awareness programs
- Safe and positive options for bystander intervention
- Information on risk reduction to recognize warning signs of abusive behavior

In one UE claim resulting in a six-figure settlement, study abroad faculty and staff were not trained on how to handle sexual assault reports. As a result, these employees did not immediately offer the victim support services or notify the home campus of the assault. Defense counsel’s concern about the lack of training led to the settlement decision.

In OCR’s April 2014 *Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence*, specific training requirements are outlined for “responsible employees,” those on campus who have authority to redress or a duty to report incidents of sexual violence, or those who students reasonably believe have this authority or duty. This training should include not only the topics above, but also:

- The responsible employees’ reporting obligation, including what should be included in a report
- Any consequences for the failure to report an incident
- The procedure for responding to students’ requests for confidentiality, including available confidential advocacy, counseling and support services
- Contact information for the school’s Title IX coordinator

Designate program directors and trip leaders—often faculty—as responsible employees for Title IX reporting purposes, and train on responding to sexual assault reports prior to any planned trips.

¹ These training requirements may be found in *Questions and Answers on Title IX and Sexual Violence*, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Education, April 29, 2014.

Students

As part of any trip orientation, remind students of your harassment policy provisions and reporting procedures. For example, [Austin Peay State University](#) has outlined information to be included in all pre-trip orientation sessions. Topics include the university student conduct code and sexual harassment policy, how to report harassment, and country-specific dating and relationship norms. In addition, if you accept students from other institutions into your program, educate them about your policies and how they apply. Explain that your policies may differ from those of their home institution.

Lastly, as a general practice, document any training or education you have undertaken so there is a record of efforts to address sexual assault abroad.

Train on Cultural Issues and Bystander Intervention

Students studying abroad must learn to navigate an unfamiliar culture. Too often, this results in misunderstandings. Inconsistencies in cultural understanding can lead to compromising situations for students—most often females. A review of UE sexual assault claims occurring abroad revealed² 69 percent involved perpetrators who were new acquaintances or strangers. Most often these assaults happened after students were drinking at local clubs or bars. In one-quarter of the claims, victims were raped at the club where they were drinking or while on their way home. In the remaining three-quarters of the claims, the victims left voluntarily with the perpetrator.

Cultural Issues

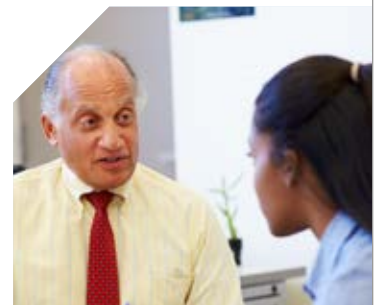
Discussions of cultural and safety issues abroad should take place in orientation sessions at your institution prior to departure and reinforced at an on-site orientation upon arrival in the country. Consider covering:

- Lingering stereotypes about the sexuality of American women.
- The presence of sexual predators abroad who specifically target visiting students, offering to buy drinks and/or accompany them home “safely,” or trying to separate them from their friends.
- Language barriers.
- Cultural differences about the use of alcohol and sex. Cues the parties give may be opaque and subject to misinterpretation.

Also address practical general health and safety education. On-site orientation is a good time to remind students that they should:

- Be wary of new acquaintances
- Get to know people they meet slowly
- Evaluate strangers as they would anyone back home.

² In the UE claims reviewed, the victims were female and the perpetrators were male. We recognize that there are other sexual assault scenarios that can and do occur.



Understanding “Responsible Employee” and “Campus Security Authority”

Under Title IX, your institution must address incidents of sexual violence that a “responsible employee” knows or should have known about.

In addition, the Clery Act, which was amended by the Campus SaVE Act, refers to “campus security authorities,” (CSAs). These include members of an institution’s campus police or security department and others with campus security duties, any individuals or organizations the institution specifies in its security policy as those to whom crimes should be reported, and any official with the authority and duty to act or respond on the institution’s behalf with significant responsibility for student and campus activities.

CSAs must report to a designated school official all allegations of Clery crimes—including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking—about which they learn.

Consider designating your CSAs as responsible employees for Title IX purposes.

Alert students to high crime areas in the host city, and once on site convey any special crime alerts your institution receives. The University of the Pacific has developed an online course to prepare students for the cultural challenges of studying abroad.

Bystander Training

In multiple UE claims, the assailant separated the victim from her friends, often on the dance floor or when leaving a bar. Research shows that effective bystander intervention training may reduce incidents of sexual violence on campus. Under the Campus SaVE Act, institutions are required to conduct bystander intervention training for their students. As your students prepare to go abroad, consider requiring them to complete separate bystander intervention training or develop a way to incorporate this training into your trip orientation.

To improve safety and reduce the likelihood of sexual assault and other incidents, the U.S. Peace Corps requires bystander intervention training for all volunteers. A similar training program is being run by a third-party study abroad provider for all students in its programs. Trained resident directors conduct the training during on-site orientation. The interactive, participatory program discusses aggressors' tactics, illustrates ways to intervene, and requires students to play roles in a situation that would benefit from bystander intervention. This is but one tool that students will have to help effectively prevent sexual assault while abroad.

Practice Responding

After your preparation, test your response plan. Consider having your campus crisis response team incorporate sexual assault abroad scenarios into its tabletop exercises. Situations can include variables such as an assault by a fellow student, an unknown assailant, and a faculty or staff member. Involve employees from the study abroad office in tabletop exercises to increase understanding about the institution's planned response to sexual assaults occurring abroad. You may draw examples from your own experiences or from these UE claims:

- Upon arrival for a short-term study trip, one institution confronted a shortage of hotel rooms for its students. The faculty member leading the trip had a female graduate student share a room with two men she did not know. After a night of drinking, one of the men assaulted the female student when he returned to the room.
- Students in one study abroad program shared a residence with bedroom doors that did not lock. Following a house party, an intoxicated student assaulted a female in her room.

No matter the circumstances, responding to sexual assaults that occur abroad will be a complicated and difficult undertaking. If your institution considers and prepares for various scenarios in advance of travel, you will be able to support victims and more effectively address incidents of sexual violence.

Acknowledgment

This *Risk Research Bulletin* was written by Heather A. Salko, Senior Risk Management Counsel.

This appendix contains excerpts from the websites of the named institutions and was current as of late June 2015. Some examples demonstrate policy options for addressing sexual assault in study abroad programs. The remaining examples provide options for incorporating cultural awareness training into orientation sessions.

I. Policies and Procedures Examples



University of California Education Abroad Program Policy Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence This Policy Must Be Disseminated During Student Orientation

University of California Policy Summary

“The University of California is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals who participate in University programs and activities can work and learn together in an atmosphere free of harassment, exploitation, or intimidation. Every member of the community should be aware that the University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence, and that such behavior violates both law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence, and will take appropriate action to prevent, to correct, and when necessary, to discipline behavior that violates this policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.”

University of California, Office of the President, February 25, 2014

Overview

The following University of California Education Abroad Program (UCEAP) policy on sexual harassment and sexual violence includes the University of California Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.

The policy and procedures apply to students, and academic and non-academic appointees serving on behalf of UCEAP. The University prohibits sexual harassment and sexual violence.

Such behavior violates both U.S. Federal law and University policy. The University will respond promptly and effectively to reports of sexual harassment and sexual violence and will take appropriate action to prevent, correct, and when necessary, discipline behavior that violates these policies. Sexual harassment, sexual violence, (assault, battery, sexual coercion, dating violence, stalking, domestic violence, and rape) are violations of State and Federal laws, University of California policy, UCEAP policy, the UCEAP Student Code of Conduct, staff personnel policies, and the UC Faculty Code of Conduct for UC faculty. Besides requesting an investigation and action from UCEAP officials, complainants of sexual assault and rape may be able to file criminal charges against the perpetrator, depending on the country.

All protocols below apply to the UCEAP Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence Policy, which is based on the UC Office of the President systemwide Policy on Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence.





Behavioral and Academic Policies on Study Abroad

While on your study abroad program, you are an ambassador of the United States, Georgia, and Georgia College & State University. As such, you are expected to behave with utmost integrity, which involves not only following the rules of your host institution, but also the laws of the host country as well as GCSU rules. Please carefully review the Honor Code [link omitted], the Student Code of Conduct [link omitted], and Student Rights and Responsibilities [link omitted] for more information on the expectations the university has regarding your behavior. For information regarding the local laws of the country and community you will be visiting, please contact the Embassy [link omitted] for free information.



Addressing Sexual Assault Abroad

Students are encouraged to be aware of cultural and social attitudes toward sexual harassment, rape and sexual assault victims, as they may vary greatly in different countries. Please speak with your study abroad advisor and in-country program director to learn more.

American University provides free and confidential advocacy services to all students. Students are encouraged to contact the Office of Advocacy Services for Interpersonal and Sexual Violence (OASIS) within the Wellness Center. An advocate can provide support, information, and assistance in navigating the reporting and adjudication process.

Please note: if an American University student discloses an experience of sexual harassment and/or assault to any Study Abroad program staff member or advisor, that staff member or advisor will be required to make a report of the assault to the Office of the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students will follow-up with the student regarding what was reported.

Student Conduct Code

The university retains authority over alleged infractions that occur during a student's matriculation or attendance at the university, including winter, spring, and summer breaks and periods of leave of absence from the university. Therefore, a hearing maybe scheduled after a student has completed a program, withdrawn, or graduated from the university.

Generally, the university will take disciplinary action for on-campus infractions of the Code.

However, the university may take disciplinary action for off-campus infractions of the Code when a student's behavior threatens or endangers the safety and well-being of the campus community; when a student is the subject of a violation of local, state, or federal law; or when, in the judgment of university officials, a student's alleged misconduct has a negative effect on the university's pursuit of its mission or on the well-being of the greater community.



Student Conduct Rules for Travel Programs

- a. Rules: Students in a travel study program are bound by the applicable policies and rules of Miami University, by the policies and rules of the foreign institutions as disseminated during orientation and by the laws of the site of the program (e.g., foreign country).
 - i. Students may be bound by additional rules as specified in writing by the program director as deemed necessary for the proper functioning of the program. These additional expectations must be in writing and provided to the students in the program.

- a. The Miami University regulations in *The Student Handbook*, the proscriptions stated in the Academic Misconduct Policy and the Code of Student Conduct are fully applicable, and violation will not be tolerated. The program director must inform students of the Code of Travel Guidelines 4 Student Conduct, disciplinary processes, and the consequences of violations prior to the beginning of the program, and consistently enforce the Code during the program.
 - i. The disposition disciplinary matter by a host institution, or the lack of a disciplinary matter by a host institution, does not in any way preclude Miami University's ability to pursue or not pursue its own disciplinary action regarding the same matter.



Resources for Faculty and Advisers— Emergency Procedures

If a study abroad participant reports an incident of sexual harassment during the program, the first and most important step is to help the alleged victim feel safe. Such action could include, but is not limited to, an immediate change of housing or a change of roommate.

Next, the incident must be reported to the Office of Study Abroad (OSA) in writing, if possible, and if not, by telephone during regular business hours at 517-353-8920 or after hours at 517-353-3784.

In compliance with university policy, OSA will report the incident to the appropriate body as described below:

- If the **alleged harasser is a faculty or staff member**, the complaint should be made, orally or in writing, to the alleged harasser's unit administrator or to the University's Title IX Coordinator [link omitted].

- If the **alleged harasser is the unit administrator**, the complaint should be made, orally or in writing, to the unit administrator's superior or to the University's Title IX Coordinator [link omitted].
- If the **alleged harasser is a student**, the complaint should be made to the Department of Student Life or to the University's Title IX Coordinator [link omitted].

The University also prohibits sexual harassment by third parties towards members of the University Community. Although individuals who are not students or employees of the University are not subject to discipline under the University's internal processes, the University will take prompt corrective action to eliminate sexual harassment and prevent its recurrence.

- If the **alleged harasser is an individual who is not a University employee or student**, the student (or leader) should report the alleged sexual harassment to the Office of Study Abroad.



Sexual Misconduct Abroad

The opportunity to study abroad is an exciting, positive, and memorable part of your Wake Forest student experience. While you begin learning about the host culture and the features of your chosen study abroad program, it is also important to prepare for safety by addressing a variety of potentially problematic issues that may be faced abroad, including sexual misconduct.

Wake Forest University expects all members of its community to act in respectful and responsible ways toward each other—whether on campus, in our home communities, or abroad. The full Wake Forest University Student Sexual Misconduct Policy can be found at: [link omitted].

The purpose of this information on sexual misconduct is to raise awareness of the issue, highlight some of the ways in which entering another culture may increase vulnerability, and advise students on available resources.

II. Cultural and Safety Issues



Cultural Adaptation

...[H]ere are a few general suggestions to help you anticipate differences that you may encounter abroad.

- Men and women may interact with each other in ways that are different from what you are used to. Body language and words themselves may have different meanings; standards of dress for women may be more conservative (especially in churches, museums, and other public places); what we perceive as sexual harassment (whistles, cat-calls, even touching) may be considered the ordinary and acceptable standard of behavior. Learn and observe how other women your age dress and behave, and follow those standards, at least until you can more comfortably understand how and when it is appropriate to be different.
- People in some places may know the US only from movies, television, music videos, and other media, and may have stereotypical views of the US, including the belief that all American women are promiscuous. It may take some time for some people to understand that that stereotype does not apply to all women, nor to you personally.
- In the US, despite problems that still exist, we tend to expect (and laws often require) that individuals are entitled to fair and equal treatment without regard to gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc. In other countries, these expectations may not apply. (See the web sites listed under “Other Travel Resources” for more information.)
- Depending on where you plan to study and travel, you may find that women are not accorded equality under the law, and/or in practice. Inform yourself about what to expect. You may learn more about the position of women by respecting and observing such differences than by arguing or intruding into places or activities considered inappropriate for women.
- Persons of color may experience more or less overt discrimination or racism than they typically expect to encounter here.
- Attitudes toward lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgendered people may be more or less tolerant than here or in your home community. NAFSA: The Association of International Educators supports a web site with an extensive bibliography of resources on travel, some of a general nature and some that is country/region specific. Several of the resources listed here also address issues relevant to women travelers in general.
- Some feelings of discomfort are inherent in any experience abroad as you cross the boundaries between your own values and attitudes and those that you encounter in a new and different cultural context. However, if you feel unsafe or uncomfortable as a result of attitudes or actions that you think are directed at you because of your gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, etc., it is critical that you speak to your program sponsor or host, or that you contact the Center for Global Initiatives. Your program or host can help you understand what is happening, respond appropriately, and access local sources of support, as well as take any action that may be necessary to ensure your safety. But remember that no one can know what you are experiencing or how to help you if you don't speak up.

APSU Study Abroad Program Orientation Guidelines

The information covered in the outline below must be presented in all pre-departure and on-site orientations.

Student Expectations

- Attendance policies
- Student code-of-conduct policies
 - Prohibits the use of alcohol or drugs
- Student course enrollment policies
- Student payment policies
- Students must obey host-country laws
- Student responsibility
 - Personal preparation
 - Knowledge of host country
 - Actions and decisions
 - Keeping program coordinator informed of their whereabouts

Practical Pre-departure guidance

- Banking notification
- Travel insurance
- Prescriptions and over-the-counter medications
- Host country research
- Immunizations
- Illnesses endemic to the host country
- Special student health needs and availability of services in host country

Practical Travel Guidance including the following:

- Visas/Passport
- Arrival procedures
- Luggage restrictions
- Airport conditions requiring special attention

- Travel insurance In-Country Practical Considerations
- Voltage
- Computer Access
- Communication Methods
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Currency exchanges
- Managing Finances

Academic Information

- Credit transfer issues
- Academic differences abroad, if applicable

Sexual Harassment

- Country specific information on appropriate venues and culturally-appropriate attire
- Difference in dating and relationship norms
- University policy on sexual harassment
- Steps to reporting sexual harassment

In-Country Safety Procedures

- Road safety and means of safe transportation
- Country specific travel concerns

Recreational Hazards

- Program specific risks and how to avoid injury
- Emergency Procedures
- Procedures for making local and international phone calls
- Host country emergency numbers (police, fire, hospital)
- Program emergency response procedure

Travel Precautions

- U.S. State Department Passport Registration
- U.S. State Department Travel alerts

- Avoid political protest or large crowds
- Maintaining a low profile
- Safety in numbers recommendation

Cross-Cultural Issues

- Appropriate dress in social and academic settings
- Regional climate and weather conditions
- Political tensions and social and environmental issues
- Predominant languages
- Religions
- Attitude and appearance
- Customs and courtesies
- Patterns of daily and family life
- Gender and age-specific roles
- Race, sexual orientation, and tolerance issues
- Women's safety issues
- Food and diet
- Recreation and holidays
- Education and health care systems
- Cross-cultural adjustment strategies



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