

# STUDY ABROAD HANDBOOK

*For semester and academic year programs*

**BOSTON  
COLLEGE**

**GLOBAL  
EDUCATION**

**OFFICE OF GLOBAL EDUCATION**



Dear Study Abroad Participant,

Congratulations on your study abroad plans for the upcoming semester! I hope that your international experience will contribute to your development as a person, a scholar, and a global citizen. Boston College hopes for no less.

We have compiled this handbook to provide you with information that you will need to prepare for your experience abroad. While you will also receive information directly from your host institution or organization, please review this handbook now and share the information with your parents. We have drawn upon years of experience to provide information on everything from visas and health to packing and cultural preparation.

While increasing numbers of Boston College students have already had significant international travel experience, relatively few have had a sustained experience of living, working or studying abroad. The study abroad experience poses great and exciting challenges and promises to pull you far beyond your normal comfort zone. Please welcome that challenge. Part of what is rewarding about studying abroad is pushing yourself outside of your comfort zone and having a truly formational experience.

How might you make the most of your study abroad experience? Work to integrate into your host environment. Keep in mind that the transition into your new setting will not be seamless, and you may not have the same services that are available at Boston College. Take advantage of the strengths of the host university and community and try to live as the local students live. Join student organizations, do volunteer work in the local community, set up informational interviews with local companies...do whatever it takes to meet local students and residents. Try, as best you can, to live in and with the community which will be your home for the term or year.

And if you face difficulty or experience confusion, let us know. Our office, and Boston College at large, is always ready to help.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Pickener".

Larry Pickener  
Director, Office of Global Education

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# Student Responsibilities for Study Abroad

As a study abroad student, you are expected to:

- Educate yourself about, and fully integrate into, your host country's culture;
- Fully participate in host university-sponsored events and become integrated with the local community;
- Be an exemplary BC ambassador to your host country and university by taking full responsibility for your personal conduct and academic performance;
- Learn about and strictly observe the local laws and customs of your host country, and understand their implications for you as an individual;
- Maximize your personal safety by taking all reasonable precautions, safeguarding your belongings, and keeping emergency contact information at hand;
- Be aware of any existing disabilities, chronic illnesses, or mental health issues and share that information with your OGE advisor or program provider who can help you plan for a safe and healthy experience;
- Consider host country culture, attitudes, and laws regarding personal relationships, sexuality, race, religion, gender, etc;
- Educate yourself on the academic policies at BC as they pertain to study abroad and at your host institution and comply with those policies;
- Achieve your own study abroad goals by carefully reading all program materials and responding in a timely manner to communications from the OGE, on-site staff, and program provider.

# Pre-Departure Checklist

## Travel Preparations

- Conduct pre-departure research
- Apply for or renew passport
- Apply for a visa if necessary
- Make travel arrangements
- Plan your finances
- Arrange medical and dental check-ups
- Obtain necessary vaccinations and prescriptions
- Register online with Cultural Insurance Services by logging into [myCISI](#)
- Make a packing list

## At Boston College

- Complete the Final Confirmation and Clearance Form for Study Abroad
- Pay all BC bills
- Complete a Consortium Agreement (only for financial aid recipients attending an external program)
- Obtain [BC course approval](#) for major, minor, and core requirements
- Complete a housing “Leave of Absence Form”, or contact Residential Life to sublet your apartment
- Submit a mail forwarding address to the McElroy post office
- Contact the OGE with any questions or concerns that you might have

## On-site Safety Planning

- Review health and safety advisories for your program site
- Make copies of all important documents
- Give a relative your travel itinerary, contact information and copies of your important documents

# Travel Preparations

## Passports

You are responsible for being in full compliance with immigration regulations. You must have a passport valid for at least six months after your US return date. If you do not currently have a passport or it expires soon, you should apply for or renew your passport immediately. Visit [the State Department passport page](#) for the most current processing times.

## Visas

**What is a visa?** A visa is an official stamp or document affixed within a passport, or given to you as a separate document, that has been issued by a foreign government granting permission for entry specifically to study, work, or live in a particular country. Non-US citizens should check with the appropriate consulates about visas and passport renewal procedures.

**Where do I apply?** In most cases visa applications are submitted by the student via an in-person appointment at the host country's consulate in the US. You can find the relevant consulate and visa requirements on the host country's embassy website. In most instances, you will submit your visa application to the consulate, which has jurisdiction over either your home state or Massachusetts.

**When do I apply?** Requirements and processing times vary greatly; apply early and make copies of all of your documents. In many cases you cannot apply for a visa more than 90 days before your program begins abroad.

**Obtaining a visa is YOUR responsibility.** The OGE may be of assistance in answering basic questions and reviewing forms, but we are not able to speak on behalf of consulates or intervene on your behalf with a visa problem. Consulates are representatives of a foreign country in the US and set their own rules and procedures.

If you attend a BC program and your host country requires a visa, your OGE advisor will provide you with further details on the visa application process. Students are responsible for obtaining their own visas. You are also encouraged to contact the consulate directly. External program students should check with their program provider for visa procedures.

If you travel through other countries *en route* to your final destination, even if you just switch planes, you may need a transit visa. Check on this before departure.

**A visa is a privilege, not a right.** A consular office may deny your visa application, so it is best to adhere to their requirements strictly.

### Common visa requirements may include:

- Acceptance letter to a foreign university or program abroad
- A passport valid for at least 6 months after the end of your stay in the host country
- Proof of Enrollment at Boston College (can be requested from Student Services via Agora)
- Round-trip flight itinerary
- Background check
- Evidence of funding for your time abroad to be proven with a student or parent's bank statements and/or financial aid information.

- Some documents may need to be notarized. Notary public locations on the Boston College campus are found [here](#). Notaries are also available in many banks and law offices.

Keep copies of all passport and visa application documents you submit. Make copies of your passport and visa and keep them in a separate place from the originals when you travel. Leave a copy at home.

## Travel Arrangements

You are responsible for making your own travel arrangements. If you will arrive before the start of your program, book accommodations for that time. Youth hostels may be a less expensive alternative to hotels, however, hostels may not have lockers available so you should have an alternative way to secure and lock your belongings. It is advised that you wait until you have received official acceptance from the host university before buying plane tickets.

You are expected to arrive on time for your program and to attend any orientations and/or early-start programs. Inform on-site staff immediately if you will be delayed. Err on the side of caution when booking your return date; your flight should be booked for a date after your last possible final exam.

Keep in mind that most rail and airline passes must be purchased in the US before departure. Read all guidelines and restrictions before purchasing airline tickets and passes. Remember that most airlines charge fees if you change your travel dates after purchase.

Some websites that students have used in the past to make travel arrangements include:

- [Rail Europe](#)
- [Google Flights](#)
- [Travelocity](#)
- [Kayak](#)
- [Hostelling International USA](#)
- [Hostels.com](#)
- [Student Universe](#)

## Finances

In most countries you can use credit, ATM, and debit cards. Your ATM card must have access to international networks (e.g., Cirrus, Plus). If you have a PIN with letters, know the corresponding numbers.

Many US banks have international partners that either do not charge ATM fees or charge reduced fees. Ask your bank about their international partners before departure. You should also plan to take a second ATM or credit card as a back-up and include copies of all your bank cards with someone you trust in the US. Notify your ATM, credit, and debit card banks about your travel plans and dates before departure, otherwise, they may think your cards were stolen when you use them abroad. If this happens they may freeze your account and you will need to contact them from abroad to reactivate it. It is easier to deal with this issue while you are still in the US, but just in case you should also bring your banks' international customer service numbers abroad with you.

Some vendors and ATMs may require a special 'chip' card for transactions, making it impossible to use your card in certain situations. However, many US banks have recently switched to chip cards; if you do not yet have one you should check with your bank. Prior to departure you should also check if your bank charges foreign transaction fees on credit card purchases made abroad. If so, you may



want to research obtaining a new card that does not. You should also request and know your credit card PIN; having a PIN may make it possible to get cash with your credit card.

You should keep backup local currency on hand and bring some US currency, which can be exchanged in an emergency.

Research what is needed to open an overseas bank account. It may not be possible to open an account everywhere, although some countries may require it. It may take up to two weeks to activate a new account and you will likely be required to show proof of residence in your host country.

Evaluate your program cost (see the BC semester & year cost by program link in the [Finances section](#) of the OGE website) and prepare a budget. Take local currency with you for your arrival as you may have difficulties withdrawing or exchanging money at the airport and will want to make sure that you have enough for the first day. The amount needed will vary by location. BC students who have already studied in your host country are a great resource on tips for budgeting and getting student discounts abroad. Please reach out to your OGE advisor to contact returnees from your program.

## Phones Abroad

Ask study abroad alumni or locals for advice about making calls abroad. Some methods work better than others. Options that may work include:

- BC 2-Step Verification is required to [access Eagle VPN](#). We recommend that students set up Eagle VPN & [BC 2-Step Verification](#) by getting the Duo Mobile app prior to leaving the U.S.
- Your US cell phone can work abroad if it is a world/tri-band phone. Keep in mind that making international calls from your US cell phone can be prohibitively expensive. Contact your provider for rates.
- You may be able to unlock your phone and use a local SIM card, allowing you to pay local rates. Contact your provider to see what might be possible.
- If it is not feasible or too expensive to use your US phone abroad, consider purchasing an inexpensive cell phone and plan in your host country.

## Alert Traveler® App

Boston College now requires students to download the AlertTraveler® mobile app, which helps keep you safe while abroad and can assist in the event of an emergency.

Alert Traveler will allow you to see safety alerts, communicate with us directly in the event of an emergency, and provide resources for in-country emergency services should you need them. It is a requirement for students to activate when they become eligible, which will occur **60 days before your program start date**.

Instructions for BC study abroad students to download and activate the application are [HERE](#)

## BC Communication and Technology

Boston College will communicate with you via your BC email account. Be sure to check it while abroad.

For technology information specific to study abroad, including how to get your laptop repaired, visit [www.bc.edu/techabroad](http://www.bc.edu/techabroad). For software and other technology questions, you can also contact the BC Help Center at [help.center@bc.edu](mailto:help.center@bc.edu) or +1(617)552-4357.

You may need to set up a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection while abroad, particularly in areas that restrict internet access. When using your computer in public places (cafe, hotel, etc.), connect to VPN before accessing sites that require any personal information. Visit EagleVPN and [www.bc.edu/vpn](http://www.bc.edu/vpn) for details.

Stay connected with the OGE on [Instagram](#).

## Health Preparations

### Medical Insurance

You will need to have several types of medical coverage while abroad, which will include your domestic insurance plan, CISI insurance, and in some cases in-country insurance. All serve different purposes.

**Domestic Coverage:** All students must maintain domestic coverage while studying abroad. You can use BC's insurance plan or arrange coverage through another carrier. BC program participants who do not use the BC plan must waive the insurance through Agora. External program students who choose the BC carrier's plan must obtain the "Student Health Insurance Plan Enrollment Form for Junior Year Abroad (JYA) Students" from Student Services and submit it to the provider.

**CISI:** All BC students who study abroad will also be enrolled in the CISI insurance plan for the duration of their program. CISI provides worldwide medical coverage. External program students with comparable coverage may be eligible for a waiver. Visit the [OGE website](#) for a list of eligible programs. Students enrolled in CISI can register online to access resources through [myCISI](#). Visit the [OGE website](#) for more information on how to access resources available through the CISI insurance plan.

A CISI fee is placed on your BC bill each semester you are abroad. If you plan to be abroad before or after your particular program's coverage dates, it is recommended that you extend your coverage for an additional fee. Visit the CISI website for further details on [Individual Online Enrollment](#). Keep in mind that CISI does not cover you within the US. Download your CISI membership card from [myCISI](#) portal. Carry this card at all times. You will need the card if you seek medical treatment abroad. With CISI, there is no need for a separate claim to your health insurance company in the United States. In case of an emergency abroad, you should go immediately to the nearest physician or hospital without delay and then contact CISI. This policy is in effect for both BC and approved external programs. Check the [Participant Plan Guide](#) for details.

### Students with Chronic Illness

If you have a physical or psychological condition that requires ongoing treatment, you should notify the OGE so that necessary assistance can be arranged. You should also consult your physician or counselor about your plan to go abroad. Seek their advice about your options and discuss your overseas medical care.

Consider possible consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and reliance on different medical practices.

You are strongly encouraged to inform on-site staff about any medical condition or disability for which you may need special assistance. Do this prior to departure because host universities require ample notice, cases must be documented, and we cannot guarantee that accommodations can be made.

If you have a serious health condition like diabetes or an allergy to penicillin, wear a Medical Alert bracelet.

Bring translations for your condition or allergy in the local language(s) where you will be traveling, so that you can explain your condition in an emergency.

If you are on medication, discuss the type of care you may need abroad and the best way to continue your regimen. You may also contact the following BC services if needed while abroad:

[BC Health Services](#)  
(617) 552-3225

[BC Counseling Services](#)  
(617) 552-3310

[Campus Ministry](#)  
(617) 552-3475

## Check-Ups and Vaccinations

As of May 2021, Boston College requires students to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 before participating in any academic activity. You may be required to show proof of vaccination in order to travel or to participate in your program. Prepare to carry the white CDC card with you abroad as proof of your vaccination status.

Schedule routine medical and dental examinations before departure. Ensure that you are in good health, and check that your vaccinations for measles, meningitis, mumps, rubella, polio, diphtheria, and tetanus are current. Remember that some immunizations need to be administered months in advance.

Certain countries may also require or recommend vaccinations against specific diseases such as yellow fever, cholera, and typhoid. Check if any vaccinations are recommended or required for all travel destinations by consulting the following websites for details:

[US Department of State](#)  
[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)  
[CISI insurance](#)

Malaria is one of the most frequent problems faced by travelers to the tropics and sub-tropics. The mosquito-borne infection is most common in Central and South America, Africa, India, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and the South Pacific islands. Different forms of malaria have a variety of impacts, from fever and chills to vomiting and diarrhea. If left untreated, serious infection can lead to death. Be sure to ask your health care provider whether a vaccine and/or medication are recommended.

## Mental Health

Students' mental health abroad can be impacted by culture shock, homesickness, and a number of other challenges. Students are encouraged to seek help if they are experiencing mental health issues abroad. Mental health counseling appointments can be arranged with your CISI insurance, and many host programs have additional support for students. Students can also contact their OGE advisor for support or additional resources. Students who currently receive treatment for mental health issues should work with their existing counselor to make a plan for their time abroad.

## Prescriptions

Bring medications in their original labeled bottles and bring copies of all written prescriptions with their generic names. Do the same with eyeglass and contact lens prescriptions. When feasible, bring medication that lasts for your entire stay abroad. It is not always possible to obtain all medications

abroad. Pack medication in your carry-on bag, not your checked luggage. Do not ship medications overseas; they may be retained at customs, which could require you to submit additional documentation and pay fees to get them released to you. Visit the myCISI website ([www.culturalinsurance.com/boston](http://www.culturalinsurance.com/boston)) for information on your prescription benefits.

Plan to bring your own basic drugstore supplies such as aspirin or Tylenol, motion sickness medications, antacids, antihistamines, decongestants, antiseptics, and Band-Aids. Depending on your destination and how long you will stay, your doctor may recommend that you bring antibiotics in case you become ill abroad. If you bring injectable medications, make sure to bring some of your own supplies. If you wear contacts, you should also bring an extra pair of contact lenses and solution as you may not be able to find the kind you need abroad.

## Packing

The government, airports, and airlines enforce strict regulations on the content and weight of baggage. Consult airline websites for details. Use sturdy luggage and pack lightly. Be sure you can lift your own luggage. Secure a luggage tag on each bag. Place your overseas and US contact information inside each suitcase.

Take a small carry-on bag packed with essentials (e.g., toiletries, a change of clothes, medication in original containers) in case your luggage is lost. Read federal guidelines ([www.faa.gov](http://www.faa.gov)) before packing liquids, gels, and aerosols. Keep your passport, money, and acceptance letters separate from your checked baggage. You will need them upon arrival at the airport.

### Don't Forget:

- Copies of your passport, visa, medical prescriptions, and all bank cards (front and back sides) in case of loss. Leave copies with a parent or guardian
- Your host institution's acceptance letter
- Contact information for overseas staff and the OGE
- CISI insurance card
- Appropriate clothing for your host country's culture and climate
- Prescriptions in their original containers
- Extra eyeglasses, sunglasses, and your prescription(s)
- Contact lenses and solution
- Cell phone
- Adapters and voltage converter
- Laptop computer (consider insuring it against theft)
- Lightweight backpack for traveling
- Sturdy walking shoes or waterproof hiking boots
- Camera and journal to document your experience

## Pre-Departure Research

You will live in another country complete with its own unique history, culture, language, political system, and societal norms. Learning about your host nation before you depart will help you adjust, adapt, and be a more active, informed participant in your experience abroad. Research your host country using the Internet, travel books, newspapers, magazines, and international news programs. You should also talk with study abroad returnees, OGE staff, BC faculty, and international students who have studied or lived abroad, and especially those familiar with your host country.

Be informed and capable of discussing US history and current events while abroad. You may be surprised by how much people in other countries know about these topics.

The following websites may be helpful in conducting pre-departure research:

[Boston College Blogs, Podcasts and Social Media](#)

**Health & Safety**

- [OGE Health & Safety resources](#)
- [US Department of State](#)
- [Students Abroad - US Department of State](#)
- [CISI Insurance](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

**Countries & Cultures**

- [International newspapers](#)
- [Country Watch](#)
- [World Atlas](#)
- [Culture Crossing](#)

**Recommended Guides**

- [Rough Guides series](#)
- [Let's Go series](#)
- [Lonely Planet series](#)
- [Frommer's series](#)
- Culture Shock book series
- [Eyewitness Travel guides](#)
- *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Student's Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use* (R. Michael Paige et al., 2002)

## At Boston College

### OGE Final Confirmation

External program participants must notify the OGE when accepted to their program. Provide the OGE with a copy of your acceptance letter. The OGE cannot process your final paperwork until you let us know your acceptance status.

All students must complete the “Final Confirmation Form” by its due date. If you submit the “Final Confirmation Form” after the due date, you risk losing your study abroad placement. The form can be found in your application portal and is done online.

As of May 2021, all students going abroad are required to review and sign two new documents: the OGE Travel Form and Covid-19 Addendum. Both can be accessed via the [MyOGE student portal](#).

Once we receive your “Final Confirmation Form” the OGE will register and bill you for study abroad. Any BC courses for which you had registered will be dropped.

You must continue to meet BC’s academic, disciplinary, and financial requirements until departure or risk losing final clearance to go abroad. You are responsible for all financial losses if you are not cleared to go abroad.

### Study Abroad Withdrawal Policy

In the event that you must withdraw from your program, contact the OGE immediately. External program students should also contact the external program provider. Students (except CSON) who return to BC within the first two weeks of the BC semester may re-enroll at BC.

If you withdraw from a BC or external fall semester program after June 1 you will be charged a \$500 withdrawal fee (\$1,000 if your program already began) and other program expenses incurred. The withdrawal deadline for spring semester programs is November 1. These withdrawal fees will be applied to your BC student account and will not be covered by financial aid. Students who received OGE scholarship money will also need to return those funds upon withdrawal. External program students may incur additional charges from their provider and should contact them about fees.

### Finances

Study abroad program participants are billed BC tuition and can be considered for BC, federal, and state financial aid. For some programs, housing costs are included on the BC bill. Participants are responsible for handling all other expenses. Visit the Finances section of the [OGE website](#) for estimated program costs.

All students are charged a CISI insurance fee for each semester abroad.

Fall and full-year students receive a fall credit on their BC bill for the BC Activities Fee and Health Services Fee after it is confirmed that they are studying abroad. Student Services processes these refunds.

Visit the [OGE website](#) for details on study abroad scholarships.

## **BC Housing**

Students with four years of BC housing should complete a “Leave of Absence Form” for their time abroad, which can be completed on Agora in the MyResLife menu (see “Web Forms”).

If you need to sublet your off-campus apartment or room, contact the [BC Off-Campus Housing office](#) to post a vacancy.

Housing questions should be directed to the [BC Office of Residential Life](#).

## After Arrival Abroad

It is important to let your family know you have arrived safely within the first day of arriving. Your first days are a good time to share any important medical or personal information with your Resident Director, university contact, and/or host family. If you take daily medications or have allergies, share this information with the people you live with and other friends.

Keep in mind that once you arrive overseas your immunity to disease will be lowered due to the new environment and changes in diet and sleep. Thus, it is easier to get sick. In some parts of the world, you must be careful about drinking water, juice, or consuming produce you have not cleaned yourself. Standards of food preparation differ from the US and it may take time for you to adjust to local food.

When you are first in a new country, it can be easy to get overtired, anxious, or overwhelmed even when you are having a good time. It is important to take care of yourself, get sleep, take time to eat regular meals, hydrate and exercise. Maintaining a regular schedule can help you adjust to a new time zone, city and lifestyle.

Many countries require you to register with a local authority (e.g. police station, governmental office) upon arrival. You should also register with the local US embassy or consulate upon arrival through the US Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program](#) (STEP). This allows US authorities to keep you informed of any travel advisories and to contact you in an emergency.

### Cultural Adjustment

Once abroad, you may face an adjustment period referred to as "culture shock." The degree of shock depends on factors such as length of study abroad, your flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, degree of difference between your home and host culture, prior experience abroad, and your expectations. Culture shock is a normal part of study abroad. It shows that you are experiencing the differences between your culture and that of the host country. Symptoms of culture shock can include homesickness, depression, feeling lost and out of place, frustration, irritability, and fatigue. If you experience culture shock, remember that you are not alone. Some suggestions for dealing with culture shock include:

- Embrace your host culture and wrestle with the differences;
- Keep an open mind. We all have preconceived ideas and beliefs that come into question while abroad;
- Get to know others at your host school; do not isolate yourself;
- Find a "cultural informant," such as a local person with whom you can discuss your frustrations and encounters with difference;
- Learn as much as you can about your host culture;
- Maintain a support structure with others, particularly those going through the same experience. However, do not retreat into an American "clique" to avoid the discomfort of culture shock;
- Keep a journal. Record your impressions of new experiences and the transformations that are occurring within you.

**Student Tip:** "Talk to the students in your classes and do volunteer work for the community. Also participate in the university social events. It's easy to stay in the international bubble, but by doing these things, I met many locals who greatly enhanced my abroad experience."

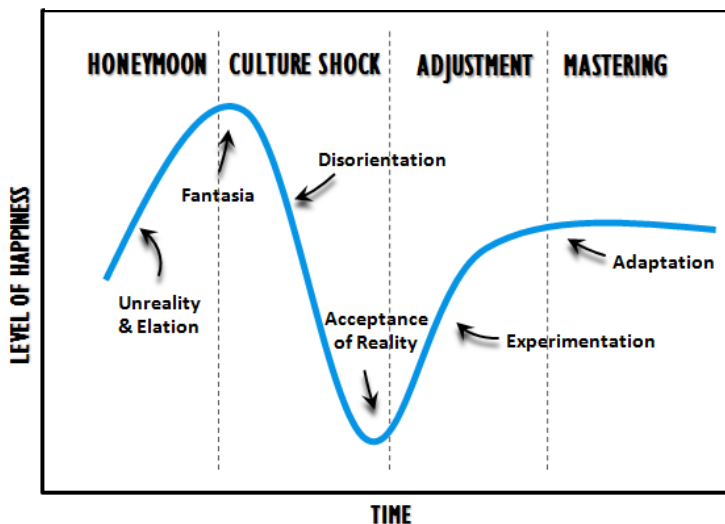


Remember that insight results from sustained and direct contact with your host culture, not from observation at a distance. As you overcome culture shock, you will be able to approach life in your host country with understanding and enthusiasm.

If at any time you feel overwhelmed, lonely, or are struggling to cope with day-to-day activities, your host university can often provide local counseling services. Do not hesitate to reach out to talk to someone. Your Resident Director or host university contact can direct you to the best resources.

For some students, culture shock becomes more serious. If you are concerned about your mental and/or physical status, do not hesitate to seek help. On-site staff can assist in helping you find medical treatment.

## Culture Shock Stages



## Academics & Courses Abroad

View the [OGE academic webpage](#) for the most up-to-date information.

### Course Registration and Withdrawal

Students are expected to enroll in and maintain a full course load, equivalent to 15-16 US credit hours for each semester abroad. If you are considering withdrawing from a course, you should be in touch with the OGE Academic Operations Administrator (oipreg@bc.edu). You are also expected to follow the guidelines regarding withdrawals at your host institution; in some cases, withdrawals may not be permitted. Typically after the add/drop period allowed by the host institution, students who withdraw from a course will have a "W" recorded on the host institution's transcript, which will be recorded to BC's academic record. Students will not be permitted to withdraw from courses after the deadline set by the host institution.

### Pass/Fail

- Students abroad can take a maximum of one pass/fail course per semester
- No business course can be taken pass/fail
- A pass/fail course cannot fulfill a BC major, minor, or core requirement
- After a course is declared pass/fail, it cannot be changed back to a graded course, and no grade changes will be made after the pass/fail timeline period has ended
- Courses should be taken for a grade with the host institution. OGE will mark your course as P/F once we receive your transcript from abroad.

## Timeline

Course Length	Last day to declare pass/fail
Regular semester course	8 weeks (56 days) after the course starts. Courses can never be declared P/F after the final exam
Courses 1-5 weeks in length (typically intensive, pre-semester, or early-start courses)	10 days after course start

Students should email their course title and course ID number (if possible) to their OGE Advisor before the timeline listed above.

## BC Course Registration and Transcripts

Visit the [OGE website](#) for further details on credits, grades, transcripts, and BC course registration.

## Academic Expectations

While the ability to explore the world is a major benefit of studying abroad, your academic experience should be your top priority. Personal travel will sometimes need to take a backseat to your coursework. Students are expected to attend all class sessions regardless of extracurricular travel plans, and all students are subject to the absence policies of their host institution or program provider. While you should certainly make the most of your time abroad, you must also make sure you do not neglect your studies.

The academic system abroad may be very different from what you are used to at Boston College. For example, you may not receive a detailed syllabus for each course or have as much homework and/or

**Student Tip:** "You have to work hard to earn your grades [at BC], and I felt that I was prepared to do the same thing abroad. I worked the same amount that I did at BC and saw the grades I wanted to see.

I also had learned much about the region at BC so it was easier to understand the culture, and we were able to go into detail about topics because I and my classmates had learned about the general topics at home."

graded work as you do at BC. In many places you will need to be more independent and self-motivated in your studies than you are accustomed to. You may not have to submit graded work until late in the semester, but this does not mean you can expect to cram at the end of the semester and do well. If you have fewer graded assignments, each will count for a larger proportion of your final grade, so it is very important to be prepared.

In all likelihood, you will have to develop new study skills, modify expectations and classroom behavior, and make a concerted effort to balance work and play. Returned students have said that courses are not necessarily harder at their host university, just different. This belief can be reinforced by the rate of student absenteeism at some universities. This can be very deceptive as it does not take into account

the work that local students are doing outside of class.

Here are some tips for achieving academic success abroad:

**Attend class regularly** - The academic support that exists at BC will probably not be available abroad, so make it a policy to attend every class. If you miss class you could miss vital information. It will be difficult to catch up if there is no class syllabus, faculty office hours or students to help you. Some schools will have attendance policies that will affect your grade if you have too many absences.

**Stay motivated** - There is generally less hand-holding in universities overseas. Chances are, you will not be able to rely on external checks from your professors or weekly assignments to let you know how you are doing. It will be up to you!

**Know what it takes to succeed in class** - Ask professors and classmates what you need to do to be successful in class. For example, classes in Europe are less structured but the students know what is expected of them and are used to studying with less guidance. In Asia, on the other hand, classes are highly structured and students can be quite competitive. BC students who have already studied in your host university are also an excellent resource.

**Work hard** - Study abroad is above all else an academic experience. Take your classes seriously, attend regularly, work hard and ask for help if you need it.

## Safety and Responsibility

### Personal Safety

Many regions of the world are considered as safe as, or safer, than large urban areas of the US. Other regions may require extra caution. Be sure to thoroughly acquaint yourself with the [US Department of State advisory](#) for the country you plan to study in, as well as any other countries you plan to visit.

Students should be aware of countries with varying levels of advice that apply to specific locations or areas within a country. Designated high-risk areas within Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 countries are to be strictly avoided. Conditions in any country may change rapidly and at any time. The Department of State Travel Advisories also provide clear reasons for assigned levels, using established risk indicators, and offer specific advice to U.S. citizens who choose to travel there, such as Crime, Terrorism, Civil Unrest, Health, Natural Disaster, Time-Limited Event and other.

Note that non-program related travel is only encouraged before or after official program dates and that Boston College does not take responsibility for students who chose to travel independently outside their designated program dates.

Remember that the possibility for non-violent crime exists everywhere. Use your best judgment to avoid situations that may put you in danger. Some countries or areas may have political and/or social instability, and you should avoid demonstrations or large political gatherings.

Pay close attention to all health and safety information provided by your host university or program provider, CISI (your medical insurance provider), and ask trusted locals for safety tips and information on where you should and should not go.

### Being a US Citizen or Resident Abroad

In some countries, Americans should maintain a low profile due to the political climate. Blend in with the local culture in terms of dress and behavior. In foreign language destinations, try to use the local language as much as possible in public, and avoid sites and landmarks abroad that are typically associated with the US.

Be prepared for interaction with locals who want to talk about politics. By knowing about US politics and your host country's political system, you will be able to engage in friendly and intelligent dialogue. Try not to take anti-American sentiments or opinions personally and avoid arguments and confrontations. If someone makes a critical statement to you directly as an American, it is often best to simply walk away and avoid verbal or physical confrontations.

Do not participate in any political demonstrations. This may be tempting, given that you are interested in learning about the political processes taking place in your host country, but you never know when a demonstration may turn violent or get out of control.

Watch and read the local, national, and international press to stay informed about local events in your host country and international events and perspectives.

### **Registering with Local Authorities**

Many countries require you to register with a local authority (e.g. police station, governmental office) upon arrival. Check your program information for details.

You should also register with the US Department of State's [Smart Traveler Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#) to receive travel information and warnings, as well as assistance abroad if you need it.

The US embassy or consulate in your host country can provide the following services to you:

- Issue you a new passport if yours is lost or stolen;
- Help you find medical or legal services in the case of emergency, and help notify friends or family members;
- Explain what to do if you are robbed, and help have funds wired to you from home;

The US embassy or consulate will *not*:

- Provide bail or help you to get out of jail;
- Act as an interpreter, courier, travel agent, or information bureau;
- Give or lend money, or cash checks;
- Arrange for free medical or legal services;

### **Representing BC and the US**

You are considered a representative of BC and the US while abroad, so keep in mind that the locals will associate your behavior with your home institution and home country. Be aware that inappropriate, dangerous, or illegal activity abroad may result in disciplinary sanctions at BC.

### **Obeying Local Laws and Customs**

As a US citizen in another country, you are subject to that country's laws. Local laws may be stricter than those in the US (and the penalties for disobeying them more severe). Learn about the local laws and obey them. Laws and legal practices will differ in terms of arrest, court, and punishment procedures. Conditions may be harsh in many countries. You could face stiff fines or sentences if found guilty of a crime. Illegal or unacceptable behavior may result in BC disciplinary sanctions.

Be aware that local customs regarding alcohol, drugs, and other activities are different in other countries. Respect local customs.

The OGE Director, Resident Director, and/or your host institution representatives have the authority to discontinue your participation in your program if it is determined that your conduct is unacceptable.

### **Maximizing Your Personal Safety**

Always be aware of your surroundings and stay in populated, well-lit areas. Try to blend in with the local culture in terms of dress, behavior, and language. In general try to avoid very bright colors, sneakers, baseball caps and college T-shirts and sweatshirts. Avoid moving around in large groups of Americans and speaking English loudly. If in a foreign language destination, use the local language in public.

Walk confidently as if you know where you are (even if you do not), but if you feel nervous or lost, walk into a café or shop and check your map there rather than on the street. Avoid eye contact with strangers. Always travel with a companion at night. Know the local phone system, emergency numbers, and how to say help in the local language.

Be a smart and careful pedestrian. When crossing the road, keep in mind that certain countries drive on the opposite side than in the US. Do not drive while overseas. Use caution when riding in vehicles and crossing the road. Driving behavior and laws vary by location.

Pay attention to local health, safety, and travel recommendations. Always carry your CISI medical insurance card and emergency contact information for your host school and Boston College.

### **Safeguarding Your Belongings and Valuables**

Non-violent theft is the most common crime directed at travelers. Handbags, backpacks, coats, and back pockets are most prone to theft. Wallets should be carried in a front pocket; purses should be slung over one shoulder and under the opposite arm; backpacks should be carried in front of you in crowded places (such as subway trains). Always secure and watch your belongings. Use luggage locks. Keep alert for ploys to distract your attention. Carry as little cash as possible. Never carry all of your money in one place. Never count your money in public. Be aware of groups of people (even children) who work together to distract or confuse travelers in order to rob them. Do not wear expensive jewelry. Consider insuring your laptop and other valuables.

Be careful with bank card numbers, receipts, and PINs. Exercise caution at ATM machines. Secure your belongings in hotels and hostels. Do not leave valuables lying around. Consider using a public locker if there is no safe place for valuables. Leave your passport and visa in a secure place when you are not traveling, and carry a copy with you at all times. Leave a copy with a relative in the US. If you are mugged, do not struggle with the perpetrator; your safety is worth more than the loss of your belongings. Report any thefts to on-site staff and the OGE. For information on identity theft, visit <https://www.identitytheft.gov>. We recommend that students enroll in Personal Property Insurance through Boston College, especially those traveling to parts of the world known to have higher crime rates. More information can be found through the Office of Residential Life. For plan highlights, visit [www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/offices/StudentAffairs/ResLife/PDF/Property%20Insurance.pdf](http://www.bc.edu/content/dam/bc1/offices/StudentAffairs/ResLife/PDF/Property%20Insurance.pdf).

### **Alcohol and Drugs**

Countries have different laws and customs and it is your responsibility to be aware and strictly adhere to local laws. Students will be subject to local laws, especially those related to alcohol and illegal drugs. Additionally all study abroad students are expected to observe Boston College student conduct and host university policies regarding the abuse of alcohol and drugs.

### **Sexual Health**

Relationships in other countries may be different than what you consider “typical” romantic and friendly relationships here in the US. Both men and women may play different roles and interact with each other in manners you have not encountered before. It is helpful to learn more about your host culture and the dating/relationships customs that are common in your new location.

You should behave in a way to keep yourself safe. Do not take drinks from people you do not know, do not leave parties or bars with people you do not know, and look after your friends.

Same sex relationships are viewed differently around the world. In some countries, certain types of sex acts between partners of the same sex are illegal and can be punishable by law. It is helpful to learn more about how your host country views LGBTQ relationships before you study abroad. If you have concerns, feel free to speak with your OGE advisor at any time. Conversations will be kept confidential.

HIV/AIDS remains a serious health threat to millions of people worldwide. Be informed about HIV/AIDS in the countries where you will reside and visit. The World Health Organization has an [overview of HIV/AIDS around the world](#) and [country profiles](#).

## Sexual Assault

Boston College takes all reports of sexual misconduct and discrimination very seriously, regardless of where such incidents occur. Cultural norms may mean that actions are interpreted differently in other countries. Regardless of these norms, you are encouraged to utilize BC support resources and report any incident of harassment or sexual violence.

The OGE works closely with BC's Title IX Coordinator to ensure that survivors receive the privacy and support they need both overseas and upon their return to campus. In the case of an incident of sexual assault, get to a safe place, seek medical care if necessary, and take time to decide how you wish to proceed, i.e. reporting the incident to the local authorities, reaching out to BC, or speaking with someone you trust. Your Resident Director and faculty program leader are always available as a resource, and you should not hesitate to contact the OGE directly as needed.

Any student who is a victim of sexual assault is strongly encouraged to utilize the services of the [Sexual Assault Network](#) at Boston College, a 24-hour/7-days-a-week private and anonymous resource that is staffed by advocates who are trained to listen, provide options, and support the survivor. SANet resources are available to you while overseas and when you return to campus. Call +1(617) 552-BC11 (2211) for assistance.

## Foreign Medical Practices

Be aware that the manner in which medical help is obtained, the way patients are treated, the conditions of medical facilities, and how health care is afforded may be quite different from US practices.

US health care values, assumptions and methods are not universal practices, and even notions regarding illness onset or the timing of expert attention can be considered culturally based. You should seriously consider the consequences of stress from cultural adjustment and relying on different medical practices.

## Diversity and Inclusion Abroad

The OGE hopes to prepare students to wrestle with how their own identities may interact and change within an unfamiliar cultural context, enriching and complicating their study abroad experience. Given the relevance of a global education in preparing students for an increasingly competitive and globalized world, it is imperative that every BC student has the option to go abroad - regardless of race/ethnicity, gender, finances, on-campus commitment or area of study. The OGE strongly believes in affording transformative study abroad experiences to all eligible BC students, and not just a select few. Our commitment is rooted in the belief that all students' experiences overseas are enhanced through a diversity of perspectives and backgrounds.

Attitudes toward women, the LGBTQ population, disabled people, and various ethnic/racial groups vary worldwide. Customs, beliefs, laws, facilities, and social practices relating to these populations may be different than in the US.

To prepare for the cultural differences you may encounter, it is recommended that you:

- Speak with people who have traveled or lived in your host country;
- Visit the [BC OGE](#) website for further information on diversity and inclusion abroad;
- Research your host country. Many student travel guides have sections pertaining to diversity and inclusion abroad;
- Be sensitive to cultural differences. Remember that you will be subject to your host country's laws, even if you feel they are discriminatory;
- Meet with your OGE advisor if you have any concerns. All matters will be kept confidential;
- Visit the [BAIC website](#) for further support and information

## Women Abroad

Attitudes toward women vary tremendously around the world, and awareness of this is an important aspect in preparing to enter a new culture.

BC does not recommend that women travel alone, but if you choose to travel alone or with other women you should be aware of the situations you may encounter. It is recommended that female students speak with women who have traveled and lived abroad, and read about the position of women in different countries.

Women's roles around the world differ greatly from what may seem typical here in the United States. Learning about women in your host country can help inform your time abroad and help make the most of your experience.

Before you travel it is recommended that you review the following resources:

- [Diversity Abroad: Women Going Abroad](#)
- [U.S. Department of State: Women Travelers](#)

## Gender Roles

Commonly held cultural attitudes regarding gender roles vary across cultures and may not always align with your own values or experience. In certain locations, women in particular may feel significantly different about what their gender identity means abroad than at home. This may affect decisions about behavior, relationships, dress, safety, travel plans, and daily routines. When making decisions about behavior, actions, and relationships abroad, all students are urged to put their safety first. You are also encouraged to inform yourself throughout the study abroad process of local cultural cues and gender roles in order to help make the best decisions for you.

It is just as important for men to understand the prevailing gender roles in their program location, and to be sensitive to the challenges that women in the program may face that men may not. Your identity as a male may be different in another cultural context, and you are advised to research what that might entail.

## Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning Students

Customs, attitudes, laws, and social practices relating to gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people vary throughout the world. Some countries are more progressive than the US in their perspectives on LGBTQ issues. Many other countries are far more conservative and restrictive in their dealings with LGBTQ issues. If you are an LGBTQ student it is important to learn more about relevant issues in your host country and your travel destinations, which will vary by location.



Acceptance towards lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) students varies by location and depends upon each country or area's cultural norms and laws. In some countries, LGBTQ individuals are afforded equal rights and are protected by law from discrimination. There are other countries where openly identifying as LGBTQ is punishable by law, or there may be no laws to protect an individual from hate crimes. While most LGBTQ students will not have any problems, it is important to know the legal regulations and conditions of your location before you go to stay safe and make the most of your experience.

Regardless of where you are studying abroad, it will be helpful to learn about the social environment, recent news, and brief history of LGBTQ rights and issues in your host city and country. Reading local news and talking to other students who have studied abroad in your region are good places to start.

Laws concerning sexual orientation and sexual expression vary worldwide. You are subject to the laws of your host country even if they are discriminatory. Know the local laws before you leave home. The following resource will help you to become familiar with the laws:

#### [LGBT rights by country or territory](#)

While you may or may not be open about your sexuality or gender identity at home and/or at BC, going abroad has sometimes been described as a second “coming out” since you will meet many new people with varied opinions, perspectives, and backgrounds.

All OGE staff members are available to speak with any student about their concerns about studying abroad as a member of the LGBTQ community.

Below are some additional resources:

- [Resource Guide: Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer & Questioning Students](#)
- [LGBT Students Abroad: University of Minnesota](#)
- [Rainbow Sig – Student Resources \(NAFSA\)](#)
- [Diversity Abroad - LGBTQ+ Students Abroad](#)

### **AHANA Students**

Race and ethnicity are defined and talked about differently in other countries, and students may come across situations that differ from those experienced in the U.S. For some students, studying abroad may afford them the experience of being in the racial majority for the first time. For others, you may experience the opposite. Those with whom you come into contact may make certain assumptions based on your physical appearance or what they have seen from popular culture, as is the case in all countries. Some may be interested to learn more about you, but there may be others whose behavior toward you might make you uncomfortable. In many other countries, people talk about racial and ethnic differences more bluntly or directly. Generally, people will mean well. If at any point you feel unsafe, you should remove yourself immediately from the situation and get help, as needed.

Studying abroad provides an opportunity to engage in dialogues in a new and different manner; as a result, it is recommended that all students research how questions of race and ethnicity are addressed and talked about in their host country.

You may want to consult the following AHANA Resources:

- [Thea Bowman AHANA and Intercultural Center](#)
- [All Abroad](#)
- [Diversity Abroad](#)
- [CIA World Factbook](#) (“People and Society” section for each country for a breakdown by ethnic group, religion, and race.)
- [IES Abroad Country-Specific Resources](#)
- [Transitions Abroad](#) (“Top 10 Reasons for African Americans to Study Abroad”)
- [Unpacked: A Study Abroad Guide for Students Like Me](#)



## Students with Disabilities

Access to facilities and resources for people with disabilities may not be the same abroad as it is in the U.S. We encourage students with documented disabilities to consider the types of accommodations they will need when exploring the possibilities for going abroad. Many BC programs are accessible to most students with disabilities, and we will work to ensure reasonable accommodations.

Although many countries are becoming more aware of the needs of people with disabilities, not all countries have similar laws and accessible infrastructure and services. Consequently, requests which may be reasonable in a domestic context may not be reasonable in the international context in light of available resources. Further information and resources can be found on the [OGE website](#).

Below are some resources that can help you prepare for a safe study abroad experience:

- [Access Abroad](#)
- [Diversity Abroad](#)
- [Go Overseas: How Students with Disabilities Study Abroad](#)
- [Mobility International USA: Students with Disabilities Abroad](#)
- [Studying in Australia](#)
- [Studying in Germany](#)
- [Studying in the UK](#)
- [U.S. Department of State: Travelers with Disabilities](#)
- [How to Make Flying With Physical Disabilities Less Stressful: A Fully Accessible Guide](#)

## Preparing for Your Return

Before you leave your study abroad site, make sure to collect names and contact information of your local friends, professors and key administrators so that you may get in touch with them at a later date if necessary. If you developed a good relationship with any faculty members, you may wish to have them write a letter of recommendation for you at some point.

Many students, once abroad, are eager to learn about ways to pursue graduate studies overseas and may wish to pursue national fellowships that will help them do so. Keep in mind that many of the major fellowship programs of interest to students returning from study abroad, such as the Rhodes, Marshall, Fulbright and others, have early fall deadlines. Students who are considering applying to one of these programs should look into the requirements and the application process as early as possible. More information is available through the [University Fellowships Committee](#).

The OGE offers many opportunities for returned study abroad students to get involved. Your OGE advisor will contact you about opportunities to participate in our Study Abroad Fair ([eNav](#)) in September, our pre-departure orientations each semester, and possible opportunities to speak on student panels about study abroad. We also encourage you to get in touch with us if you would like to be a resource for students considering study abroad in your host country.

# Emergencies Abroad

## What to do in an Emergency

If you encounter an emergency abroad such as a natural disaster, severe illness or injury, physical or sexual assault, terrorist attack or political disturbance you should:

- Contact on-site staff immediately.
- Send a push notification to BC on the Alert Traveler® mobile app
- Contact the OGE at +1 617-552-3827 during business hours (Monday-Friday 9 am-5pm EST) or the Boston College Police Department (BCPD) if outside business hours at +1 617-552-4444. BCPD is available 24 hours a day and will contact the appropriate university personnel to assist you.
- Contact your family in the US/abroad.

Students are responsible for their own health, safety and security, in preparation for, and throughout their time abroad. While there are some situations that are out of anyone's control, by being knowledgeable about your host country, making educated decisions, knowing the available resources, and asking for assistance as necessary, you can help to mitigate adversity. Taking the following actions will ensure that you are well prepared:

### Required / Critical Actions:

- Complete the Emergency Contact Information form in your OGE online account
- Know how to access your CISI health insurance and keep a copy of the card (you have to log into [myCISI](#) and print your card) with you at all times along with the 24/7 assistance phone number
- Keep the on-site faculty or coordinator's numbers, OGE, and BC and your host university emergency numbers with you at all times.
- If there is an emergency, you should immediately contact, or respond to contact from the on-site faculty member or coordinator. It is their responsibility to make sure that you are safe; you must follow their instructions. If there is not an on-site BC faculty or staff person, you should contact your OGE Advisor at BC and the international office staff of your host university as soon as possible.
- Download and utilize the Alert Traveler® app to communicate with Emergency Services and/or OGE
- Develop a plan for telephone or e-mail contact with your family, so that in case of emergency you will be able to communicate directly about your safety and well-being. It is your responsibility to be in touch with your parents in the case of an emergency; the OGE will only contact families in the case of a major emergency or crisis (in which students are directly involved or face significant risk or danger) once the response is underway and/or the incident is resolved.
- If there is an emergency in your host city and/or country, it is likely that BC OGE Advisors or other OGE staff will contact you, often just to ensure your safety and wellbeing. It is imperative that you respond to any e-mail correspondence from OGE staff as soon as possible, as we have to verify that we have accounted for all students.

### Recommended Actions:

- Pay attention to all materials sent to you, or reviewed during pre-departure orientations by your program and the Office of Global Education, including the Handbook for Study Abroad; share this handout and other such materials with your parents, so that they are aware of our policies and expectations.

- Consider your mental and physical health and disclose to OGE, the on-site staff and host institution accurate physical and mental health information, and any other personal data that you think may help to ensure a safe and healthy study abroad experience.
- Review [DOS Country Information](#) for your host country and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) latest guidance on [International Travel During COVID-19](#).
- Enroll in [STEP](#), the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a service of the U.S. State Department, for up-to-date safety and security information from your on-site U.S. Embassy.
- Familiarize yourself with local laws and customs of the countries to which you are traveling. Understand and comply with the terms of participation and codes of conduct in your program and those at BC, and obey host country laws.
- Make two copies of your passport. Leave one with your family, bring one with you on your trip, and keep it separate from your passport.
- During a local crisis or some other emergency during which foreigners in general or U.S. citizens in particular may be at risk, keep a low profile; avoid demonstrations, confrontations or situations where you could be in danger; avoid behavior that could call attention to yourself; avoid locales where foreigners or Americans are known to congregate.

The [Emergency Response Preparedness Guidelines](#) were designed to help students manage and respond to emergency incidents that occur overseas.

## Preventing and Handling Emergencies

- Provide your family and any others who may need to know with emergency contact information for you while abroad.
- Keep them informed of your travel plans.
- Download and activate Alert Traveler 60 days before your program start date
- Keep your [STEP profile](#) on the US State Department website up-to-date.
- Know your program’s emergency procedures.
- Always have an emergency plan (e.g., let someone know where you are at all times, arrange to call a specific person in an emergency, have a predetermined rendezvous point when traveling with friends in case of separation).
- If you find yourself in a potentially bad situation, try to walk or run away. If you cannot, try to seek assistance or attract attention to yourself.
- Know how to say “HELP” in the local language, or another word such as “FIRE” in order to attract attention.
- Familiarize yourself with the local phone system and emergency numbers.

Below are some resources that can help you prepare for a safe study abroad experience:

- [R.A.D. Training](#)
- [Safety Tips](#)
- [US State Department STEP](#)
- [myCISI Travel Destination Information](#)
- [Downloading and Activating Alert Traveler® mobile app](#)

## The OGE and Emergencies Abroad

We care deeply about events that occur throughout the world, including those that may impact our students abroad, international exchange students currently studying at BC, and our extended university community. In the event of an emergency, political crisis, or natural disaster in a city or country in which the OGE currently has a program in session, OGE staff will be in close contact with our on-site colleagues, students, and emergency contacts as necessary. Our staff will also be in

contact with our international exchange students regarding events that occur in their home countries.

The OGE monitors a variety of sources on international safety and security on a daily basis, including the [U.S. Department of State \(DOS\) travel advisories](#), [OSAC](#), local media, peer groups, and updates from partner universities and on-site staff around the world. We recommend that students and their parents also stay informed. Please note that, as of January 2018, the U.S. Department of State launched improvements to the way information is shared with U.S. citizens traveling abroad. Under the new system, every country has a [Travel Advisory](#), providing levels of advice from 1-4. Travel advisories replace the warnings and alerts used in the past. Please refer to the CDC for [Traveler Health updates](#).

The OGE operates programs in countries with an active Department of State Level 3 and 4 advisory on a case-by-case basis; if we do have a program in a country with an active Level 3 or 4 advisory, students will be informed and asked to sign a waiver prior to confirming their participation. Boston College undergraduate students are typically not permitted to travel to Level 4 countries. Students should also be aware of countries with varying levels of advice that apply to specific locations or areas within a country. Higher-risk areas designated within Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3 countries are to be strictly avoided. Conditions in any country may change rapidly and at any time. The [Department of State Travel Advisories](#) also provide clear reasons for assigned levels, using established risk indicators, and offer specific advice to U.S. citizens who choose to travel there, such as Health, Crime, Terrorism, Civil Unrest, Natural Disaster, Time-Limited Event and Other. Please be sure to thoroughly acquaint yourself with the advisory for the country you plan to study in, as well as any other countries you plan to visit. Note that non-program related travel is only encouraged before or after official program dates and that Boston College does not take responsibility for students who chose to travel independently outside their designated program dates.

In the rare event of a severe natural or political disaster abroad, BC has an evacuation plan in place.

## OGE Contact Information

Location: Hovey House, 258 Hammond Street  
Hours of Operation: Monday-Friday, 9am – 5pm  
Tel: +1(617)552-3827 Fax: +1(617)552-0647 Email: [oge@bc.edu](mailto:oge@bc.edu)

Call the Office of Global Education during regular business hours. For emergencies outside of office hours, call the Boston College Police Department at: +1(617)552-4444 and ask to be connected to the Administrator on Call.

### OGE Staff Directory

<b>Larry Pickener</b> , Director	<a href="mailto:pickener@bc.edu">pickener@bc.edu</a>
<b>Brendan McGrath</b> , Administrative and Fiscal Assistant	<a href="mailto:mcgratbh@bc.edu">mcgratbh@bc.edu</a>
<b>Austen Carpenter</b> , Program Manager (Great Britain, Denmark, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Ireland Interim)	<a href="mailto:carpenau@bc.edu">carpenau@bc.edu</a>
<b>Christina Hatzipetros</b> , Associate Director for Program Development & Communication (Africa, Asia, Middle East, Southeast Europe, SEA Semester, Scholarships)	<a href="mailto:christina.hatzipetros@bc.edu">christina.hatzipetros@bc.edu</a>
<b>Brodie Henry</b> , Academic Operations Manager	<a href="mailto:brodie.henry@bc.edu">brodie.henry@bc.edu</a>
<b>Ashley Jun</b> , Associate Director	<a href="mailto:ashley.jun.1@bc.edu">ashley.jun.1@bc.edu</a>
<b>Samantha Lee</b> , Program Manager (Australia, New Zealand, Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Switzerland, Italy Interim)	<a href="mailto:samantha.lee@bc.edu">samantha.lee@bc.edu</a>
<b>Rowan Mayback</b> , Applications and Technology Specialist	<a href="mailto:mayback@bc.edu">mayback@bc.edu</a>
<b>Patrick O'Donnell</b> , Assistant Director (Spain, Portugal, Latin America)	<a href="mailto:patrick.odonnell.3@bc.edu">patrick.odonnell.3@bc.edu</a>
<b>Elizabeth Ryba</b> , Exchange Program Manager	<a href="mailto:rybae@bc.edu">rybae@bc.edu</a>
<b>Vaughn Thornton</b> , Program and Outreach Specialist	<a href="mailto:vaughn.thornton@bc.edu">vaughn.thornton@bc.edu</a>
<b>Shannon Williams</b> , Summer & Internships	<a href="mailto:shannon.williams.4@bc.edu">shannon.williams.4@bc.edu</a>

### **Cultural Insurance Services International (CISI)**

Boston College partners with CISI to provide health and emergency services to Boston College students while traveling and living outside the United States. Our student accident and health insurance plan provides worldwide medical coverage for registered BC students while abroad.

In a medical emergency, head to the nearest hospital without delay. For emergency assistance, call the Team Assist line: **+1 312-935-1703** (collect calls accepted) or email [medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us](mailto:medassist-usa@axa-assistance.us). The TeamAssist Emergency Assistance Provider is AXA Assistance.

Non-emergency questions may be directed to CISI at 203-399-5130 (toll free 800-303-8120).

### **Additional Boston College Resources**

Boston College Police Department (BCPD): +1 (617) 552 4444 (ask for Administrator on Call)

SANet (Sexual Assault Network): +1 (617) 552-2211 (anonymous hotline)

Assoc. VP, Student Health & Wellness / Title IX (Melinda Stoops): +1 (617) 552-3280/ [stoopsme@bc.edu](mailto:stoopsme@bc.edu)

Women's Center (Katie Dalton): +1 (617) 552-3489 / [women@bc.edu](mailto:women@bc.edu)

University Counseling Services (confidential): +1 (617) 552-3310; +1 (617) 552-3227 (nights and weekends)

Mission and Ministry: +1 (617) 552-1603 / [ministry@bc.edu](mailto:ministry@bc.edu)

Rick Rossi (Office of Campus Ministry): +1 (617) 552-6592

Last updated: October 2023