Planning for Time Abroad:
Taking Care of Yourself

Spending a period abroad is the most fantastic opportunity and one that we warmly encourage as many students as possible to take up. Now that you have decided that you want to go abroad as part of your degree*, we strongly advise you to plan for your wellbeing away from Sheffield. It is your responsibility to do this but staff at the University of Sheffield are here to work with you to ensure that your experience is as beneficial and positive as possible. Remember that not everywhere has the same kind or level of support available.

All students should be aware of issues relating to working within a different culture and away from their normal support and friendship networks. Some have additional needs which may need some additional preparation.

We would like you to think about how you manage situations now and where you might need to plan for a different way of managing when you are away. You should start work on this now. You could take this sheet to service providers (e.g. counselling, GP, study abroad tutor) in Sheffield to help you discuss and plan your time abroad.

*Volunteering or working abroad in vacations

The University does not provide support for activities that are not part of your studies. However, there is information here to help you plan your time abroad.
Helping you to plan for your time abroad

What support do you currently have?

- Your local GP
- Your family
- Your friends
- University’s health centre
- Local support networks
- Online search
- University’s Student Union
- International Student Support

Things to think about/tips

- Talk to international students here about cultural experiences.
- Talk to international students here about cultural challenges.
- Talk to international students here about cultural differences.
- Talk to international students here about cultural norms.
- Talk to international students here about cultural values.
- Talk to international students here about cultural barriers.
- Talk to international students here about cultural obstacles.
- Talk to international students here about cultural issues.
- Talk to international students here about cultural problems.
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Things to think about

You probably take for granted some of the support that you have in the form of your close friends, family, partner, your GP, maybe a counsellor, a faith community etc. Think about how you will manage with thousands of miles between you and that support and start planning for the different ways you will need to manage and thrive.

Moving to a new country and job/university is one of the most stressful and challenging things you can do - and one of the most rewarding! If you know you might find the transition difficult, you really need to plan and prepare, talk to University staff and talk to students who have been to your destination before.

If you have a disability, legal and social requirements in the UK may accommodate many of the adjustments needed to give you equal access – physical and otherwise – to learning, social activities, everyday living. You may need to plan this for your time abroad as legislation, attitudes and common practice are likely to be different. Women students in particular may find that attitudes can be different and require thinking about.

Legislation and social attitudes to the LGBT community vary widely throughout the countries to which our students go. If you want to be part of that community overseas, you could do some research in advance.

Even if you are spending time abroad as part of your course, check that you have insurance for health, return home in an emergency etc.

We have listed some areas to think about with a few examples of possible actions. Please look through this information and follow up any of the suggestions that might benefit you during your time abroad.

Don’t forget that there is a great resource on your doorstep; not only will there be people from your department who have gone before you, but there are probably students from your selected country registered in the University of Sheffield. Students going abroad through the Global Opportunities & Exchanges team can ask for ways of contacting them through there. Any student can email international.students@sheffield.ac.uk to ask to make contact with students from that country.

Use this space to jot down useful contact numbers:
Staying safe abroad

This starts before you go. In the current climate, it is hard to predict where there might be risks. You can plan what you need to do if an emergency should arise. Check [www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo](http://www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyougo) for foreign travel advice.

Plan and follow these tips to help keep you safe:

- Check out the current travel advice about the country you are going to from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office [www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice](http://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice). Follow on Twitter @FCOtravel
- Get to know the location and contact details of support services (e.g. in your host university or employer) where you are.
- Make a note of the contact details of the British Embassy/High Commission/Consulate where you are.
- Check your Sheffield and host university email accounts regularly.
- Check the University of Sheffield’s incident page [www.sheffield.ac.uk/incidents](http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/incidents) for information is there is an emergency situation near your University of Sheffield placement.
- In an emergency situation, use Facebook “check-in” facility to let people know you are safe.
- If you are working/volunteering abroad independently, make sure you have funds to leave in an emergency.
- Email [support@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:support@sheffield.ac.uk) for access to Sheffield’s services.

Travel to high risk areas or areas of high concern in vacations

We do not recommend that you travel to high risk areas. If you choose to spend time in such areas, please consider all of the information in this leaflet plus:

- We assume that you have ensured that your trip will not be terrorism-crime or extremist-related BUT is it possible or probable that UK or other countries’ security services might think your trip is related to criminal and/or extremist activity? If so:
  - Check out before you travel that the organisation/employer is bona fide. Seek guidance from Careers Service, Multifaith Chaplaincy team etc.
  - Carry in hand luggage:
    - all documentation relating to your employer or the volunteer organisation
    - evidence of return travel plans
    - evidence of home address and University registration
  - Consider who you can talk to if you want /need to leave your place of work/volunteering.
Useful web pages at The University of Sheffield

**University Health Service**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/health

**Counselling Service**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/counselling
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/counselling/self

**Disability and Dyslexia Service**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/disability

**International Student Support**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/international

**Financial Support**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/money

**Things not going right...**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/sos

**Mental Health and Wellbeing**
www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/mentalwellbeing