

Pratt Outbound Student Handbook



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Pratt

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Introduction

Office of Education Abroad

The Office of Education Abroad is pleased to assist all students at Pratt Institute with the opportunity to learn while traveling through our many exchange partners. Our office is excited to see students taking their education internationally and taking great responsibility in making sure you are prepared for the adventure ahead of you.

In addition to nominating you to study at one of our exchange partners, the Office of Education Abroad will provide assistance in registering for courses abroad, provide information about health, visas, and housing, and will maintain consistent contact with you and our exchange partners. The Office of Education Abroad is always available to hear your concerns and answer your questions.

By embarking on this experience, you are gaining the skills and knowledge you will need to succeed in the 21st century. You will gain new perspectives, learn how to adapt to unexpected circumstances, work with diverse peers, and communicate across languages. These skills will make you more competitive in the job market and will transform your life, forever.

We wish you safe travels and may you experience the time of your life!

Maria José Soares

Director, Office of Education Abroad

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Student Checklist

Before you leave

Approval of Health – All students are required to complete a Health and Emergency Statement and provide proof of immunization, if applicable, before studying abroad.

Passport – All students traveling overseas are required to have a passport. Make sure it is valid for at least six months while you are abroad. Safeguard your passport at all times and carry copies in case of emergencies. If your passport is lost or stolen, report it immediately to the nearest embassy or consulate and let the Office of Education Abroad at Pratt know. Make sure you have a copy of your passport with you at all times.

Student Visa – As a long term resident of a new country, you will most likely be required to obtain a visa before entering. Be sure to check with the Office of Education Abroad or the host country's rules on long term student residents if you are required to have a Visa. Visas typically take several weeks to process, so apply as early as possible.

Travel Itinerary – Book your flight as soon as you know the duration of your stay and schedule an airport pickup. Once your flight is booked, share your arrival information with your contact abroad. It is important to check-in to your flight within a 24 hour period before your flight departs. If luggage fees apply, you can usually get a cheaper rate by paying before you get to the airport.

Be sure to let the Office of Education Abroad know when you arrive at your school. It is your responsibility to arrange and pay for your arrival and departure from your host country. Please refer to your exchange school's academic calendar, which is typically listed on the school's website.

Some students are required to attend orientation at their exchange school before arriving at the program site. If you arrive outside of the designated arrival time or at the incorrect airport, you will be responsible to make your own way to the meeting location.

Student Checklist

Housing – If your exchange school does not provide housing for students, it is the student’s responsibility to find and pay for housing while abroad. This can be any sort of off-campus housing that is available to students. Costs of living will be paid for by the student.

Insurance – Students going abroad are required to have travel insurance in their host country. The Office of Education Abroad will assist in enrolling students in GEOBlue WorldWide, our international insurance provider. The costs will be paid by the student. If you have medication that you must take while abroad, get a letter from your doctor indicating which medications you will be bringing. Read about how to get your medication based on your host country’s regulations.

Course Registration – You must register at Pratt for the semester that you will be at the host school using the PEX 400 Course Contract Credit Transfer Agreement. This involves selecting courses at the host school and having appropriate Pratt officials approve them for transfer credit . The completed PEX 400 contract is submitted to the Office of Education Abroad.

Host School – Keep your acceptance information from your host school as it will be important to you when arriving and planning your stay. Make sure you have confirmed your nomination with the school after applying to them by their application deadline.

Money – Make sure you have the correct form of currency when abroad and be aware of exchange rates. Do not carry a large amount of cash while traveling. Only carry what you need. If you are using cards while abroad, make sure it is accepted in your country. Visa and Mastercard are widely accepted, while American Express and Discover are not. Contact your banks and credit companies with exact dates and locations of your travel so that your cards do not get frozen. Be aware of surcharges and international fees. These add up so add them to your budget. To lessen the fees, make fewer trips to the bank and take enough money to last you a few weeks instead of going every week or a few times a week. Do not carry large amounts of money with you. Make copies of your debit and credit cards and scan them to your email so you can access the information if they are stolen or lost while abroad. Leave copies of your cards with your parents so they have the information as well. Making a budget before going abroad is important to prevent you going into debt.

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Student Checklist

Be sure to have thoroughly researched your destination

The more you know, the easier the transition will be. Become familiar with their laws, communication, transportation, holidays, and currency.

Pack accordingly and lightly

Depending on the length of your stay, packing light may be challenging. Be sure to only pack approved items by checking acceptable items online. If you plan on bringing things back from your host country, it is important to check the guidelines of what and how much you are allowed to bring back to the U.S.

Plan your wardrobe accordingly so that it does not offend locals of the country or draw unwanted attention from others. Tourists are typically targeted for crimes abroad, so try to 'blend in' as much as possible.

Traveling in your host country

Become familiar with transportation practices abroad. If the host country has mass transit systems, know what you will need and how much it will cost to use it. Map out your most frequent routes between housing and living to prevent getting lost in a new country. If your country does not have mass transit, be sure to research alternate methods of transportation and plan your budget accordingly.

Travel in groups whenever you can. It is never wise to travel in a new place alone. Never take shortcuts, regardless. Be sure someone always knows where you are in case of emergencies. Carry emergency numbers with you at all times and have a way to contact your emergency number. Follow all travel advice provided to you by the local program staff. Try not to carry too many valuables, but always at least carry a copy of your passport.

When You Arrive

Be prepared for the cultural change you will experience

You are now in a different country with different cultural and social practices. Be cautious when traveling, especially if you are alone. Don't share information about your plans or your itinerary with strangers. If someone bothers you for your information, do not share it with them.

Get to know your new school

Make sure your class list is up to date and that you are registered for the appropriate classes. If you need books or other supplies, be sure to get those as soon as possible so you don't run the risk of not having access to them if they run out. Become familiar with your campus and the surrounding area, including your living situation if you are on campus. If you can, get to know your fellow Pratt students who are attending your exchange school and exchange contact information.

If you need to make changes to your contact information, classes, or housing, immediately let the Office of Education Abroad know so that we can update your information in their system.

Register your travel plans

Register your travel plans with the State Department through a free online service at travel.state.gov. Enrolling will give you email updates to citizens in the region indicating if there is a natural disaster, political unrest, or other information you should be aware of.

While You Are Abroad

Safeguard your personal items

To decrease your chances of becoming a victim of theft, be sure to keep all personal items of value hidden and not on your person, unless absolutely necessary. Do not leave your electronic devices unattended and do not ask someone else to watch your items for you.

Make sure your electronic devices are up to date with protection services to prevent being hacked and having your personal information stolen. Use discretion when posting personal information online or sharing it on websites with which you are not familiar.

Travel safety tips

Travel in groups and never alone, especially in a new place. Avoid shortcuts at all costs. Make sure someone always knows where you are when traveling. Keep your emergency number with you at all times and always have a way to contact someone for emergencies. If you do not have the original emergency contact card, please find it on the contact page in this handbook.

Alcohol and drug use

Do not go out to drink alone as it puts you at a higher risk of emergency. Do not accept drinks from others, especially if they are “free” drinks. It is never okay to import, purchase, use, or have drugs in your possession. Drug charges can carry severe consequences. Contraband or paraphernalia associated with illegal drug use can also get you in trouble.

Gender and sexuality abroad

If you plan to be sexually active while abroad, bring protection like condoms and birth control. There are differences on gender perspectives abroad. Reflect those perspectives with the program staff, but do not put yourself in danger.

Communicating with Family/Friends

We understand it is important for you to stay in contact with your friends and family while you are abroad. There are many ways to facilitate communication overseas without breaking the bank, but we encourage you to choose the method that works best for you and your family. Many of the best and free options for international communication require access to WiFi or use of data.

Video and voice calls

Many families choose video and voice calls to stay in touch. Using a cell phone abroad without an international plan or use of a local cell phone can be expensive. However, there are free options to communicating.

- Skype is available on computers and as an app that can be used on smartphones. When connected to WiFi, Skype can facilitate both video and voice calls between users for free.
- Skype can also be used to call a Skype user from a regular cell phone or landline if WiFi cannot be accessed. This service is not free, but is cheaper than purchasing international phone plans.
- FaceTime is free and accessible for iPhone and MacBook users when connected to WiFi.
- Viber can be downloaded on your smartphone or desktop and facilitates voice calls between Viber users when connected to WiFi or through data.
- Google offers two services that can be used for voice and video chat. GoogleVoice allows users to make voice calls from a computer. GoogleHangout facilitates video calls between users.
- There are also traditional methods of communication such as international calling cards. While not as popular, they are still options for those who prefer it.

Communicating with Family/Friends

Text Messaging

Text messaging is the most common method of instant communication, but requires a cell phone and can be expensive when international. Just like video and voice calling, students can purchase international plans or choose one of the following options that are free of charge.

- iMessage is used between iPhone users and offers free international communication when connected to WiFi. To make sure your iMessage is activated on your iPhone, go to Settings, select Messages, make sure iMessage is turned on and wait for it to activate. iMessage is activated when your text bubbles are blue.
- WhatsApp is a smartphone app that allows users to text each other using data or WiFi and is free of charge.
- WeChat is similar to WhatsApp and is popular in Asia.

Email

Email is a popular method of communication and is free between international users. Some email servers provide free additional services that can also be used for communication, such as GoogleVoice and GoogleHangout with a Gmail account.

Social Networks

Many people are already active on social networks and are great for communicating. Networks like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Tumblr, or Blogs are free and easy to use. Be careful not to share personal information with strangers online and don't leave your social media accounts signed in on public computers.

Share your experience!

Email studyabroad@pratt.edu if you are interested in sharing photos from your time abroad with Pratt.

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Contact Information

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