

Student Travel Checklist

HARVARD'S ONLINE PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION



IN AN EMERGENCY

1. Call the local equivalent of “911,” if appropriate.
2. Call International SOS: +1-617-998-0000 or connect through the Assistance App.

International SOS offers 24/7 worldwide medical referrals, medical and security assistance, lost passport help, and evacuation services. International SOS will also alert Harvard Global Support Services, and we can provide additional help.

PRE-TRAVEL REQUIREMENTS

Register your travel

- Register your **itinerary and contact information** with International SOS.
- Enroll your trip with the local U.S. embassy through the **U.S. State Department website** or with your home country's embassy.
- Download the International SOS **Assistance App**.



Obtain travel documents

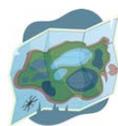
- Each country's **visa requirements** vary based on your citizenship, reason for travel, length of stay, and number of entries.
- If working abroad, you may need a work permit—even for an unpaid internship.
- Obtain a **passport** and required documents well in advance; the process may take 10-14 weeks+.
- International students: consult with the **Harvard International Office**.

Obtain health clearance

- Obtain **health clearance**, if required by your program.
- If traveling with Harvard sponsorship, you're required to have **health insurance**. Check with your health insurance provider about your international coverage options.

Review Harvard's travel policies and complete other pre-departure requirements

- Review the **student travel policies**.
- Check the Harvard GSS **travel risk ratings**.
- Complete a **travel waiver**.
- Complete a **travel safety questionnaire**, if applicable.
- Review the expectations for conduct in your School's student handbook, which apply whether you're on or off campus.
- If conducting research on human subjects, contact your School's Institutional Review Board (IRB).
- Consult with your School's export control administrator about **export/import permits** if transporting scientific equipment or biological samples across borders.



PLANNING AND LOGISTICS

Research your destination

- Research country-specific environmental, financial, health, legal, medical, political, safety, and communication information.
- Prepare for cultural differences and consider how different identities are treated. For example, think about your dress and how to balance being true to yourself while respecting the local culture. Resources include **International SOS**, the **U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**, and the **U.S. Department of State**.

Health and wellness on the road

- Schedule a **travel health consultation** at least six weeks before your trip to obtain necessary vaccinations and medications.
- Work with your doctor to ensure that your **medications** are legal and available in country, and that you'll have enough for the duration of your trip.



- If receiving mental health treatment, work with a professional to develop a wellness plan to meet your needs abroad.
- Feeling some disorientation and stress is normal.
- Establish routines and make time for exercise, relaxation, and self-care.
- Reach out to International SOS or your program for help if you're feeling out of sorts or especially down or depressed.

☐ **Budgeting and accessing your money**

- Research cost of living, exchange rates, and [accepted payment methods](#).
- Notify your bank and credit card company that you'll be traveling.

☐ **Transportation and getting around**

- Research and budget for safe transportation options. Resources include International SOS, [remote road travel advice](#), and the [Association of Safe International Road Travel](#) (use member code Harvard1636).
- Harvard advises against driving abroad, and you agree to that in the travel waiver.

☐ **Housing and your new neighborhood**

- Learn what you can about your lodgings and the neighborhood where you'll be living.
- Expect to encounter common elements of buildings that differ from those in the US (e.g., locks, windows, smoke detectors, and emergency exits).
- Always prioritize your safety.

☐ **Communication**

- Store emergency phone numbers in your phone, including the [local equivalent of 911](#), if appropriate, and the International SOS number.
- Share your plans with a Harvard contact, in-country contact, friend, or family member.
- Plan regularly scheduled check-ins with one or two people.

☐ **Data security**

- Be mindful of your destination's IT laws and practices.
- Know how to [keep your data safe](#).
- Check with HUIT and GSS about how to securely transport research data.

FIRST DAYS ABROAD AND BEYOND

☐ **Planning a smooth arrival**

- Stay alert, and never lose physical contact with your carry-ons.
- Have plans and backup plans for your trip from the airport to your lodgings. Ask for help from a trusted official if you need it.
- Take it easy the first few days.

☐ **Update your itinerary**

- Update your location and contact information in International SOS MyTrips, especially if you purchase a new phone or SIM card.
- Add any day trips or overnight stays away from your lodging.
- If needed, use the check-in feature, valid for 48 hours, on the Assistance App.

☐ **Personal safety and caring for self and others**

- Be mindful of your appearance, demeanor, dress, and possessions. Consider [what to wear traveling in conservative countries](#), and [advice and resources for street harassment](#).
- Be aware of your surroundings and avoid distracting activities when you're out and about.
- Use the buddy system, and do not travel alone, especially at night.
- Know how to ask for help in the country's language.
- Inform yourself about the local laws around alcohol and substance use.
- Be thoughtful about social media posts.

☐ **Injury or illness**

- Injury and illness are common. So is traveler's diarrhea. Consider [food and drink safety while abroad](#).
- If you need immediate medical attention, call the local equivalent of 911 (if safe to do so).
- Contact International SOS. Case managers can provide advice and referrals to medical professionals.
- Report any illness or injury requiring a medical visit to International SOS, even after the fact, and keep all relevant documentation for any reimbursements you may be seeking.



- ❑ **Muggings and express kidnappings**
 - Muggings and petty theft may be common. Be cautious about ATMs and cash, and use only trusted transportation services.
 - If you experience a mugging or express kidnapping, give up your valuables without argument, and never try to follow the criminal.
 - Cancel your credit and debit cards and contact your bank.
 - Report any robbery or assault to International SOS and your country's embassy or consulate.
- ❑ **Sexual assault and gender-related violence**
 - If you experience **gender-related violence or sexual assault**, get to a safe place immediately.
 - Your decision to report is a personal one.
 - You can call International SOS for discreet medical attention, mental health support, and advice on filing a police report.
 - Consider reporting the incident to your trip leader, your Resident Dean, or the confidential **SHARE Team** within the Office of Gender Equity.
- ❑ **Protests and demonstrations**
 - Do not participate in street demonstrations or protests.
 - Taking pictures of protests, riots, police, or military buildings is illegal in some countries.
- ❑ **Arrest or detention**
 - If arrested or detained, call your country's embassy or consulate. If you cannot call, ask a friend or bystander to call for you.
 - Ask the embassy or consulate to call International SOS to report the situation on your behalf.



QUESTIONS

Contact your program director or Harvard GSS at +1-617-495-1111 or globalsupport@harvard.edu.

