

## Guidance notes for students: Risk awareness form

These guidance notes have been designed to give you some ideas of the issues you may need to think about and some ideas on how you might deal with them when you complete the risk awareness form.

By following this process you can begin to identify potential difficulties that you may face during your time abroad and start to identify possible ways of reducing these. The form covers several important areas, not all of which may be relevant to you, depending on the nature of the subject you will be studying / the type of work you will be doing and / or your destination. All forms should be completed and submitted to either the Study Abroad or Erasmus Team, whichever is applicable.

Details on some sources of information that you may find helpful when completing the form can be found at the end of these guidance notes.

### The aims of the form are to:

- Identify any problems you may have with your time abroad relating to the academic or work setting you will be in and your day-to-day life.
- Consider ways of reducing the potential for these problems by using the information and resources available here at the University before you leave.
- To ensure you make the most of your time abroad.

### Things to think about

The following areas have been included on the form as they are considered the most crucial areas for consideration with regard to your time abroad. However, this is not an exhaustive list and if you feel there are topics missing please feel free to include them in the 'Other Considerations' section of the form. For each element you should consider what hazards and risks may be involved and what you can do to avoid the hazard or reduce the risk.

### Nature of Study Abroad Programme

*e.g. Lectures, Labs, field trips, work in a School, type of company working for etc.*

What is the environment you are going to be studying or working in? Is it a University – if so, is it lectures only or are there other activities such as laboratory work, fieldtrips or activities in workshops? If it is a workplace, what are the work activities of the company - is it office based, field-based, laboratory based, or based in a healthcare setting etc?

### Transport

*Details of transport to be used to travel to the country but also on a day-to-day basis e.g. public transport, own/hired vehicles, licence requirements for the country.*

Taking public transport in certain parts of the world can be one of the highest risk activities you undertake so it is important to consider which is the most secure and effective. This section should include both your travel to your destination and transport whilst you are there (for example travelling between your accommodation and the University campus or place of work).

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## Cultural

Identify any cultural differences that may affect you and consider consequences of actions within the country e.g. religious differences, differences in laws, food and drink, appropriate clothing, appropriate behaviour, attitudes to gender and sexuality, politically sensitive issues.

This may include some consideration as to how you should dress and behave in certain countries where it can be an offence to be seen in public dressed inappropriately. You should also consider different attitudes to alcohol consumption and diet. It should also consider differences in attitudes to gender and sexuality, or other potentially politically sensitive issues. You should also consider the consequences of any actions that may be acceptable in the UK but not in the one to be visited.

## Accommodation

Consider its location with respect to where you are studying / working and the neighbourhood it is in. Is it university owned or is it privately owned? Shared or single room etc. Familiarise yourself with fire emergency arrangements.

Within this section consider where your accommodation is in relation to the University or place of work. Consider questions such as: Is it a reasonable distance away from the University / place of work? What type of area is it in? Is it privately run? Is it private or University accommodation? Is it shared with others? Check on arrival what the fire safety measures are and ensure you familiarise yourself with these arrangements.

## Personal Security

Consider the potential for crime, hostility or physical / mental violence (knowledge of country or Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice / previous incidents etc).

Some areas or countries may have increased risk associated with them, often in the form of military, political or civil unrest. Although the University would not expect its students to undertake any activity where they would knowingly be at risk, it is worth bearing in mind that situations can change. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), Embassy or Consulate of the country will be able to advise you on what to do if such a situation arises. Also be aware of what concerns fellow students have raised in previous years - the Erasmus/Study Abroad Team have feedback from previous students.

## Individual specific

Consider any health condition(s) (physical, mental or psychological) or any other disabilities that may require medication or specific arrangements at the destination. Where relevant, ensure you have enough medication and support for the time you are abroad.

Do you require any medication or other medical treatment such as regular physiotherapy that you will need to access abroad? It is important for you to check that any medication you require is either available in the country you are going to, or that you can take it with you. Speak to your GP who may be able to advise you. It is also worth considering that some common over the counter medication may have the same trade name but a different formulation in other countries. You may also need to consider access to ongoing treatment - is this available and do you need to plan this in advance?

## Insurance

Confirmation that you have obtained Kent's Travel Insurance and completed Student Notification Form. Consider specific country requirements where additional health insurance may need to be purchased/acquired.

All students undertaking a period abroad should apply for [Kent's Travel Insurance](#) and submit a [Travel Notification Form](#). If you are going to Europe, you should also apply for the [European Health Insurance Card](#). You should also check if you will be required to purchase a Health Insurance policy from the institution where you will be studying abroad or if your employer requires any additional coverage for the activities you may be carrying out.

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### **Climate / Time difference**

*Consider differences in temperature, humidity, altitude, seasons, time differences, jet lag etc. Is acclimatisation required?*

Consider the local climate – particularly extremes of climate - and be prepared for this. Also consider the time difference and potentially different seasons.

### **Other Considerations**

*Consider FCO advice, entry requirements such as Visas, specified time remaining on passports, vaccination certificates for the country. Will you be using any specialised equipment?*

This may include knowing how to raise a concern whilst abroad both to staff at your host institution/employer and to the Go Abroad Team at Kent. Consider what contact details from the University of Kent that you need to take with you. Also consider any specialist equipment you may need, and consider that standards may vary in certain countries from those that you are used to in the UK. Think about how you will ensure that you feel safe at all times.

### **Destination Specific**

*Any other measures not already considered, this may include endemic diseases.*

Consider how you will find accommodation and whether it is essential for you to confirm arrangements before departure or whether it can be done easily on arrival.

Do you need to register with the British Embassy?

Do you need vaccinations for the country you are visiting? If so, plan these in advance with your GP and check whether you need evidence of these vaccines to enter the country.

In some cases it is recommended to drink only bottled water, check advice on this too.

### **Useful Resources**

- General advice is available from the Go Abroad Team (Erasmus or Study Abroad).
- Feedback from students who have been to your destination in previous years or from students who are currently at the destination.
- Contact current incoming students from the host institution via the Go Abroad Team.
- Pre-departure briefings organised by either the Erasmus or Study Abroad Team, whichever is applicable.
- The website of the institution where you will be studying, or the organisation you will be working with.
- The Foreign and Commonwealth Office <http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/about-kbyq-campaign/> and <http://www.fco.gov.uk/travel>
- The Third Year Abroad <http://www.thirdyearabroad.com>
- The Centre for Global Education <http://www.studentsabroad.com>
- Go International <http://go.international.ac.uk/go-abroad>